

The Resurrection of our Lord
Easter Sunrise message
April 4, 2021

"Mary"
(John 20:16)
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LSB 467, 463

“Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today’s text for this Easter morning is from our Gospel reading John 20:16

“Jesus said to her, “Mary!” Here ends our text.

After this message we will confess the Apostles Creed. On that first Easter morning at daybreak, there wasn’t much confessing of faith happening. Even after the women had seen Jesus and told the disciples Luke tells us that they thought they were idle tales. For Mary, her confession was basically “I believe in God the Father Almighty maker of heaven and earth and in Jesus whose dead body was stolen from the grave.

So, overwhelming was her grief that she became fixated with the belief that someone had taken Jesus’ body. The tomb is open and there’s no body. The conclusion is that someone must have taken it.

Would we have thought differently had we seen what Mary Magdalene saw? She saw her Lord crucified. She saw Him laid in the tomb. She came that morning to anoint a dead body. She was sure of that. And if the body wasn’t there, then all her plans to honor her Lord were thrown out the window. What if a funeral director told a family that they couldn’t find the body of their loved one. It got lost somewhere. Would there not be a lot of grief?

Just tell me, anyone, where the body is, and I’ll bring it back. That doesn’t sound very likely, but we often say illogical things in the midst of great anguish. She was being denied her time to mourn properly for the One who had done so much for her, driving out the 7 demons.

In short, one word described her morning. “Help!” Of course, God’s help had always been there for Mary and the other disciples. Jesus had forewarned them about His death and resurrection. And though God always keeps His promises, God’s word was what was lost that day, not Jesus’ body!

Are we any different than Mary? In this midst of our difficult circumstances, do we run first to God’s word or look for solutions without God?

I don’t know where they have taken Him. But, yes, you do! God’s word prophesied His death and resurrection. If God’s word is forgotten, then one is left to one’s own thoughts and assumptions. That can only lead to despondency, crying, depression. And that’s where Mary was, crying out “help”.

When all of a sudden, only one word changed everything. “Mary”. She recognized the voice that spoke her name. And she responded with one word, “Teacher”. Jesus heard her cries. Jesus hears ours too. And He comes to our aid.

Jesus speaks but one word, our name, and all is made right. The Teacher is alive. Yes, the Teacher taught His resurrection and she clung to Him. And Jesus in great love reminds Mary another important truth. As the resurrection was necessary, so is the evangelization of the world. **“go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.’ ”**

God’s word reaches us this morning with all the same promises of the resurrection. Our resurrection! Because the apostles believed and taught Jesus’ word, it has come to our generation. In one word, Jesus has claimed you when He called you by name in your baptism. In that moment, all the chaos turns to calm. All your sins are washed away. For you are a child of God and through Jesus’ death and resurrection can call Jesus’ Father your Father.

The morning started with false information being shared to the disciples that Jesus’ body was stolen. But when God speaks His word to our hearts and calls us by name, the true information is given. It’s given to us to believe and go and tell, that Jesus is risen! And you who believe in Him are saved and will also rise again on the last day. That’s the Apostles confession and ours which we confess right now, that I believe He rose again on the third day and the resurrection of the dead.

Amen.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)