

I HAVE SEEN

JOHN 20:1-18

(Prepared by Gene Thompson using LifeWay's ETB materials)

1. What are some examples of "transformation?" (Physical: Weight loss; body building; beauty makeover. Nature: butterfly; frog. Movies: The Hulk; Superman; Spiderman; etc. Bible: Paul; Zacchaeus; The Demoniac; etc.)
2. Are these transformations visible?
3. Should transformations be visible?
4. How does electrical power transform a device? (It empowers the device to do something it cannot do without the power being accessed.)
5. What is the Source of power for living as Christians? (The Holy Spirit.)
6. When we plug into the Holy Spirit's power, what kind of power is available to us? (The same power that raised Jesus from the dead.)

The same power that raised Jesus from the dead transforms and empowers our lives to live for God and His glory and that kind of transformation is visible to the world around us!

In today's passage, Mary heard her name called by someone she thought was a gardener, but that encounter changed everything. Her life was transformed at that moment. People can have a similar encounter today. In fact, that's what Easter is all about.

EXAMINE! Read John 20:1-10

According to the other Gospel accounts several women went to the tomb on that first Easter, though John focused on Mary Magdalene. Notice in verse 2 she used the plural "we." Jesus had cast seven demons out of her—Luke 8:2. According to Mark 15:40 and 47 she was at the crucifixion and had watched Christ being put in the tomb. From Jesus' followers' point of view it was all over. The last three years or so was now a distant memory. "They all walked away, nothing to say, they had just lost their dearest friend. The Garden the jail, the hammer, the nails, so this was the way it would end." (Song lyrics.)

1. We study the story of Jesus' resurrection every year. Why do we put so much emphasis on this one story? (Jesus' bodily resurrection from the dead is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. "If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone." 1 Cor. 15:19.)
2. What do you think Mary was feeling that morning? (Hopelessness, despair, disappointment, grief, etc.) Little did Mary know that her despair was about to turn into inexpressible joy!
3. What was Mary's reaction when she discovered the stone had been removed? (She assumed Jesus' body had been moved or stolen. She ran to tell Peter and John.)
4. What was Peter and John's reaction to Mary's news? (They ran to the tomb. It was undignified for men to run in this day, but they cast protocol aside.)
5. When they got to the tomb what did they see? (The burial shroud was lying in the tomb as if Jesus had just vaporized. The cloth that was on His face and head was lying folded in a separate place.)
6. Can you believe and yet not understand?
7. What did John believe? ("In the context of John's Gospel, with the meaning that it gives to "faith" over and over again throughout the book, this can only mean that he believed that Jesus was who He said He was the Son of God. Now—in seeing this empty tomb and the grave clothes displayed and discarded like bedclothes—he believes that Jesus rose from the dead."—Josh Moody.

The Scriptures as a whole, even the Old Testament, only makes sense when we see that they have been fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ.

God is not threatened by our questions about the resurrection. Instead, He wants us to bring them to Him honestly.

Mary likely had followed Peter and John back to the tomb, but they had already left by the time she arrived.

QUESTIONS! Read John 20:11-13

The word translated “crying” is more accurately translated “wailing” or “sobbing” as we say at the tomb of Lazarus.

1. What questions and preconceived beliefs get in the way of believing the resurrection? (Outside of our faith the resurrection isn’t logical. People die and return to the dust of the earth. We haven’t seen it with our own eyes.)

Mary still believed Jesus’ body had been moved.

2. What impact did the angels’ presence have on the situation? (Notice that Mary did not seem to be frightened by them. Perhaps Mary didn’t realize at the time that they were angels.)

Many thought Jesus would establish an earthly kingdom. After the crucifixion, they could not contemplate a resurrection.

3. What questions and preconceived beliefs get in the way of believing the resurrection?
4. Why did Mary maintain her first impression about Jesus’ body? (Nothing had changed or happened to make her think otherwise.)

We should always filter our ideas about Jesus through Scripture so we can focus on who He really is, not what others think He is.

WITNESS! John 20:14-18

1. Why didn’t Mary recognize Jesus? (Something caused Mary to look over her shoulder, probably a feeling that a person was standing behind her. Perhaps she didn’t recognize Him because of the same kind of blindness that afflicted the two who walked the road to Emmaus. It could have been grief, tears, emotions, only a glance, not looking at His face but keeping her head down.)
2. Jesus knew for whom Mary was looking; why did He ask her? (Maybe He was asking her to evaluate her actions.)
3. What did Mary say to the person she thought was the gardener? (If you have moved him, please tell me where He is, and I will take Him away for you. Just tell me where He is.)
4. What caused Mary to finally recognize Jesus? (When He called her name. He probably used a tone and inflection she often heard Him use. Her anguish and despair turned to astonishment and delight.)
5. Why did Jesus say, “Don’t cling to me?” (Jesus had work to do and so did Mary. Neither could get their mission done with Mary clinging to Jesus’ feet.)

This wouldn’t be the last time she’d see Him, but she needed to quit relying on sight and touch. The nature of her relationship with Him would change. After His ascension, Mary would relate to her Lord in faith not sight.

6. What mission did Jesus give Mary to accomplish? (Go and tell my brothers. This is the first time Jesus called His disciples “brothers,” in the past it had been “servants” or “friends.”)
7. You can’t make this stuff up. If they did make this stuff up, they wouldn’t have women as the first witnesses to the resurrection. Why not? How were women treated back in Jesus’ time? (They could not testify in a court of law. If they were making up a story about Jesus’ resurrection, they would not likely have had a woman, and especially not one with a history of being demon possessed as their primary witness.)
8. How are our lives different because of the resurrection? (For Christians all over the world, today is Resurrection Sunday. We meet each week, among other things, to celebrate the glorious, wondrous fact that Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus’ resurrection really did change everything!

“The resurrection changed the cross from a tragedy into triumph, the Roman Empire into a Christian state. It changes people from being spiritually dead to being alive to God. It changes fear into love, despair into joy, the spiritually dead to being alive in God, guilty condemnation into a celebration of forgiveness and freedom. It changes anxiety into a hope that goes beyond the grave. We can today experience resurrection life and victory over sin. The resurrection is far from being something we only benefit from in the future!”—Adrian Warnock.

Romans 6:4— “We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”

Eph. 2:5-6— “God...made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with Him.”

We have already been changed by Jesus’ resurrection!

SUMMARY AND CHALLENGE!

John MacArthur: “The resurrection is the ground of our assurance, it is the basis for all our future hopes, and it is the source of power in our daily lives here and now. It gives us courage in the midst of persecution, comfort in the midst of trials, and hope in the midst of this world’s darkness.”

1. What objections do people raise to the resurrection? (It is impossible. It is just another fairy tale. There is no real proof.)
2. How can we respond? We can know the resurrection is true because of at least seven facts:
 - Broken Roman seal.
 - An empty tomb.
 - Large stone moved.
 - Roman guards gone.
 - Empty grave clothes.
 - Appearances of Christ.
 - A woman saw Him first in a culture where a woman’s testimony was usually considered invalid.
 - Cowardly disciples become bold witnesses.
3. One of the most effective methods of leading people to Christ is to simply tell about your experience with Him. That was what Mary Magdalene did. Who do you know that might be receptive to hearing about your experience with Jesus?