



## HIGHLIGHT: John 20:11-18

H

<sup>11</sup>But Mary stood outside facing the tomb, crying. As she was crying, she stooped to look into the tomb. <sup>12</sup>She saw two angels in white sitting there, one at the head and one at the feet, where Jesus' body had been lying. <sup>13</sup>They said to her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "Because they've taken away my Lord," she told them, "and I don't know where they've put Him."

<sup>14</sup>Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, though she did not know it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup>"Woman," Jesus said to her, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Supposing He was the gardener, she replied, "Sir, if you've removed Him, tell me where you've put Him, and I will take Him away."

<sup>16</sup>Jesus said, "Mary."

Turning around, she said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!"—which means "Teacher." <sup>17</sup>"Don't cling to Me," Jesus told her, "for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to My brothers and tell them that I am ascending to My Father and your Father—to My God and your God."

<sup>18</sup>Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them what He had said to her.

E

## EXPLAIN

**Leaders: Feel free to use any of the "Explain" materials to guide discussion as it is needed or to expound on a certain area of the text as it comes up during your Life Group time, but the purpose of this section is to deepen your own personal understanding of the Word. Your members have access to all of this material as well.**

In the stunning conclusion to the Passion narrative, Jesus has done exactly as He said He would and has risen from the dead, but His followers don't know it yet. On Sunday morning, three days after He was killed and buried, Mary, who was going to attend to His body, found the stone in front of the tomb rolled away and the tomb itself empty except for two angels sitting on either side of the slab where He lay. And what's most amazing about this is that the fact of Jesus' resurrection changes everything—including us.



- v.12 It may seem a spurious detail to include that one angel was at the head of where Jesus was lying and the other was at the foot, but this draws a vivid picture of the Mercy Seat on the Ark of the Covenant. In the Holy of Holies, the High Priest would take blood from the sacrificed lamb and sprinkle it on this Mercy Seat, which was the space between two cherubim on either end of the Ark. When he did this, God would dispense His mercy on the people. In the same way, when Jesus sprinkled the blood of His sacrifice, God showed mercy on all those the blood covered—but this time, we don't have to keep returning year after year with fresh blood from new lambs; one sacrifice has covered all forever.
- v.14 Here, in 21:4, and in Luke 24:31, we see people who knew Jesus not recognizing Him after His resurrection. Mary's and the Disciples' initial "blindness" is illustrative of the way many today don't recognize Jesus even if they're looking directly at Him. When God opens the eyes of our hearts and we truly see Him, however, we are unable to pry our eyes away from Him.
- v.16 Jesus told us in John 10 that He knows His sheep, and His sheep know His voice. Jesus doesn't have to prove anything to Mary or provide her with a sign; He only has to say her name. It took only one word from her master for Mary to recognize Him.
- v.17 This is a difficult passage to interpret for those who claim Christianity was invented by some delusional fishermen in the first century: having Jesus reveal Himself to a woman—and a *single* woman (without another witness)—is a sure-fire way to destroy whatever credibility you'd built up to that point. John isn't interested in perpetuating something that doesn't have a sure foundation, though; he simply reports the fact of what happened. A man was crucified and dead for three days... but now He is alive, a truth with implications that we simply must deal with. From this woman's missionary journey—arguably the first missionary journey in the post-resurrection world—we can trace our faith in a resurrected King today.

## A

### APPLY

*Your Leader Guide will have material that the member guides do not have. The **bolded material** is what the people in your group will have, the other material is only for you to help guide discussion.*

*This guide can be as strict a script or as general a resource as the leader needs it to be.*

- 1. What stuck out to you or challenged you in what you heard in the sermon or read in the text?**
2. Many times we miss what God is doing in our lives right now, only to have it become clear in hindsight—like when Mary talked to Jesus in v.15. **What is a situation you can look back on and, in hindsight, realize that it was God working in all along?**

This week's guide is slightly shorter than previous ones. Don't be afraid to spend time hearing people's personal stories. Often, when we remember the times when we felt most desperate and hopeless, we see only afterwards how Jesus was with us the entire time.



3. Mary was once tortured by seven demons living inside of her, but her life took a drastic turn when she encountered Jesus. **How has encountering Jesus changed you? How has He given you purpose and an identity bigger than this fleeting world can offer?**

One of the most remarkable things about belonging to the Kingdom of God is that our identity and purpose is rooted in something bigger than the world has to offer us. It, like all we see, will pass away; God's kingdom remains forever. When we ground who we are in who Christ says we are in Him, nothing that the world tells us can supersede it.

4. **How are we to live in a post-Resurrection world? What kinds of things are expected of those of us who believe? How should we be interacting with our neighbors, with our friends, with our family?**

The answer to this is both simple and complex: we are to represent Christ to a world that doesn't know Him. It looks different for each person individually, but that is why a personal relationship with Him is so crucial: you become transformed into His image, which allows you to reflect Him, His ideals, and His heart—and in doing so, introduce the people around you to Him.

## R

### RESPOND

Challenge your group to individually answer:

- **How does your life reflect the risen Christ?**
- **What is one thing you need to surrender this week to better reflect Him?**

Encourage one another through email, text messages, or coffee dates throughout the week to build up and encourage each other.

