

John 20:11-18

~ Resurrection Joy ~

Introduction

There are 2 things that **never cease** amazing me regarding the human race and suffering...

First, I'm **continually amazed** at just how much **stress** and **trouble** and heartache human beings experience **every single day!**

Just taking a **recent inventory** of some of the people in this church – there are many struggling with:

Pain
Sorrow
Sickness
Disease
Death
Addiction
Sadness
Depression
Divorce
Debt
Miscarriage
Job-loss
Anxiety
Surgery
Infertility
Hopelessness
Sleeplessness
Restlessness
And more

There is seemingly no end to the heartache & pain that we can experience!

Resilience

On the other hand, I'm **also continually amazed** at just how **gritty** and **determined** and **resilient** the human heart is during these same events!

And often, it is those **same people** going through events who are **also going through** other trials!

Rarely is it **ever just** financial trouble – but **legal** trouble – and **emotional** trouble – and **family** trouble – while you have **cancer** and reoccurring **migraines**!

It is **never just** car trouble – but **social** trouble – and **parental** trouble – and **emotional** strain – and **financial** heartache while your child is sick and bullied at school!

It's the reality of what one theologian called:

Multiple complex overwhelmings

A person who is **so overwhelmed** by multiple trials that come upon their life **all at the same time**!

Life Index

Many of you I'm sure are familiar with the tool known as the *life change index*

It is somewhat of an outdated tool but still effective in measuring **levels of stress** associated with **major life events...**

It works by assigning **numerical values** to people's lives based on how much *change* or *adjustment* they typically require in those moments...

So you go through these events – you tally up the score – and then you come to a number to see the **quality of life** you're currently experiencing and how long you get sick or seriously ill!

So for instance:

In the death of a spouse you instantly get – **100 points**!

Divorce of your parents is – **90 points**

Personal injury or illness – **53 points**

Change of responsibility at work – **29 points**

And so on!

Now the results can vary **depending on** the person and the circumstance – and **how many events** are going on all at the same time –

but:

If you scored **150 points or less** – then you have a **low to moderate** risk of getting ill or sick sometime **in the future!**

If you scored between **150-299 points** – you have a **moderate to high** chance of getting ill or sick sometime **in the future!**

And if you scored over **300 points or more** are you're going to get very sick very soon!

John 20

After reading the opening verses of the disciples in John chapter 20 – I wonder what their particular stress index **would have been!**

Witnessing **the arrest** of Jesus in the Garden – **50 points!**

Witnessing the trial and sentencing of the Jews – **90 points!**

Witnesses the beatings, the mockings, the scourgings, and the pain – **300 points!**

Witnessing the crucifixion – **500 points!**

Having to bury the One who claimed to be the resurrection and the life – **unable to be calculated!**

These men were **crushed!**

These women were crushed!

Despair

They had spent the last **3 and a half years** following Him around and listening to His teachings!

He had become to them their **greatest joy** – their **highest treasure** –their **only hope**!

And then He died!

HE DIED!

They buried Him in a tomb!

And put His body in the grave!

At the Tomb

And so you have to understand that **in verse 1** when Mary came to the Tomb of Jesus – she's **NOT coming** to celebrate the glorious resurrection **that we saw** last week:

She was coming to mourn!

She was coming to weep!

To pay homage to the one who had promised to deliver her from everlasting pain!

The Gospel of Mark says that:

When the women came early to the tomb they came bringing spices in hand!

And the fact that they are coming to the tomb **early in the morning** indicates that these women had **NOT received** any sleep in the last **24 to 48 hours**!

EMPTY

And so imagine their surprise then that **when they got** to the tomb:

His body was completely missing!

He's NOT there any longer!

And **contrary** to what we believe:

That would have **increased their anxiety and sorrow** – it would **NOT** have taken it away!

In fact verse 11 says that:

Mary stood weeping outside of the tomb...

The word there is actually a very **strong Greek word** indicating:

A loud and unrestrained sobbing...

She was wailing – howling – shrieking in pain!

One in which only the **heartache of death** itself could produce in a woman like Mary!

And I can think of no better description than what F.W Krummacher gives when speaking of Mary in this scene – he says:

Who is she who, all alone, has found her way so early to the tomb...whose eyes are swimming in tears, and who, with her head leaning on the stone, seems ready to faint with agony and grief? You know her: she is that disciple whom you saw at the Pharisee's house a while ago, washing her divine Master's feet with her tears and drying them with her hair. She who once went so far astray and was so fearfully possessed; she whom her Lord liberated from the power of seven devils and, in a peculiar manner, rescued as a brand out of the fire. Much had been forgiven her, and therefore, she loved—and still loves—much!

And so I think we have **every reason to believe** that these women when coming to the tomb of Jesus had:

Multiple complex overwhelmings!

They **did NOT expect** the glorious Good News of what we're about to see with Mary in John chapter 20!

Main Point

And so what I want to do then is simply walk through the text identifying key themes and images that contribute to the **overturning of this sorrow** and making this **the best news** of the human heart anyone can embrace this side of cross!

And the main point that we're gonna see as we come to John chapter 20 is this:

*The resurrection of Jesus transforms our darkest sorrows into deepest joys by reminding us that we have a glorious **resurrection message** to proclaim*

Outline

2-point outline:

The grief-stricken Mary (11-16)

The God-sent messenger (17-18)

John 20

So John chapter 20 beginning in verse 11 – John writes:

But Mary stood outside the tomb, crying. And as she was crying, she stooped to look into the tomb. She saw two angels in white sitting where Jesus's body had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. 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." Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know it was Jesus. "Woman," Jesus said to her, "why are you crying? Who is it that you're seeking?" But supposing He was the gardener, she replied, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you've put Him, and I will take Him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary." Turning

*around, she said to Him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!”—which means “Teacher. Don’t cling to me,” Jesus told her, “since I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them that I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God. So Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, **I have seen the Lord!** And she told them what He had said to her...*

Opening Gambit

It’s striking to note here that when Mary first sees Jesus standing at the tomb – she mistakes Him for the Gardener in verse 15!

Even though there were likely **several other women** standing with Mary – John is **zooming in** on this one particular woman...

And what he wants us to see is a **man and a woman** standing in a garden!

Garden

Now John has already mentioned **several times** that the place in which Jesus was buried **was clearly** in a Garden!

He has told us that the resurrection took place on *the first day* of the week!

And Now He’s telling us that Mary is mistaking Jesus as the gardener of the tombs!

All of this speaks of creation!

All of **it speaks** of redemption!

All of it speaks of **a second Adam!**

Angels

Notice too that in verse 12:

*She sees **two angels** sitting in white at the **head and feet** of Jesus!*

It's a picture of the Old Testament mercy seat of God – the angels with their wings **extended over** the place where God was said to be present!

So you have this Old testament imagery being fulfilled in Jesus at the tomb – but in particular angels **always seem to come** at:

Significant moments of redemptive history!

So you have angels **at the beginning** of creation with Adam and Eve standing in the garden:

And when Adam and Eve are **kicked out** of His presence for disobeying His laws – 2 angels come **and guard the way** of access back into the presence of God!

Angels appear to **some of the Patriarchs** in the Old Testament Scriptures when coming to announce the Kingdom of God!

Angels are **all over the story** of the Exodus with Moses leading the people!

They are there at **the announcement** of Mary and her pregnancy!

At the birth of Jesus in Luke chapter 2!

They were there at the **beginning** of creation – they will be there at **the end** of creation!

Because Angels are markers from God indicating:

Divine Redemptive significance!

Adam and Eve

And it's **also striking** to note that in the first Garden – when Adam names his wife he actually **names her twice!**

First he calls her *woman* in verse 23 of Genesis 2 – and then he calls her *Eve* **after the Fall** in verse 20 of Genesis chapter 3!

And so here's Jesus doing a **very similar thing** when speaking to Mary:

He calls her *woman* in verse 15 – and then He *calls her by name* in verse 16!

And what I think John is trying to do here is trying **to show us** the differences between:

The first Garden – and this second Garden!

The first Adam – and the second Adam!

That where sin & sadness **first began** all those years ago [namely in a Garden] – Jesus was **now overturning** in His death, burial, and resurrection!

Jesus is the **better Adam** who comes to open the way **through the mercy seat of God!**

Despair

And so Mary's sadness is **first overturned** with the angels' question in verse 13:

So they said to her, Woman, why are you crying?

It's a question you see designed to **convey astonishment!**

It's NOT a question they were **seeking** an answer to – but it was almost like a subtle rebuke!

Because her response to the sight of this empty tomb is one that is **totally inappropriate** for the situation at hand!

Just as you would **never laugh** at the death of a spouse at a funeral!

Or weep tears of **sorrow** at the birth of our own children!

And so too Mary's sadness is **totally inappropriate** for the sight of this empty tomb!

And the angels are trying to understand why she is weeping at the **greatest news** that a human heart could ever embrace:

They were astonished at her lack of unbelief!

D.A Carson writes in his commentary:

*The Angels' question becomes an invitation to reflect on what Kind of Messiah she was expecting...and thus to widen her horizons and to recognize that grand as her devotion was to Jesus, her estimate of Him was **still far too small...***

Counselling

See there was a devotion in Mary that was almost like a **double-edged** sword where:

On the one hand her devotion to Jesus was really **unparalleled** to many of the disciples who **at this point** are hiding away in a locked room in Jerusalem for fear of the Jews – but **at the same time** there is this **hardness of heart** where her stubbornness is refusing to believe the words of the Scriptures – and even Jesus Himself who had said to her:

That the Son of man must die and rise again on the third day!

And so her **devotion** is **leading** her to the tomb – but her **stubbornness** is **refusing** to accept its message!

Sometimes I think we can be so **over-clouded** with **grief** and **sorrow** and pain that we **even refuse** the evidence that is plainly put before us!

And it's a **subtle reminder** that the next time we are counselling a friend or a family member in grief – that it's **NOT always helpful** to just throw ourselves headlong into the mess of their situation!

Knowing that if we do so – we're both going to be drowning in the pit together!

And so sometimes the **most loving** thing we can do – is keep one foot **firmly planted** on the shore in order that **at the right time** we can pull them out of that pit!

And often that's gonna feel unloving – often it's gonna feel judgemental – it's gonna feel like you're judging them – and often **they're going to think** that **you think** you're better than them...

When **in reality** all you're **trying to do** is to love them like Jesus – and to **lead them to his Word!**

And sometimes you're gonna have to be "*the bad guy*" that pulls them out of that pit!

Our Greatest Need

See the irony of this situation is actually **quite interesting!**

The **very absence** of His body in that tomb which is the **cause** of her greatest pain and grief – is **at the same time** the very **token of** her greatest good!

Isn't that interesting!

The very thing that's **causing her to weep** – will **also be** the **very thing** that causes her to rejoice!

She's crying at the sight of the empty tomb – but it's the empty tomb that her soul **most desperately needs!**

And this is often how the Lord's works in his mysterious dealings with us:

The things that we view as the worst possible events – are **often the things** that God has loaded with the greatest possible blessings!

The things that will often grow us – and strengthen us – and mature us in Christ!

Are the things that we so **often seek to avoid!**

Because we **don't have** the eyes to see...

We don't have the hearts to know what is best for us!

And so often we need a friend or a spouse to **pull us out** of the muck/ out of the mire and to point us to the risen Lord Jesus Christ...

And sometimes when a friend **can't do that...**

Jesus Himself does it in His word!

And that's what we see happening in verse 14!

Standing

After Mary's despair is made known to the angels – and the angels **cannot get through** to her – Jesus Himself addresses her heart!

And so Mary turns around in verse 14 to see Jesus **standing** at the tomb!

And I love the fact that Jesus is standing!

He's **NOT** limping – He's **NOT** hobbling – He's **NOT** leaning against the wall – or cringing in pain!

He's standing in victory over the grave!

The Lamb of God has conquered the grave!

The tomb that had **once held Him down** is now no more!

It reminds me of that scene in Revelation 5 where the Lamb of God is **standing in triumph** before the throne of God!

And all of heaven's creatures are praising Him in triumphant glory as the Lamb who was slain **now stands** and conquers!

Getting the Heart

And then in verse 15 we have the **very first words** of Jesus ever recorded **after the resurrection** – and He says to Mary 2 things:

Why are you crying? Who are you seeking?

And this is **just like Jesus** to ask – isn't it?

It seems so **cold**, so **calloused**, so **blunt**, so **direct**!

But like the woman of the well in John chapter 4:

Go get your husband...

And like the man of Bethesda in John 5:

Do you want to get well?

Jesus knows the answer to His question!

He knows what she wants!

He knows who she's seeking!

And so **often in the Scriptures** God will ask us **direct** and **immediate** questions that He's **NOT so much** looking for an **answer** – but He's wanting to teach us a lesson!

JOB

It's the **same lesson** Job learnt in Job chapter 38 – when God comes to Job and says:

Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Where were you when the morning stars sang together?

Tell me Job where were you when I clothed the outer garments of the galaxies!

Or walked in the darkness of the deep?

Have you entered into the recesses of space?

Or seen the expanse of the universe?

Do you know when the mountain goats give birth?

Or when the deer is in labour?!?!?

Will the one who contends with the Almighty seek to correct Him?

Jesus is asking these questions of Mary – **NOT** because He's seeking an answer but because:

He's dealing with the **hardness of** her heart!

He's wanting to cut through the pain – and grief to deal with the **problem of her unbelief!**

And **He does that** by asking 2 penetrating questions that seek to **transform her thinking:**

And this is **the power of questions** in counselling!

And this is the power of asking questions when someone is in grief!

Why are you crying? Who are you seeking?

Not WHY but WHO!

Now notice that Jesus is NOT just asking the **same question** of the angels back in verse 13 – but He **follows it up** with a secondary question – knowing that it's that **second question** that gets to **the heart of her weeping!**

Because if the first question is the **why** – the second question is the **who**!

Who are you seeking Mary!

Who are you looking for!

Think about **who it is** that you're seeking Mary – you're seeking for Jesus:

The one who cast 7 demons from your soul!

The one who set His love upon you!

You're Looking for Jesus the one who healed the lame – and fed the hungry!

The one who walked on water!

Who opened blind eyes!

And healed deaf ears!

The one who opened the Scriptures!

Who silenced the Pharisees!

And raised up the dead!

That's the one you're looking for!

And you're looking for Him here – in the **tombs of the dead!?!?**

Because **if that's who** you're looking for then **why are you still weeping!?!?**

If you know the one your heart is so devoted to – then why do you seek the **living** amongst the **dead!**

Do you see what He's doing?!?!?

He's drawing out her heart by showing her – her unbelief?

Application #2

It's the **same question** Jesus is **asking us** here this morning!

Dear brother/dear sister why are you still weeping over your singleness – don't you know the one who sits on the throne of heaven and calls you to Himself?

Dear Mother/dear Father why are you **still fretting** over that wayward child – don't you know the one who calls prodigals home to Himself?

Dear Christian why are you still fearful over losing your earthly job – don't you know the one who clothes the lilies of the field?

Who feeds the birds of heaven?

Blinding us

Now don't get me wrong – all of these things are worth spending our time in praying for – in weeping for – in pleading for – but if these things are **blinding us** to the truth of **His resurrection glory**:

Like they were for Mary!

Then these are the exact questions we need to be asking:

Why are you weeping – who are you seeking?

But Mary doesn't get it!

She answers with the same assumption she gives to the angels:

He's dead **X3**

Rabboni

She is **so distraught** – she is **so distressed** – she is **so troubled** in soul that she's **NOT** even **buying into** the questions Jesus is asking...

And so He turns to her in verse 16 and simply says:

Mary!

One word!

One word that transforms her life!

MARY!

We **don't know** if it was **the inflection** of His voice – we **don't know** if it was **the tone** – we **don't know** if this was how He **always referred** to her personally – but we **do know** John chapter 10:

My sheep hear my voice and they follow me...

The Good Shepherd calls His sheep by name and **with one word** Jesus transforms her entire life!

He **calls her out** by her name!

One pastor says:

*I wonder if in the halls of heaven, when the Lord grants the **miracle of salvation**... I wonder if He does that by **simply calling our names**...*

Murray – Michelle – Brian – Anthony – Tabitha – Dorothy – Han!

I wonder if that's how He does it!

I wonder if you've been called **by name** this morning?!?!

I wonder if you've heard the **sweet milky voice** of the Shepherd Himself calling you of your sin and into the arms of His love!

POINT 2

Mary did – and all of a sudden the ***grief stricken Mary*** of the tombs – now becomes the ***God-sent messenger*** to the Apostles in verses 17 & 18...

She turns around in verse 16 and she says:

Rabboni! —which means Teacher...

In fact it means more than that – it actually means:

My teacher!

It's a personal embrace – a personal faith!

And she runs to Jesus and clings to Him in **all the love** that her heart can afford!

It is one of the great signs of a genuine born-again believer:

A deep love for Jesus is at the centre of the Christian faith!

A true love for Jesus always results in a genuine affection for Jesus!

Do not cling

But then in verse 17 this **really strange** interaction occurs between Mary & Jesus – and it throws us off guard if we're **NOT familiar** with the Gospel of John...

So In verse 17 Jesus says to Mary:

*Do not cling to me, **since** 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 to your God...*

Now there are a dozen interpretations of this – this has **puzzled** many commentators – **confused** many pastors – **stumped** theologians – D.A Carson says:

This passage belongs to a handful of some of the most difficult passages in all of the New Testament Scriptures...

So that was helpful...

Contrast

An older interpretation of this says that:

Jesus was drawing a contrast...

When He says:

I go to my Father and your Father...to my God and your God...

He was saying:

I know my father in a **different way** that is different to **how you know** my Father...

You know Him by **adoption** – **you** know Him by **inclusion** – **you** know Him by **faith**!

I know Him by **nature** – **I** know Him from **sight** – I've seen Him from eternity – I know Him because I **share in** His very essence!

I am the **monogenes** Son of God – you are an **adopted** Son of God!

And therefore Jesus was drawing a contrast!

John chapter 1:

For those who received Him He then the right to become sons of God!

Jesus **doesn't become** the Son of God – He is the Son of God!

So that's **one view** – Jesus was **drawing a contrast**!

Adoption

But another view – and a **more recent** view (one that Sinclair Ferguson would adopt) – is to say that:

Jesus **wasn't drawing** a contrast – but He's actually **doing the opposite!**

He's actually **closing the gap** between God and man!

Jesus was actually showing us the privilege of adoption in Christ – and saying:

*That the one to whom I relate to as Father is **exactly the same as** the one to whom you relate to as Father!*

I call Him Abba as you call Him abba in my human nature – I relate to Him as a Son in my human nature!

Kind of like a Romans 8 point of view:

We have received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry out abba father!

And so Jesus was showing **the closeness** we have in Christ to God the Father!

Work to do

And then there is a **third view** that says that we really **shouldn't be reading into** His words too much – or trying to over-spiritualise the meaning – because Jesus was simply highlighting the **nature of His mission** after ascension!

And so after His resurrection – Jesus was saying:

*Do NOT cling to me Mary for there is still **much more work** to be done!*

Nations need discipling – kingdoms need building – churches need planting – women need training – men need strengthening – strongholds need destroying – and so on!

Which is why He says to her:

*Do not cling to me – for I have **not yet ascended** to the Father, but go to my brothers and tell them **I am ascending to my father...***

There's an **anticipation** of the **power that goes forth** after He ascends!

Power that comes to **accomplish these tasks!**

Cling

And so it seems that Mary is clinging to Jesus in anticipation that:

She doesn't want to lose Him again

In fact the word cling there seems to reinforce that view – it means:

To grasp – or to hold onto – to grab with a tight grip!

Mary thought He was dead – she thought He was **gone forever!**

And now that He's back she's NOT going to **lose Him again!**

And so Jesus says:

*Do NOT cling to me because I **have NOT yet** ascended!*

I am ascending but I'm still going to be here **for a little bit longer!**

Holy Spirit

But **think also** that throughout His ministry and specifically in **John's Gospel** Jesus said multiple times:

I am going to the Father... I am going away... I go to be with God... do not let your hearts be troubled I go to prepare a place for you... it's better that I go... it's better I ascend... and when I ascend I will send my spirit... when I ascend I will give my presence...

So He's said this **multiple times** – in **multiple ways** – on **multiple occasions** – and every time He says this He connects it to the Holy Spirit – that:

When I go to God I will send the Helper!

When I ascend to God I will give my Spirit!

And He will guide – He will comfort – He will convict!

He will be **more real** to you than breathing!

Real Presence

And so Jesus was also communicating to Mary:

*As hard as it is Mary, do NOT cling to me now but go to my brothers and tell them I am ascending – and when I ascend I will be **near to you** in a **far greater way** that you could ever imagine!*

Remember what He said in John 16:

*It is better that I go, for if I don't go the Helper will **not come** to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you.*

It is better for Jesus to go so that He can be more real to us!

One pastor says:

*Christians today living on the other side of Christ's ascension and the coming of the Spirit enjoy a **higher form** of communion with Christ than **even the disciples** did who knew Him in the flesh!*

Because we have Christ dwelling in us, through the Spirit, in a **greater way**, by faith!

And that's why He says:

Do NOT cling to me...

Let me ascend **so that** you will have my presence in a **far greater way**!

Sent

And then He sends her out – verse 18:

Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them what He had said to her.

She goes to the disciples and says:

I have seen the Lord and He is ascending to the Father!

That was her message!

I have seen the Lord and He is ascending on high!

Mary becomes **as it were** the **very first missionary** of the Church to the disciples!

One pastor says:

She becomes the apostle to the Apostles!

She becomes the very first recipient of:

Resurrection Joy!

Go Therefore

And the news that Mary brought to the disciples that day – it really is:

Good News of Great Joy

More than the simply **seeing** the risen Lord Jesus Christ – she **proclaimed** the risen Lord Jesus Christ!

And the message that she proclaimed is the message that we have today!

The **same message** that Mary brought to the Apostles in Jerusalem – is the **same message** that the church brings **to the world** today!

As one pastor says:

Go forth and proclaim the power of the Gospel to every creature in every nation!

Preach the gospel to everybody in the world even though you only made it to the 8th grade!

Explain the colours of a rainbow to a group of blind people so that **they may know** the beauty of God in the world of colours!

Go out into all the cemeteries and preach to all the headstones walking in cavil avenue and queen street mall, Brisbane city and beyond!

Go into a every community of **deaf people** and belt out all the hymns and songs at the top of your lungs!

Go out into to all of the temples, and the buildings, and the **cults** and tell them to repent and come to the God of Scripture who declares His glory with **no other god!**

Go before Kings – Queens – Governors – and Princes and tell them that **unless they surrender** their lives to the Lord Jesus, then they do not have a hope of happiness in this life or the next!

Walk out before all the **principalities** and **powers** of this world, with their **armies** – and their **legions** – their **philosophers** – their **poets** – their **prophets** – their **priests** – professors – university lecturers – their citadels of power, and every vestige of worldly tradition!

And tell them that you are going to pull down **all of their strongholds**, their philosophies and their vain thoughts of life!

Tell them that you are going to destroy every high and lofty thought that exalts itself against the name and excellency of the Lord Jesus Christ...

And when they laugh at you!

As did **Goliath did** when he saw David... show them the weapons that you have... you have the Gospel in your heart, you have the Word of God as your sword, and you have Christ as the solid rock on which you stand!

You have some water for baptism, and you have some bread, and some wine for communion!

These are the weapons that God has given to the church!

This is the weakness that He has given to shame the strong!

And this weakness, is **mightier** than giants and **stronger** than any earthly principality or power – because:

This is the gospel!

This is the power that **changes hearts** and transforms nations!

The good news that Christ has come in the forth in the flesh in order that He may live the perfect life, and when dying on the cross, took the sin and rebellion that we should have and has laid it on Himself and rose from the dead!

The wrath of God that was hurdling toward us, Christ stepped in to take the blow!

And now we live in the power of His resurrection – the power of His resurrection joy!

And this treasure is **the greatest joy!** Ever to be known by the heart of man!

This is resurrection joy and it compels us to go and proclaim the message of God:

The resurrection of Jesus transforms our darkest sorrows into deepest joys by reminding us that we have a glorious message of resurrection joy to proclaim!

John 20:11-18

Discussion Questions

[Read John 20:11-18].

Main Point: *The resurrection of Jesus transforms our darkest sorrows into deepest joys by reminding us that we have a glorious resurrection message to proclaim.*

Q1. Why is the resurrection foundational to the Christian faith? – How does it validate Jesus' identity and mission? (**Refer to 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 and Romans 10:9-10**).

Q2. Reflect on Mary's grief as she stands outside the tomb weeping. – Discuss how grief can often blind us to the truth of God's character and or His word. – How do the angels in the tomb seek to overcome her blindness? – Does this give any weight toward a model for helping those in grief? (**i.e. is it better sometimes to simply ask questions rather than give pithy platitudes?**).

Q3. How does Jesus' personal call to Mary model His relationship with each believer? – Share a time when you've experienced God's personal call or reassurance during a difficult season. – What things were you reminded of? What did God teach you about Himself & yourself?

Q4. What does the garden setting suggest about the new creation and redemption brought about by Christ? – How does Jesus' resurrection overturn the curse of the first Garden? [**See Genesis 3**].

Q5. What barriers prevent us from sharing our faith, and how can the joy of the resurrection overcome that?

Q6. What does the empty tomb reveal about Jesus' authority over life and death and how does this reality strengthen us in trials?

Q7. Discuss any other thoughts you have on this passage.