

John Ch 20:1-18

“A Risen Savior”

In Leviticus Ch 16 we read of an interesting ritual that would take place one day a year by the High Priest on Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement.) He would take off his high priestly garments and exchange them for simple garments of linen. and He would take the blood of the sacrifice and enter in beyond the holy place in the temple, through the veil, and into the Holy of Holies. Where the tangible, visible Shekinah glory of God was abiding, because this day was a day like no other. It wasn't a day where the priest was simply seeking to make atonement for himself, or for a certain individual, but this is the day that he stood in the gap on behalf of all of the people, for every tribe in the nation of Israel. He would take the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkle it there upon the lid of the Ark of the Covenant, otherwise known as the Mercy Seat where God had said that it is there that I will meet with you, from above the seat of mercy, where the blood has been presented, the sacrifice accepted on your behalf.

You remember the details of that box, 2'x3', overlaid with gold, and the lid made of pure gold with a cherub at either end, their wings outstretched making like a covering over the Mercy Seat. and So it was that when the high priest entered into the Holy of Holies, and presented the blood of the sacrifice that the people would wait outside the temple with great anticipation. Because if there was sin in the life of the priest, or if for any reason that sacrifice was unacceptable, the high priest would never come out, he would be struck dead right there in the presence of God. and The people would have to drag him out by the rope that they'd tied around his ankle before he went in, the sacrifice had been rejected, the people's sin not put away, and they'd have to wait another year before the next high priest could give it another shot. But if that high priest emerged from the Holy of Holies, there would be a great celebration, the people would shout and rejoice, the sacrifice took, God had forgiven their sin, they were clean for another year.

Well, as you recall from John Ch 19 we seen Jesus, our great High Priest in the light of Is 53, beaten, bruised, and buried, the sacrificial Lamb of God. But you recall there in vs 23 that the soldiers took from Him his seamless tunic, that garment that was reminiscent of the High priestly robe that was seamless as well, that garment was laid aside. and In vs 40 we see where He was bound in linen, His blood had been poured out, the sacrifice had been made, our Great High Priest Jesus Christ wrapped in linen and placed in the tomb. But the question remains, did the sacrifice take; did it work? Did God receive the blood of His Sacrifice, was He with out sin, would He emerge to proclaim forgiveness, not to simply the tribes of Israel, but to every tribe and tongue and nation, to all who would believe *in* Him, and call *upon* Him? Not a once a year covering of sin, but a once for all remission of sin, would He come out of that tomb, did God accept the sacrifice, or do we remain unforgiven, in bondage to sin? Well, it's kinda hard to set this up in a suspenseful way because you know how it ends, but you get the idea, this is where we're at, it's been 3 days since vs 42 of John 19.

I wish I could tell you that the disciples were filled with uncertainty as to how this thing was going to play out, gripped by *suspense*. But instead they're gripped by *sorrow*, they believe they know exactly how it's going to play out, Jesus is dead, they're probably going to be before it's all over and that's the end of the story. But we read in vs 1 of Ch 20.

Vs1

Mary of Magdala, you've got to love Mary. The sun's not even up yet on this Sunday morning and she's already up and out, going to minister to her Lord's body. Where's the men, where are His devoted disciples? They're tucked away in hiding because they fear the religious leaders, Jesus had said, "If they persecute Me, they're going to persecute you." The chief priests had asked Pilate to set a Roman guard over the tomb of Jesus because Jesus had said that in 3 days He'd rise again. and They wanted to make sure that His disciples didn't come anywhere near that tomb on the 3rd day lest they take the body and begin some kind of conspiracy, some deceitful plot to further the claims of Jesus. and So they knew that coming near that tomb was pretty much the same thing as signing their own death warrant.

But here's Mary, she didn't care about any of that, she was at the cross as Jesus was dying, and she's going to be there the 1st opportunity she has to finish the burial rituals. Because Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea had to prepare the body quickly because of the ceremonial Sabbath coming with the setting of the sun, so they didn't complete the process. But Mary is going to do just that with certain other women (according to the other accounts), but apparently she is sort of the one leading the procession. The largest concern on her mind right now is, "How are we going to get that stone rolled back? Maybe the soldiers will let us in." She just had a deep devotion, and dedication to Jesus Christ We don't know a whole lot about her background, but we do know that at one time Jesus cast 7 demons out of her and set her free from the demonic bondage she'd been enslaved to for no telling how long.

You remember when Jesus was speaking to Simon the Pharisee who was rebuking Him under his breath regarding a certain manner of woman that Jesus was allowing to wash His feet with her tears and anoint His head with fragrant oil. and He said, Simon, I have something to say to you. *“There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?”* Simon answered and said, *‘I suppose the one whom he forgave more.’* And He said to him, *‘You have rightly judged.’* Luke 7:41-43 and He went on to say, “You see this woman? I entered your house and you gave Me no water to wash My feet, she hasn't stopped washing My feet with her tears. You gave me no kiss, she hasn't stopped kissing My feet since I came it, you gave Me no oil to anoint My head, she anointed My head *and* My feet with fragrant oil.” and He said, “You know why she loves so much? Because she's been forgiven much, and the one who's forgiven much, loves much, but the one who's forgiven little, loves little.”

It's not that some are *less sinful*, it's that others are *more aware*, and cognizant of their sin, they know how much Jesus has forgiven them. and Therefore their love for Jesus is greater,

Mary Magdalene was that type of person, she'd been forgiven much, and she knew it, and her life demonstrated that in her dedication, and devotion to Jesus. and The same is true for you, and it's true for me, the more consciously aware we are of the amount of sin debt that we've been forgiven, the more that'll be reflected in our lives by our dedication, and devotion to Jesus. If you don't think you've been forgiven much; that you're basically a good person, then you really don't think you owe too much, consequently you won't be too dedicated to Jesus. (Thankful for salvation and all,) but beyond that, don't look to me for overly committed service, or being available in a way that's inconvenient.

Mary got up early in the morning, before the sun was even up, because she loved Jesus, and wanted to minister to Him. How's your morning devotions coming along? To me this is convicting stuff, and I'm not saying that the morning is more spiritual than any other time of the day, but it's a 1st fruits kind of a thing. The 1st fruits of our day need to belong to Jesus. Prov 8:17 says, "*I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.*" KJV

Or another version says those who seek me *diligently*. Both apply to Mary, she was the 1st to *seek* Jesus, and we'll find that she'll be the 1st to *see* Jesus. But as for now, it's early Sunday morning she looks at the tomb as it's silhouette is coming into focus there in the dark, and she doesn't see any soldiers, only the stone rolled away. So she immediately assumes that the body has been transported, and she freaks out. Apparently she doesn't take the time to investigate she just runs immediately Peter and John.

Vs2

The "we" would be indicative of the other women who were with her. Now last we seen of Peter he was running off, weeping bitterly because he'd denied the Lord. and You recall that John was the one who gained him access to the courtyard, so no doubt John felt a little bit responsible for the whole deal and so here we find him reaching out, and ministering to Peter. The bible says, "*Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*" Gal 6:1-2 and That's what John is doing, just bearing Peter's burden with him, reaching out to him in a restorative kind of way, just hanging *with* him, being available *to* him.

But we notice there's no bell ringing in anyone's mind regarding the resurrection at all. Peter, or John didn't say, "Wait a minute, it's been 3 days, His body hasn't been *relocated*, its been resurrected, Jesus is alive." Even though Jesus had told them over and over again that He had to suffer at the hands of the chief priests, be crucified, and on the 3rd day rise again. It just never registered with them that He was speaking literally.

They were as Jesus told the 2 disciples on the Emmaus Rd, slow of heart to believe in *all* that the prophets had spoken. They were quick to grab on to the scripture's the dealt with the

rule and reign of the Messiah, but they just couldn't get a grip on those passages that dealt with His suffering, His affliction, His stripes, His being # with transgressors, having His grave made with the wicked, but with the rich at His death.

This is an error for you and me to avoid, (when you study the scriptures you want to look for certain things, one of which is errors to avoid, and this is one of them) being slow of heart to believe in *all* that the Word of God says. There are certain areas we gravitate towards, God meeting our needs, being blessed, the promise of eternal life. But then when chaos breaks loose in our life we can't figure it out, but the bible is clear regarding tribulation, suffering according to the will of God, persecution, spiritual warfare, and hardship in this world. But we want to take in the whole counsel of the Word of God that we might grow thereby. Not focus on one thing to the neglect of the other, lest we become unbalanced in our biblical worldview. They weren't connecting the scriptural dots, we want to be careful to know the word of God, and rightly divide it, lest we be deceived or caught off guard in a given situation. They were caught off guard, it'll all begin to register soon enough, but as for now they're confused.

Vs3-4

John was (traditionally speaking) the youngest of the 12, and Peter was older and traditionally speaking much bigger. So John shot out and beat him to the tomb. There are some who spiritualize this in saying that since Peter was out of fellowship with the Lord having denied Him and all, that the idea here is that he was hindered in the race he was running. You remember that Paul said, "*Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.*" 1 Cor 9:24 and Of course he's speaking about our course in life, and giving it everything we have to ensure that we've lived this life above reproach, totally sold out to Jesus with nothing hindering whatever He wants to do in our lives. That we might hear, "Well done good and faithful servant."

The application that's drawn from this is that Peter's race is being weighted down by peripheral debris in his life when the author of Hebrews says, "*...since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,*" Heb 12:1-2

I wouldn't in anyway argue the truism therein, that sin, and other peripheral issues in life that have nothing to do *with* Christ only weight us down in our pursuit *of* Christ. But I'm not of the persuasion that John is seeking to implicate that here in anyway, he's just stating a fact. They both ran, and even though John *got there* 1st, it was Peter who *went in* 1st, notice.

Vs5-8

Now as you may or may not know the key to understanding this portion of the text is found in that 3 lettered little word, “saw.” John got there 1st and he leaned over to look in the tomb and he saw the clothes lying there. That particular word, “saw” is the Greek word “Blepo” which simply means to look at something, or to perceive it. It’s sort of how I’m looking at you, and you’re looking at me, obviously with John there was a bit more emotion going on, but you get the idea. But odds are at this point he thought the body was still there because he saw the linen cloths lying there, he glances in and sees the cloths there. and The idea here is that he saw them as they were originally, sort of like a chrysalis (a cocoon).

They hadn’t been ransacked or anything, they were still in the shape of a body. The aloe and myrrh would’ve made a glue like substance that held its shape. So it looks to him perhaps like the body is still there, and he’s thinking, “Mary just didn’t look in.” But then Peter comes huffin and puffin in behind him but he doesn’t slow down when he hits the opening, he just flies right on in. and He to saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around Jesus’ head not lying with the linen cloths, but folded neatly in a place by itself. A few clues of orderliness, not random chaos like grave robbers, or spices everywhere and shreds of linen cloth where the body had been ripped out. It just looked like the body had “evaporated” for lack of a better word. It just wasn’t in the wrappings.

This word “saw” is the word, “Theoreo” from which we’d get a word like “Theatre” it means he was checking it out attentively, his hard drive was working, he was trying to put things together. “What’s going on, there’s an empty linen wrap here, the cloth over His face is obviously folded purposefully and laid somewhere else…” But its still not registering, so he probably waved John in, or John just came in after he saw the stunned look on Peter’s face. and Vs 8, John “saw,” which is the word “eido” which means to perceive with understanding, like when someone is seeking to explain something to you and you say, “I see” and what you mean is the lights have come on and you understand what they’re saying, you get it. It speaks of a fullness of knowledge, so that John is seeing what Peter’s seeing, but it clicks in him. It’s all racing in his mind, empty grave clothes, open tomb, the handkerchief folded over here, how did…He’s risen! and John believed, he put it all together.

Vs9

Underline that section, “He must rise again” it’s a must, our eternal hope lies in the reality of the resurrection, no resurrection, no salvation, no propitiation, no sanctification, we’re eternally lost. Look at 1st Cor 15 (Vs12-17) look at the 1st phrase of vs 20.

Jesus is alive, Rev 1:18, *“I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen.”* It took, the sacrifice was accepted, Jesus came out of that tomb providing forgiveness to all who believe *in* Him and call *upon* Him. and Now He ever lives to make intercession for you and for me as our faithful high priest. Had Jesus been in that tomb on day 4 we’d all be condemned in our sin, separated perpetually/eternally from God. But our High Priest came out alive, an acceptable sacrifice for you and me, our atonement before God is found in Him, He is our Mercy Seat, it’s through His blood that God will meet with you, and with me showering us with grace and mercy, forgiveness and restoration.

He must rise again, the scriptures had foretold it, Ps 16:10 *“For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.”* and As you go through the book of Acts you see various other Ps that the apostles would reach back into and glean the resurrection. In 1st Cor 15 Paul saw a picture of the Resurrection in the feast of 1st fruits and how that Christ became the 1st fruits of those who have died as believers in regards to the resurrection. Jesus Himself utilized the account of Jonah to validate His resurrection, and the idea here is that as sure as the Word of God is, so to the resurrection of Jesus Christ The scripture had foretold it, therefore it *must* happen, God is not a man that He should lie, if it comes forth from His mouth, it’s absolute, it’s a guarantee. These guys hadn’t put those things together yet, but with John it’s all beginning to compute, and he’s blown away, apparently speechless because he and Peter leave and Mary’s still standing there in dismay.

Vs10-12

Now again, what’s this reminiscent of? Blood stained slab with an angel at either end... It’s kinda picturesque of the Mercy Seat isn’t it? But I thought that the Holy of Holies was reserved for the high priest only, and at that once a year. Not anymore, Jesus has created access for all who believe in Him into the very throne room of God Himself. The bible says, *“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”* Heb 4:16 Jesus has created the avenue through which we can obtain mercy, find grace to help us in our time of need, the shedding of His blood makes for the remission of our sin, and the cleansing of our soul before God.

Vs13

This is something else we need to see, because she didn’t know the scripture, she didn’t understand, and because she didn’t understand she was weeping when she could’ve been rejoicing. As believers we don’t sorrow as those who have no hope, we rejoice that those who we love in Christ we’ll be reunited with once again. But she’s still not putting it together, she’s so beside herself with sorrow that the presence of these angels don’t even phase her, she just turns around prepared to walk off.

Vs14-15

He asks her the same thing, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking? Good question, whom are you seeking, why are you here, what are you looking for, if it's Jesus He'll reveal Himself to you, just as sure as He did for her that day. Why didn't she recognize Him? Perhaps her eyes were filled with tears, we know she wasn't looking for Him to be alive. Perhaps He'd blinded her to who He was like with the disciples on the way to Emmaus, He was searching her heart, seeking to draw it to the surface for her, why are you weeping, whom do you seek? and When the desire of her heart is brought to the surface, she wants to be *with* Jesus, to minister *to* Jesus, just to be where He is, He reveals Himself to her in a personal way. and I suggest the same thing holds true for you, and true for me. That when all we want is to be with Jesus, to minister to Jesus, and just be where He is, He honors that, and will open our eyes and reveal Himself to us in intimate and personal ways, notice.

Vs16

Of course we can't let this vs go with out drawing attention to John Ch 10, Jesus is the Good Shepherd, He calls His sheep by name, and His sheep hear and recognize His voice, and He gives them eternal life. She just wanted to see Jesus so bad, and she's the 1st one that does. How badly do you just want to see/understand Jesus, to know His heart, and seek Him out. Jesus rewarded her dedication and devotion to Him, by unveiling Himself to her.

Vs17-18

So the commission to speak of His resurrection was given 1st to a woman. Why? Because Jesus knew that if He told something to a woman, man it would get around quick... (Just kidding).

Now here in vs 17 Jesus wasn't saying He was untouchable, she had a hold on Him that wasn't about to turn loose. and I pray you have that same tenacity when it comes to your commitment to hold on to Jesus. But Jesus was saying that the dynamic of their relationship was changing. It wasn't about His physical, tangible/touchable presence. He had a different platform by which He would be with them, in the person of the Holy Spirit, which they'll be learning here directly.

So He's speaking of a new relationship, that she has new relatives, he called the disciples "friends" before, now He calls them brethren. We're a family in Christ, but He's careful to make the distinction between His relationship to the Father, and our own. He's not our Father, in the same manner that He's Jesus' Father, we're adopted. He's not our God in the sense that He's Jesus' God, Jesus is God, we're not. So there's a new *relationship*, she's got new *relatives*, and also a new *responsibility*. To testify of a risen Savior, and even as she was commissioned to testify of the reality of a risen Savior, even so, all that we've seen *in* the Lord, all that we've heard *from* the Lord we're to testify of today. Jesus is alive, and forgiveness flows forth from Him to all who'll but place their trust, and their faith in Him.

If you're here, and you've never taken the opportunity to place your faith in Jesus Christ Then I want to encourage you to do so today. The sacrifice took, the offering was accepted, Jesus emerged from the Holy of Holies alive forevermore. and Eternal life can be yours, His blood is sufficient to wash away your every sin and give you new life, but only if you trust Him for it. If God is dealing *with* you, calling out *to* you, today is the day of salvation, just let Jesus in.