

“Seek the Risen Lord”

Message by DD Adams / Drama for Scripture
Kemptown Providence U.M. Church
Easter Sunrise Worship 6:30 and 9:30am
April 1, 2018

The reading comes from John’s gospel, chapter 20, verses 1 through 18.

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.”

Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself.

Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes. But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw

two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet.

They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” When she had said this, when she turned around ... she saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her...

“Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” Jesus said to her ... “Mary!”

She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended... But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my God and your God.’” Mary went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord!”

This is God’s word for God’s people. Please pray with me. Lord we pray your blessing on the hearing, reading and understanding of your word. Move within each heart and mind today. Let each be open to a new way of thinking and living as your presence is received and embraced. Amen.

The unimaginable had happened—Jesus died. Some disciples had scattered, some had kept awake, maybe watching or praying, but Jesus died. And as he died, all who loved him were devastated. They couldn’t imagine life without him. He

had called them from their ordinary lives into an extraordinary way of seeing and living God's love and grace. Jesus had met them in their brokenness. The loss of Jesus walking alongside them was shattering; it wasn't what they had hoped for or what they expected.

Mary Magdalene came to the tomb while it was still dark that Easter morning. She saw—the stone had been rolled away! She ran to tell Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and they ran back to the tomb. Mary was right! Jesus' body was gone! The men went home, but Mary lingered outside the tomb and wept.

As Mary wept, she looked in the tomb and saw two angels in white where Jesus' body had been. One at the head and one at his feet. The angels asked Mary, "Woman, why are you weeping?" Mary said, "Because they've taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they've laid him."

As Mary said this, she turned around, and a man, maybe a gardener said, "Woman, why *are* you weeping? Whom do you seek?" She replied again wanting to know where Jesus' body had been taken. The man Mary supposed to be the gardener said, "Mary!" It was then Mary's eyes were opened. She recognized the man; it was Jesus! It was the one she loved and had changed her life forever

Last Sunday we looked closely at Jesus' humanity as he prayed in the garden prior to his arrest. We saw Jesus protest to his disciples. He wanted them to pray

with him, but they were sleeping. We saw *how* Jesus prayed, telling his Father how he felt, allowing all his emotion and humanity to pour out. He was looking for another way. Jesus didn't want to see his friends' scatter out of fear, to reject and deny him, and then to endure the terrible beating and crucifixion.

In the garden we saw Jesus go back three times to pray with his Father. Finally, he was able to embrace the Father's will. He yielded and said, not my will but your will be done. In saying that, he was strengthened for the pain ahead and found the strength to move forward . . .

Fact is this, pain is a part of everyone's journey. We can ignore the pain of life and pretend it's not there. We can push past it and deny our deepest feelings of love. But, maybe it's the pain of life that grows and connects us closer to God when we include him.

Jesus cried and agonized in the garden, but he stayed connected to his Father. And Mary, she didn't leave the tomb. She lingered there, waiting and weeping. Both Mary and Jesus trusted their Father God. When we love deeply we let ourselves become susceptible to pain. It's the risk we take when we decide to love others and connect with them intimately. When we love and place our trust in someone all of us have been disappointed or hurt, but the good news is this!

There is strength and healing power in the resurrection. Jesus wept. Mary wept, but neither would deny their pain. They stayed connected to God and

acknowledged their humanness responding with tears. Let's not be afraid to acknowledge and embrace our grief and loss; this is our humanity pouring out.

Jesus empowers us with his strength and braces us up to move forward with the pain and suffering we have. Jesus knew the outcome of his fate. He believed his Father. He knew he would be resurrected! And Mary, she lingered and waited at the empty tomb, forgetting what Jesus had said, that he would be condemned to death, crucified, but rise again on the third day!

Let's remember, when Mary ran in darkness to find her Lord on Easter morning she soon greeted her Lord in the light of his promise to never leave her. Jesus was alive! And when Jesus died and was placed into the darkness of that tomb he arose through that darkness into the light of his Father's promises!

God said he would never leave us! And God has sent the Holy Spirit to lead, comfort, and guide us. Believe the promises of God! Know that God walks with you through that darkness, but then leads into the glorious light of his love and grace. Amen.