**The Risen Jesus and Mary Magdalene**

**The Word**

Read together John 20:1-18

**The Big Idea**

John focuses on the personal and intimate side of Easter, reminding us that we have a risen Savior who loves us and calls us by name.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. As you consider your experience of Easter over the years, what has Easter meant to you? Your answer may be practical or spiritual in nature; it may be positive, negative, or mixed.

2. Prior to Sunday’s message, what were your impressions of Mary Magdalene and your general assumptions about her history and personality?

3. As you consider the resurrection account through the eyes of Mary Magdalene, what detail or perspective hit you this year?

4. Take some time to read v. 17 together and discuss the implications of Jesus’ words for our lives today.

**Sermon Outline**

I. The personal nature of John’s gospel and resurrection account

A. Whereas the other three gospels focus more on Jesus’ ministry to the crowds, John narrows in on intimate encounters with individuals.

B. John’s Easter account reminds us of the intimate and personal realities of the resurrection: that the Risen Jesus is alive today and available to each one of us.

II. Mary Magdalene’s background

 A. Based on Scripture we actually know very little about her

 1. She was present at the crucifixion and resurrection

2. She was one of a group of women who followed Jesus and financially supported his ministry

 3. She had 7 demons cast out of her (Lk 8:1-3)

 B. Consider the impact Jesus had on her life

1. She knew deep demonic possession: a life of darkness, isolation, bondage, and emotional, psychological, and spiritual trauma

 2. Undoubtedly her community had tried everything to help her

3. Jesus stepped into her life with a love and power she had never known, spoke freedom, broke the darkness, and brought her into the light of life and health.

 C. Consider her experience of Holy Week

 1. The highpoint and excitement of Palm Sunday

 2. The utter despair of Good Friday

 a. She had deep grief and sadness

b. She may have also had fear that now that Jesus was gone, there was no one to keep back the dark forces in her life

III. Mary’s Encounter with the Risen Jesus

A. Mary at the empty tomb (v. 1-2)

1. Based on other gospel accounts and the “we” of v. 2, it seems that Mary was not actually alone at the tomb. John has simply chosen to narrow in on her experience.

2. The body being gone would mean either 1) grave robbers or 2) the authorities have taken the body to perform one final act of indignity

 B. Peter and John at the tomb (v. 3-10)

1. It is clear to John based on the folded clothes that this is not a case of grave robbery.

 2. John believes in that moment (v. 8)

C. Mary again at the tomb (v. 11-17)

1. Angels appear!

2. Jesus appears! First addresses her impersonally: “Woman”

3. Then he calls her by name: “Mary.”

a. His speaking her name makes all the difference.

b. That same voice that had spoken her name and called her out of darkness before was speaking her name again and calling her out of the darkness of grief into resurrection joy.

 D. This is John’s emphasis: We have a Personal Risen Savior who speaks our name

 1. Our risen savior knows us, sees us, intimately acquainted with us

2. During this series we have had members of our church share about their very personal experience of Jesus

3. Jesus himself says: “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd calls his own sheep by name and the sheep listen to his voice.” - Jn 10

4. Our experience of Easter must go from “woman” to “Mary.” It must go from an impersonal understanding of the resurrection to a personal encounter with the Risen Lord who calls us by name.

IV. Jesus’ words to Mary and his other disciples (v. 17)

 A. “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father.”

1. Surface meaning: “I haven’t left yet and will be around for a bit, so there will be more opportunities to hold me, but for now, go and share the good news with the others.”

2. Deeper meaning from John’s gospel perspective: Jesus is redefining the relationship. He will no longer be with them in tangible form to touch and hold, but he is going to the Father to send the Spirit by whom he will be with them in an even more intimate way.

a. John 14:18-26: “I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you . . . I will ask my father and he will send you the Spirit.”

b. Immediately upon seeing the disciples ,he breathes on them and says, “receive the Holy Spirit” (v. 22)

c. The Spirit would be the new way he would be with his disciples

B. “Tell my brothers ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

1. “Brothers” would convey grace and forgiveness to these men who had denied Jesus and abandoned him at his hour of need.

2. “My Father and Your Father”

a. Jesus’ relationship with his heavenly Father had always felt like sacred ground to them; a relationship of joy, intimacy, and delight that they admired but probably thought could never fully be their own.

b. Jesus is affirming that, through his death and resurrection, they now have access to that same kind of relationship with God.

c. Again, the Spirit would be the way they would experience that kind of affection and intimacy with the Father. “My father and I will come and make our home in you.”

 C. Consider John’s self-identification: “The disciple whom Jesus loved” (v. 2)

1. As he considers his life; his successes and failures; he finds his deepest self-understanding as the one whom Jesus loves

2. This is the personal meaning of Easter: we have a Risen Savior who loves us, speaks our name, and walks with us every day of our lives.