

# Why are you weeping?

John 20:11-18

So, here we are again . . . it was only a couple days ago we were here . . . but, in very different circumstances. Then it was Friday . . . then the altar was stripped bare . . . we were sombre . . . serious . . . I spoke of mourning not meaning . . . of heart before head. Then we sang 'O dearest Jesus' . . . then we left in silence.

That was Friday . . . but, this is Sunday! What a difference two days makes! And, I hope you've noticed the difference! I hope you've notice something's changed.

Today we shout with joy . . . today we celebrate. And, I hope everything we do this morning shouts out 'Something is different', 'Everything's changed', 'Nothing is the same anymore'. For that's what we are celebrating today when we shout, "He is risen!" Something incredible has happened and the world is not the same place. That something is the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ – our Lord, Jesus Christ.

'Death is conquered, we are free, Christ has won the victory'.

That's what's different. Our lives have been changed forever by Jesus' resurrection. We now live in post-resurrection time.

And, yet, you'll go home from this Easter service and argue with your partner . . . you'll yell at the kids who'll fight with each other and kick the cat. You'll discover that pain in the hip you had when you arrived is still there. You'll go home to the same empty, lonely house. Then on Tuesday morning it'll be back to work . . . the same old grind . . . the same old hassles. You'll turn on the TV and see the same bad news day after day . . . more war . . . more violence . . . more cost of living pressures.

Has anything really changed? Because it doesn't look like it, does it? And, if it doesn't look like it then it's tempting to live like Jesus is still in the grave . . . to live like nothing's changed . . . to live in pre-resurrection time . . . which means I need to make all the running . . . I need to climb the ladder of success . . . I need to make something of myself in order to 'make it'! Pre-resurrection time.

So, today we as we re-tell the Easter story we re-live Mary's story . . . actually not just today . . . but every day we live Mary's story.

It was early on Sunday morning – still dark – the resurrection has already taken place. Jesus is already alive. The tomb is already empty, but Mary doesn't know that. The way John tells it, there were no earthquakes, or lightning storms, or voices from heaven announcing the momentous event. We're not even told exactly when the resurrection happened. So, for Mary . . . in Mary's mind, it's still pre-resurrection time. This morning was just like the morning before – the grief is still strong – just another day to deal with her loss. But, as she comes to the tomb she gets a shock: the huge stone in front of the entrance has been moved.

"He's gone!" she thinks, "They've taken his body away". In pre-resurrection time that's the only explanation – the only logical explanation. Well, she knows what she sees. She knows her eyes aren't playing tricks on her. What else could have happened to it? Then, her worst fears are confirmed by Peter and the other disciple who check out the empty tomb and leave . . . leave Mary to her tears.

Even the sight of two angels sitting in the tomb where the body of Jesus once lay can't distract her from her logical explanation. The angels are puzzled – you can almost hear it in their voices – "Why are you weeping? Why are you weeping when you should be shouting for joy? Why are you weeping when this is the best day of your life . . . the best day of all time? Why are you acting like nothing's changed? Why are you still living

as if he was still dead? Weren't you listening to anything he said? Didn't you hear him say he would rise on the third day?"

But, mere angels can't distract Mary from her logical explanation.

Then she turns and sees Jesus himself, standing before her, but she doesn't recognise him – she thinks he's the gardener. And we might wonder: "How is that possible?" "How could she not recognise Jesus?" Well, she doesn't recognise him because she's still living in pre-resurrection time. Nothing's changed. She's still looking for a lifeless body and the body in front of her is full of life.

So, Jesus asks her the same puzzled question as the angels: "Why are you weeping?"

But then, Jesus calls her name . . . he calls her *by* name and . . . then . . . then her eyes are opened – her eyes are opened to the resurrection. Suddenly, she can see. Suddenly she understands. Suddenly she believes. Suddenly everything's changed. Suddenly, she's in post-resurrection time. Jesus is alive!

Isn't that our story too? We are like Mary. When we leave from here this morning we will go back into the same world we left when we walked in the door. It will look like nothing has changed. We will have to deal with the same challenges and frustrations we've always had to deal with. We will face the same battles with illness and temptation we've always faced. We will struggle with the same issues we've always struggled with. All our senses will tell us nothing is different. Our reason and intellect will tell us nothing is different. And yet, this morning we have already shouted: "He is Risen" The resurrection has happened. We don't live in pre-resurrection time, but in post-resurrection time. Things *have* changed . . . the world is different. The power of death has been conquered.

But, we will only see that with the eyes of faith . . . faith that doesn't come from within us . . . it's not ours to possess . . . faith that always comes as a gift . . . comes as Jesus calls us by name . . . just as he called Mary by name. But, how quickly we forget . . . how quickly we forget Jesus has called our names . . . as we see around us a mundane and ordinary world . . . how quickly we lapse back into pre-resurrection time. That's why Jesus doesn't just come to us once . . . he keeps coming to us . . . calling us by name . . . opening our eyes of faith . . . that's why we gather every Sunday . . . a celebration of Easter throughout the year . . . we come to hear the Risen Lord calling us again and again: "(N), your sins are forgiven, go in peace . . . (N), take and eat, this is my body . . . (N), the Lord bless you and keep you". Every Sunday we come and meet the Risen Lord, we hear him speak to us and we are given the faith we need to see ourselves in the resurrection life . . . we are given faith to live that resurrection life.

Without that faith nothing has changed, death still rules. Without that faith the body is still in the grave, or someone has taken it away and we don't know where they've put it. Without that faith there is no hope of life changing.

When Jesus called Mary's name she saw and believed . . . as Jesus calls us by name we believe and so we can see. See Jesus at work in the ordinary things of life . . . in the mundane actions . . . in the gardener . . . the beggar . . . the water of baptism . . . the bread and wine of Holy Communion. We 'see' Jesus at work, but, like Mary, we can't hang onto him . . . he's not ours to possess . . . to keep just for ourselves . . . in these post-resurrection times Jesus is there for everyone . . . everyone with the eyes of faith to see.

But, how will their eyes be open unless someone shows them Jesus . . . unless someone shares the story of the resurrection with them. But, who's going to do that? Could it be us? Will we tell them so they can see? So they can believe? So they can live? Will we tell them so those great Easter hymns would be real for them too?

Will we tell them so when we shout: 'He is risen!' they too will respond, "He is risen indeed!"

He is risen indeed.

Amen.

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