

## Every Day With Jesus Easter Devotions, Week 1

### Reading 1: Monday

John 20:1-2 <sup>1</sup>Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. <sup>2</sup>So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

NOW WHAT?

Over the past three days, Mary Magdalene's world had fallen apart. She had seen her Lord under arrest, tried, tortured and crucified. Now he was dead and buried.

It was now the first day of the week. She and some other women intended to improve on the hasty burial job Jesus' body had had on Friday evening. But when she approached the tomb, it was wide open. As she correctly concluded, Jesus' body was gone.

Now what?

Ever have a moment like that? One thing after another begins to fall apart in your world, and just when you think nothing else could happen to upset you, it does.

You and I have the luxury of knowing how everything was going to turn out for Mary. She didn't. All she felt in that moment was more confusion, more fear, more pain.

When it's your turn to have a moment like that, remember the One who has everything under control. The One who died and rose for you.

Think:

1. When is the last time I had a "Now What?" moment in my life?
2. How does Mary's difficult moment keep my difficult moments in perspective?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, in those moments when I feel only confusion and hurt, remind me that you are always in control, and that all will be well. Thank you for your forgiveness. Amen.

### Reading 2

John 20:3-9 <sup>3</sup>So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. <sup>4</sup>Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup>He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. <sup>6</sup>Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, <sup>7</sup>as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. <sup>8</sup>Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. <sup>9</sup>(They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)

TEMPORARY

If you were trying to steal a crucified corpse wrapped in linen – a corpse kept under guard by order of the governor of Judea – would you take the extra time to stay in that tomb, unwrap the corpse, then meticulously wind up the linens again and leave them lying neatly on the stone shelf? Isn't it obvious that anyone stealing a corpse would take it, linens and all, and get away as quickly as possible?

No doubt that is what went through John's mind as he looked at the empty shell of Jesus' linens in that tomb.

This was no grave robbery. Jesus had not been unwrapped from the linens. He had simply passed through them. Left them behind.

Jesus' need for the linens, the tomb, was temporary. Because of him, our use of a casket, urn, grave, burial clothes will be temporary too.

Think:

1. Why does the death of someone I love seem so permanent?
2. Because of Christ, the Christian's death is temporary. How does that help me through my grief?

Prayer: In you, my Savior, forgiveness is mine, and eternal life is mine. Help me remember that, because of you, death is temporary. Amen.

### Reading 3:

John 20:10-18 <sup>10</sup>Then the disciples went back to their homes, <sup>11</sup>but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb <sup>12</sup>and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. <sup>13</sup>They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." <sup>14</sup>At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup>"Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." <sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). <sup>17</sup>Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" <sup>18</sup>Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

THERE. ALIVE. WITH HER.

Mary Magdalene's fear and confusion continued. In her mind, her Lord's dead body was stolen; a final, cruel insult for a nightmare she still could not comprehend.

Then someone approached her. The gardener, she assumed. In her rattled state she even asked him about where the body might be.

Suddenly the dark cloud in her mind dissolved in one word. "Mary," the man said to her. "Mary."

Perhaps it was the sound of Jesus' voice. Perhaps it was the way Jesus said her name. Somehow, at the saying of her name, Mary knew.

Jesus was there. And he was alive. And he was with her. For the moment that's all she needed to absorb. That alone was enough for her to know that everything else would be all right.

Think:

1. At what times in my life do I feel the most anxious and rattled?
2. In what specific way can I stay focused on the reality of Jesus' presence in my life?

Prayer: In the troubles and confusions of my life, Lord Jesus, tell me again that you have paid for my sins. And tell me again that you are here, with me. Amen.

### Reading 4:

John 20:19-23 <sup>19</sup>On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" <sup>20</sup>After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

<sup>21</sup>Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." <sup>22</sup>And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup>If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

## MORE THAN A GREETING

There the disciples were. Afraid. Hiding behind locked doors. Fearing that soldiers or a mob might come for them at any minute.

And suddenly Jesus was among them. "Peace be with you!" he said. Those words were more than a greeting, however. He was delivering on a promise.

Since the fall into sin, there had been no peace between God and man. But now Jesus had come. He had paid the price for all sins of all people of all time. The wall of hostility between God and humanity was gone.

Through Jesus' work, peace is what the disciples now had. They didn't have to be afraid anymore. We don't either.

Think:

1. What are two worldly things I sometimes really wish I could have?
2. Would I trade my peace with God for them?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, through faith in your Son I am at peace. In him all is forgiven. In him there is nothing for me to fear. Give me your Spirit to help me remember this. Amen.

### Reading 5:

John 20:24-27 <sup>24</sup>Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

<sup>26</sup>A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" <sup>27</sup>Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

“SEE MY HANDS”

Thomas wasn't sure. Yes, all the other disciples were excited. Yes, they all agreed on what they had seen. They all told him that Jesus was alive and that they had all seen him.

But for Thomas, it was the arrest that was real. It was the trial. It was the scourge and the blood and the mockery and the nails. This talk of resurrection was just too much.

Then came Jesus. To Thomas he held out his hands. To Thomas he said, "See my hands." The proof was more than enough.

If you ever doubt Jesus' love for you, if you ever doubt his commitment, if you ever doubt his promises, he says to you, "See my hands."

The proof is more than enough for us too.

Think:

1. When have I doubted God's promises the most?
2. How do Jesus' pierced hands bring me back to the reality of God's commitment to me?

Prayer: In times of doubt, Lord Jesus, empower me by your Spirit to see your hands once again. Assure me of my full pardon through faith in you. Amen.

### Reading 6:

John 20:28-29 <sup>28</sup>Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>29</sup>Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

## HE WAS THINKING ABOUT US

The evidence could not have been more clear for Thomas. There Jesus was. Alive. There were his wounds. In response Thomas proclaimed who Jesus was: “My Lord and my God.”

Then Jesus immediately began to speak about others. He told Thomas, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

He was thinking about us.

The potent Gospel message of who Jesus is and what he has done – that message has invaded your heart and created the miracle of faith in him as your Savior. In him, the forgiveness he purchased at the cross is now your personal possession. Because of it, you know that all is well.

All of that Jesus was thinking about even then. And he was thinking about you.

Think:

1. At what times do I question if God ever thinks about me?
2. How does my outlook on my life change when I know Jesus is thinking about me?

Prayer: Dear Jesus, remind me daily that I am always on your mind and heart. Amen.

### **Reading 7:**

John 20:30-31 <sup>30</sup>Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. <sup>31</sup>But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

## WHY WE HAVE THIS BOOK

Yes or No?

We have the Bible so we have a record of how the universe came into being. We have the Bible so we have a history of the Children of Israel, from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob through King David and beyond. We have the Bible so we have an account of the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth.

Yes. No.

Don't misunderstand. Of course we have the Bible so that we know how the universe came into being and so we know what happened in Old Testament history and so we have an accurate account of what Jesus did. Of course we do.

But if we think this is a history book for history's sake, then we're missing the point.

The whole point of this book is to make the case to you that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. And that through faith in him you have forgiveness, salvation, life.

And because God is the Author of this book, the One making the case to you is God himself.

Therefore, read. Believe. And live.

Think:

1. Why do I not read my Bible at home as often as I could?
2. When I keep in mind why God wrote the Bible, how does that help me in my Bible reading?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you alone stand at the center of Scripture. When I meditate on your Word, help me to see you. Amen.