

Day Thirty-Two

Jesus: Real, Relevant, Raw and Radical!

What's in a Name?

Mark 16:9-11(NLT) After Jesus rose from the dead early on Sunday morning, the first person who saw him was **Mary Magdalene, the woman from whom he had cast out seven demons.** **10 She went to the disciples, who were grieving and weeping, and told them what had happened.** **11 But when she told them that Jesus was alive and she had seen him, they didn't believe her.**

John 20:1-30(NLT) Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. **2 She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, "They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"** **3 Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb.** **4 They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.** **5 He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn't go in.** **6 Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there,** **7 while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings.** **8 Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed—** **9 for until then they still hadn't understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead.** **10 Then they went home.**

John 20:11-18(NLT) Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in. **12 She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying.** **13 "Dear woman, why are you crying?" the angels asked her.** "Because they have taken away my Lord," she replied, "and I don't know where they have put him." **14 She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him.** **15 "Dear woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her.** "Who are you looking for?" **She thought he was the gardener. "Sir," she said, "if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him."** **16 "Mary!" Jesus said.** She turned to him and cried out, "Rabboni!" (which is Hebrew for "Teacher"). **17 "Don't cling to me," Jesus said, "for I haven't yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"** **18 Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she gave them his message.**

Jesus is alive! Jesus, the One who was severely scourged, beaten beyond recognition and hung on a Roman cross, is alive. His death was confirmed by a spear in His side. He was wrapped completely head and body, in seventy-five pounds of burial spices

and placed in a tomb. The tomb was then sealed with a large stone. He was dead. This was Friday, but by Sunday everything had changed. There were so many amazing, wonderful, puzzling and frightening things happening around the resurrection that only eternity will be able to help us to truly grasp the magnitude of the moment. We have the benefit of looking back, but the people who lived it did not. We have a tendency to use broad brush strokes to paint the picture, but Jesus is revealed in the details. We celebrate Easter, then just like Christmas ornaments on a tree, we pack it away waiting for the next one to arrive. Would you be patient with me as we continue to unpack some of the details? Maybe, just maybe, you might hear your name.

The disappointment of the disciples, and the raw sorrow and pain of those who followed Him, is evident. The hopelessness and feelings of utter despair are palpable. From reading the eyewitness accounts, they were not just at a loss, but they felt that they lost. How would you feel when everything you counted on comes to a crashing conclusion; when what you hoped for is, in your mind, finished beyond repair? You gather with your fellow followers of Jesus, and all you can do is stare at one another. You don't even have the emotional energy to discuss any of what has taken place. You don't have time to digest that one of you -- the guy that kept the books -- set all of this in motion. "Judas, how could you do this?" Do the others know about Peter's denial? How could they? They all scattered like rats from a sinking ship. Believe me, in their minds, that ship is sunk and lying at the bottom of the Sea of Galilee. Why would they discuss Peter's failure when they themselves did their best Usain Bolt impression?

So, they sit and wait. Waiting for what? The obvious; the other sandal to drop. "They got our Teacher, our Rabbi. We obviously are next." The religious leaders hated Jesus enough that they would make sure not to leave anyone out, anyone that could stir up more trouble. In the disciples' minds, they can hear the footsteps approaching. They are startled back to reality when there are footsteps, and to their surprise, it is Mary. Mary, one of the most common names of the time. It seems like there was an Oprah just handing out the name Mary. "You get a Mary, you get a Mary and you get a Mary. Everybody gets a Mary." To be able to distinguish between all the Marys, the New Testament writers used nicknames or other identifying facts about them. Mary, the mother of James and Joses. Mary, the wife of Clopas. Or even where they were from; such as, Mary Magdalene or Mary from Bethany.

Mary Magdalene has just been to the tomb where the stone has been rolled away. She ran as fast as she could and found Peter and John. She bursts through the door with these words: ***"They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"*** Notice, she doesn't claim a resurrection, she's worried about a theft. She knows it's not any of the disciples. They were all immobilized by fear and grief. Where's Jesus? When Peter and John hear the news, they are off and running. John outruns Peter and gets to the tomb first. He looks in, but

he doesn't go in. Peter, on the other hand, goes in. He notices the linen wrappings lying there with the head wrapping folded and put aside. John finally goes in and believes. Love always believes first. They both leave and go home.

Mary is crying outside of the tomb, and finally collects enough courage and decides to peek in. She sees what Peter and John either could not see or were not allowed to see; two angels, one at the feet and one at the head where Jesus laid. We know these were male angels. How do we know that? Because only a male will ask a woman the following question: **"Dear woman, why are you crying?"** She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. The same question the angels asked is being repeated. She thinks it's the gardener. **"Sir," she said, "if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him."** Can you hear the exasperation in her voice? Almost pleading, *"If you are the culprit, Mr. Gardener, I will not hold it against you."* With tears running down her cheeks, she says, *"Just please, please tell me where did you put my Jesus and I will go get Him myself."*

"You don't realize who He is to me. You don't realize the agony and torture I was in. Evil ravaged me, wrecked my world and left me a shell of myself. Then one day, Jesus walked into my life. I was bound, but He set me free. I had a hole in me so big that seven of the devil's cohorts were just too eager to fill. Then He spoke, and everything changed. I was rudderless, but found the Way. I was deceived, but found the Truth. I was dead, but found true Life. So, with all due respect 'Sir,' tell me where He is." She then turns to walk away. **Then He spoke her name! "Mary!"**

When Mary heard her name, she knew! It was like someone opened up the heavens and choirs of thousands of angels bellowed the Hallelujah Chorus. Suddenly, pure unfettered joy crushed down on her like a wave. **She heard her name.** Only One Person has ever said her name like that. Jesus will say your name in such a way that you will feel that you are the only person in the universe. No one else can say your name like Jesus can. When the Shepherd speaks, the sheep listen to his voice. **John 10:2(NIV)** *"The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out."*

In one moment, Mary goes from sorrow to ecstasy because she heard Jesus say her name. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, knows who belongs to Him. **"Nathaniel, here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit."** **"Philip, how long have I been with you."** **"Simon (the Pharisee), I have something to tell you."** **"Martha, Martha, you are worried about a lot of things."** **"Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today."** **"Lazarus, come out!"** **"Simon, I have prayed for you."** **"Thomas, put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."** **"Peter, do you love Me?"**

Jesus knows your name. I don't know how difficult things might be for you. I don't know if you, like Mary, have sorrow so deep that you cannot recognize Him, and that He seems absent. But when you feel like you cannot see Him, then simply listen for His voice. He speaks in your darkest hour. He speaks in your most difficult time. He speaks in your deepest despair. He speaks in your greatest confusion. He speaks in your most vulnerable moment. He speaks in your substantial doubt. He speaks when everybody has gone home. Your Good Shepherd is speaking your name.

John 10:14-17(NIV) “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. 17 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again.”

Today, just take a moment and you will hear Jesus speak your name. He will speak your name in the most tender and loving way, to lead you out of your despair into your purpose. If you think that your name is too common, just remember, Jesus said, “Mary,” and everything changed!

Prayer:

- **Take time to be still and listen for your Father's voice.**
- **Ask the Lord to help you learn to recognize when He speaks to you.**
- **Thank the Lord that He is your Good Shepherd and that you are part of His One flock.**
- **Pray for others, so that those who need to hear their names, will have ears to hear.**