

Sermon Title: The Way of the Cross: From Darkness to Life

Sermon Scripture: John 20:1-18



Sermon Discussion Guide (4/05) EASTER

Begin the discussion by checking in with each person present and share prayer requests/praises with the group. Then, have one person offer a prayer for the group making sure to include any prayer requests that were mentioned earlier.

Scripture

Read John 20:1-18 out loud. Discuss any initial thoughts you have about these verses.

Observation

What is the significance of Mary going to the tomb while it was still “dark”? Consider the ways that the theme of light and darkness is used in John’s Gospel, particularly in John 1.

What are Mary’s first thoughts when she sees the tomb with the stone rolled away? Why do you think Mary responds to the sight of the empty tomb in this way?

What emotional state is Mary in when Jesus approaches her? What does the way Jesus approached her reveal to us about Jesus?

What changes occur in Mary in verse 16 and following once Jesus calls her name? What purpose or calling does Jesus then give to Mary?

Application

In your own life, why do you think there are situations where it can be easy to feel that God is absent or that hope is lost?

When Mary Magdalene encounters the risen Christ, she is given a new purpose and a new identity. How have you experienced the hope and life that Jesus gives changing your purpose and identity? How might God be calling you into a greater or deeper sense of purpose and identity in Him?

Once Mary encounters Jesus, she is sent out to share with the other disciples about what she has seen and heard. Who do you know who might be feeling hopeless or who needs to hear the good news that Jesus is risen and invites us into a relationship with Himself? How will you share your story of how God has worked in your life with this person?

Pastor Kenny closed his sermon by asking, "Where do you need resurrection in your life right now." In other words, where in your life does a situation feel final? How might God be inviting you to trust in Him and the new life that can come even in this circumstance that seems lost and without hope?

Prayer

Jesus, we praise You for You are alive. You meet us in our darkness, our confusion, and our grief, and You call us by name. Thank You that no circumstance is beyond Your reach, that the cross is not the end, and that the empty tomb declares new life and new hope in all things. Help us to trust You in the silence, to recognize You in unexpected ways, and to respond when You call us by name. Use our lives to carry Your hope into a world that desperately needs it. We ask this in Your name. Amen.