

VISITING THE TOMB

John 20: 1-9

Easter Sunday, April 1, 2018

¹ 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. ² She ran to Simon Peter and to Jesus' favorite disciple and said, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb! We don't know where they have put him." ³ Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. ⁴ They ran side by side, until the other disciple ran faster than Peter and got there first. ⁵ He bent over and saw the strips of linen cloth lying inside the tomb, but he did not go in. ⁶ When Simon Peter got there, he went into the tomb and saw the strips of cloth. ⁷ He also saw the piece of cloth that had been used to cover Jesus' face. It was rolled up and in a place by itself. ⁸ The disciple who got there first then went into the tomb and when he saw it, he believed. ⁹ At that time Peter and the other disciple did not know that the Scriptures said Jesus would rise to life.

John presents us with the narrative that lies at the heart of the Gospel. Jesus, who was crucified, has been raised. All gospel accounts of this moment vary on some points, but what is consistent is the day and that it is Mary Magdalene who is the first to go to the tomb. We watch as Mary, Peter and an unnamed disciple discover that Jesus' tomb is now empty. Imagine what Mary was feeling. Did she think someone had stolen Jesus' body or did she really know what had happened? Did she know that Jesus had conquered death and a new creation has begun?

When Peter enters the tomb he discovers it is empty and unlike the four-day dead Lazarus, who stumbled out of his tomb hindered by his burial wrappings (John 11:44), the cloths are still in the tomb. John tells us that the disciple "saw and believed". Can you imagine the amazement and excitement of Mary Magdalene and Peter? Are we amazed and excited what God can do? Is our Hope and Faith built on the risen Lord?

Prayer: Gracious God, we are thankful for the chance to be on a Holy Journey with you. We are thankful for your Son, Jesus, who died on that cross for us. We can only imagine the excitement when they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. Too often God we are tired, disheartened, sad and our excitement is no longer there. We feel like giving up but we know there are no situations that you cannot help us change. May we never lose our hope, our faith and our amazement of you. We know that Jesus Christ has indeed risen. Easter is forever. Amen

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