

Bible Study

Gods Word in Focus



Week Twenty Eight

Gospel of John

John 20:1-31

The Resurrection of Christ

John 20:1-10

On Sunday morning the women went to the tomb to pay their last tribute to a dead body. The disciples thought that everything had finished in tragedy.

Neither were ready to see an empty tomb and hear the angel's message, *Why do you seek the living among the dead* (Luke 24:5)?

Is it any small wonder that it was the women, rather than the apostles, who first witnessed the empty tomb and the resurrected Lord?

Isidore of Seville, a 7th century church father comments on this: "As a woman (Eve) was first to taste death, so a woman (Mary Magdalene) was first to taste life.

As a woman was prescient in the fall, so a woman was prescient in beholding the dawning of redemption, thus reversing the curse upon Eve." The first to testify to the risen Lord was a woman from whom Jesus had cast out seven demons.

Christ Appears to Mary Magdalene

John 20:11-18

How easy it is to miss the Lord when our focus is on ourselves! Mary did not at first recognize the Lord because her focus was on the empty tomb and on her own grief. It took only one word from the Master, when he called her by name, for Mary to recognize him. Mary's message to the disciples, *I have seen the Lord*, is the very essence of Christianity.

It is not enough that a Christian know about the Lord, but that we know him personally. It is not enough to argue about him, but to meet him. In the resurrection we encounter the living Lord who loves us personally and shares his glory with us.

The Lord gives us "eyes of faith" to see the truth of his resurrection and victory over sin and death (Ephes. 1:18). The resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of our hope -- the hope that we will see God face to face and share in his everlasting glory and joy.

Without having seen him you love him; though you do not now see him you believe in him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy. As the outcome of your faith you obtain the salvation of your souls (1 Peter 1:8-9).

Do you recognize the Lord's presence with you, in his word, in the "breaking of the bread", and in his church, the body of Christ?

Christ Appears to the Disciples

John 20:19-31

Do you know the joy of the resurrection? The Risen Jesus revealed the glory of his resurrection to his disciples gradually and over a period of time.

Even after the apostles saw the empty tomb and heard the reports of Jesus' appearance to the women, they were still weak in faith and fearful of being arrested by the Jewish authorities.

When Jesus appeared to them he offered proofs of his resurrection by showing them the wounds of his passion, his pierced hands and side. He calmed their fears and brought them peace, the peace which reconciles sinners and makes one a friend of God.

Jesus did something which only love and trust can do. He commissioned his weak and timid apostles to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth. This sending out of the disciples is parallel to the sending out of Jesus by his Father.

Jesus fulfilled his mission through his perfect love and perfect obedience to the will of his Father. He called his disciples, and he calls us to do the same. Just as he gave his first disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit, so he breathes on us the same Holy Spirit who equips us with power, grace, and strength.