

Mary Magdalene in the garden...

...meeting Jesus when we are wallowing in pain and self-pity - John 20:1-18

1 Early 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 I don't know where they have put him!" 3 Peter and the other disciple ran to the tomb to see. 4 The other disciple outran Peter and got there first. 5 He stooped and looked in and saw the linen cloth 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 to the side. 8 Then the other disciple also went in, and he saw and believed -- 9 for until then they hadn't realized that the Scriptures said he would rise from the dead. 10 Then they went home. 11 Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in. 12 She saw two white-robed angels sitting at the head and foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. 13 "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 glanced over her shoulder and saw someone standing behind her. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him. 15 "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 toward him and exclaimed, "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 that I am ascending to my Father and your Father, 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 (John 20:1-18 – NLT).

Mary was a devoted disciple (Luke 8:1-3) who did not recognize Jesus at the empty tomb

- So why didn't they recognize Jesus at the empty tomb?

Our pain and self-pity...

- Increase based on how we interpret what we see - v. 1
- Increase based on how others respond - v. 2-10
- Keeps us from understanding - v. 9-12
- Keeps us from the answers we really need - v. 13-15

Jesus meets us in our pain and self-pity

- Engages us in our pain - v. 15
- Jesus focused first on her pain rather than His resurrection
- Jesus did not offer quick relief from her pain...
...but rather offered to join her in her journey
- Calls us by our name - v. 16
- Gives us an assignment that is in the opposite spirit from our pain - v. 17-18

Jesus turns the curse into a blessing!

our God turned the curse into a blessing (Nehemiah 13:23 – NLT).

- The first encounter after the resurrection was with to Mary in the garden...
...turning a curse to blessing!

The curse turned to blessing (compare Genesis 3 with John 20)

Adapted from “How the Resurrection Broke Eden’s Curse” by J. Lee Grady

- Two gardens
Genesis 3 - relationship with God was broken through our disobedience
John 20 - relationship with God was restored through God's forgiveness
- Two women
Genesis 3 - bondage to satan through deception
John 20 - freedom in Christ through truth that sets us free
- Two gardeners
Genesis 3 - the human gardener who failed and died
John 20 - the Messiah who died and rose again
- Two angels
Genesis 3 - set in place to keep humans from entering the garden
John 20 - set in place to invite us to follow the Messiah
- Two responses
Genesis 3 - to hide from God
John 20 - to tell the world that Jesus is alive