

"Knew Not"

John 20:1-18

- Jesus has been crucified and buried in the chapter just preceding our passage of the day
- His death was in our place and for our sins
- But as this portion of scripture begins, we have Mary Magdalene arriving at his grave
- She and Simon Peter and John will discover something amazing there
- Something of history-shaking significance
- And it's something she may have doubted, were it not for her experience at this place

- We'll focus on what she "Knew Not" today
- As we read from John 20:1-18

- If we have read and understand the scriptures, we know what happens after Christ's death and burial
- Our perspective is very different from that of the disciples we'll read about today
- It's difficult for us to put ourselves in their position
- To understand the emotions they may have been feeling
- To think the thoughts they may have been thinking
- But we can try
- In fact, it might be a helpful exercise as we approach John 20
- When Mary Magdalene first, then Simon Peter and John arrive at His tomb...

John 20:1

1 The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

- A sepulchre is a tomb
- This is the tomb of Jesus
- And it had been sealed with a stone
- The fact that the stone had been removed must have come as a shock
- But what she discovered beyond this was an even bigger shock...

John 20:2

2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

- Mary runs to find Simon Peter and the "disciple whom Jesus loved" John
- More important than the stone being rolled away, she reports that Jesus' body is missing
- He is not in the tomb any more
- And she has no information about where He may be now
- Peter and John go to see for themselves...

John 20:3-5

3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.
4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.
5 And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

- John is first to the sepulchre and finds the burial linens
- This means, if Jesus was moved, He was unwrapped first
- Whatever has happened, John has been an eyewitness of the evidence
- Peter comes to look as well...

John 20:6-7

6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,
7 And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

- Peter makes note of Jesus' head wrapping, which was placed by itself
- Away from the other grave linens
- These details were helping the disciples gain a picture of what actually happened
- John seems to arrive at his conclusion first...

John 20:8-9

8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.
9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

- We may ask ourselves exactly what John believed when he saw all of this
- Well, verse 9 explains
- He believed that Jesus was not simply moved
- Not that His body had been taken
- But that He had actually raised from the dead
- And while they were still coming to grips with scripture regarding His resurrection
- Their findings at the tomb
- And no doubt the remembrance of His words
- Helped, at least John at this point, to understand
- He was not here because He was alive again!

John 20:10-13

10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.
11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,
12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.
13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

- While the other disciples went home, Mary remained behind

- She had, apparently, not come to the same conclusion about His resurrection
- Her weeping, searching inside the tomb, and her response to the angels reveal this
- She assumes that His body has been taken, moved
- But she was about to have even more conclusive proof that this was not the case...

John 20:14-15

14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

- It is obvious that Mary Magdalene is distraught
- And quite distracted
- No doubt there were many difficult things running through her mind at this time
- And she doesn't recognize Jesus
- She assumes that He is the gardener
- Jesus has the same question that the angels just asked
- Why are you weeping?
- And for the third time in this passage, she rehearses her theory
- Someone has taken Jesus
- And she is searching for information on where He may be
- With just a word, Jesus changes everything...

John 20:16

16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

- All of the previous evidence gathered pales in comparison
- Here we have the Savior speaking His disciples' name
- And when He does
- She recognizes immediately who He is
- There can be no doubt at this moment that He is risen
- Many others will see Him in the coming days
- They will be absolutely certain what happened
- "Many infallible proofs" will make it certain
- It will bring into clearer focus many of the things He said
- It will confirm the prophecies of scripture
- And it will confirm for them again, that He is God's son, the Messiah
- Their Master...

John 20:17-18

17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

- The messages comes back to the disciples
- That which John observed, concluded, then believed was true
- Jesus, who died and was buried, was now alive
- He had been seen
- And will continue to be seen
- Until He goes to be with His father in heaven
- And leaves a great commission with His followers
- To make the good news known
- Christ died for sinners and victoriously rose, defeating death

Christopher Harper, Take Note 2021