

Sunday, April 21, 2019

John 20:1-18

Theme: "WITH ALL YOUR HEART-BELIEVING"

Jesus had been mocked...

Pilate had made his decision to deliver Jesus to the chief priests to be crucified...

Jesus bore His Cross to Calvary...

He offered His seven last words on the Cross and died...

He was buried in a borrow tomb...

Today the story continues by the writer saying: "Now on the first day of the week..."

It was usual practice in Jerusalem during Jesus' days for visitors to come to the tomb of the dead AFTER THREE DAYS...

*Jewish tradition taught that the soul of the dead stayed in the tomb FOR THREE DAYS...

*ON THE FORTH DAY, it was believed that the soul would leave the body until resurrection...

*So, the third day visit to the tomb was significant because visitors wanted to see the body for the last time before the soul left the body...

*We now understand why Mary Magdalene and other women went to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body...

*They wanted to see the body for the last time before His soul left His body...

*But they also went to the tomb because it was a tradition that after the third day, access to any tomb was restricted...

*Mary and the other women did not know the details of His resurrection; they did not understand Jesus' mission...

*Mary saw Jesus standing there, but because she was so sad, she did not recognize that the One for whom she was grieving was alive...

*She loved Jesus and missed Him, and for her, that was what matter at the time...

*She went to anoint a dead Jesus and failed to recognize the living Jesus...

*How many of us put our trust in dead things when in fact the living Jesus is right in front of us...

*This resurrection story is a reminder that there is hope in Jesus who is alive...

*We need to put our hope and trust in Him rather than in dead things...

*Today is Easter: What does it mean...

a) New Life...

b) Resurrected Hearts...

*Calvary was the place of death, but has now become a place of life...

*Your place of death can also become a place of life...

*The past forty (40) days have taken us through the wilderness, darkness, mountain, valley, yet we have persevere...

*I can imagine that while on this journey, you may have been confused...

*You may have been saddened...

*You may have been afraid...
*You may have experienced disbelief..
*Your faith may have been challenged
*But the good news this morning is that our Lenten journey has ended with the hope of transforming hearts...
*We have finally made it to Easter where we are celebrating with joy...
*Jesus is being welcomed in unexpected places...
*I pray that the journey has strengthened us in such a way that hope is stronger than despair...
*I pray that we will embrace the fact that love is stronger than death...
*And so, today we proclaim Jesus Christ as the resurrection and life...
*We proclaim that death no longer has dominion over us...
*We should therefore celebrate the hope of new life...
*Go and tell the story Believing With-All-Your-Heart...
*Mary Magdalene came with a broken heart to the tomb just before dawn, but she left transformed...
*Mary's tears were questioned, so just know that your tears will be questioned too...
*The two disciples who ran for their lives, saw the empty tomb, went back to their homes "believing," but not understanding...

*But be encouraged because just as the risen Christ hung around the garden so that Mary wouldn't be alone in her confusion and fear, He will hang around forcabd with you...
*Just as the risen Lord called Mary's name and at once transformed her broken and burning heart, He can call your name as well...
*Let us go and tell this story to a new generation of people so they too can proclaim, as Mary did, "I have seen the Lord..."
*Let us tell the resurrection story that it's in the darkness that the dawn of morning light comes...
*It's in the darkness that we discover the stone has already been rolled away and the love of God has been let loose in the world...
*Let us not discount the darkness in today's world...
*But let us affirm that resurrection has the power to transform a graveyard into a garden brimming with new life...
*Resurrection has the power to break open tombs and tear down walls...
*Resurrection has the power to transform the rocky wildernesses of our hearts into instruments of grace...
*Resurrection has the power to make "the possibility for love to come again..."
*The resurrection of Jesus is not the ending of the story, but the beginning of many hope-filled risings to come...
*And because the Love of God will come again and again to raise us out of death, we have hope...

*We turn our hearts with hope this day to meet the risen Christ with us, within us, and within the love between us; within the unexpected that inspires us...

Like Mary, we must each decide whether hope is stronger than fear, whether life is stronger than hate, and whether love really is stronger than death . . . every day, every moment, with all our hearts. That is what resurrection is...
Go from this place today, BELIEVING..

Amen!