

Because He Lives — Week 1

When the Gardener Calls Your Name

John 20:1-18

Big Idea:

The resurrection does not begin with certainty or celebration, but with Jesus meeting us personally in our grief and calling us by name into new life.

Introduction

The first Easter did not begin with celebration. It began in the dark, in confusion, and in grief.

Key Truth:

The risen Jesus meets us right where we are... and calls us by name into new life.

Outline

1. Easter begins in the dark

John 20:1

Mary comes to the tomb “while it was still dark.”

- Easter begins in sorrow, not certainty
- Jesus meets people in grief, confusion, and heartbreak
- Resurrection hope is for real people in real pain

Key Line:

Jesus is not allergic to your grief.

2. The empty tomb does not immediately create understanding

John 20:2-10

The first response to the empty tomb is confusion.

- Mary assumes the body has been taken
- Peter and John see the evidence, but still do not fully understand
- Faith often begins before clarity arrives

Key Line:

Jesus is still at work even before everything becomes clear.

3. Mary stays where others leave

John 20:11-13

Peter and John go home, but Mary remains at the tomb.

- She stays in her sorrow
- She stays near the place of pain
- Resurrection often unfolds for the people who stay

Key Line:

Don't quit too early on a God who is still working.

4. Jesus may be closer than you think

John 20:14-15

Mary sees Jesus, but does not recognize Him.

- Christ can be present before He is recognized
- John uses garden imagery to point to **new creation**
- The resurrection is not mainly about escape, it is about renewal

Key Line:

Don't confuse hiddenness with absence.

5. The turning point is not explanation, it's recognition

John 20:16

Jesus speaks one word: "**Mary.**"

- Mary recognizes Jesus when He calls her by name
- The Good Shepherd still knows His sheep
- Christianity is not first about mastering information, but being known by Jesus

Key Line:

Jesus does not merely save crowds. He knows people.

6. Recognition comes before proclamation

John 20:17-18

Mary is sent after she encounters the risen Jesus.

- Encounter first
- Witness second
- Resurrection life begins with being met by Jesus

Key Line:

Recognition precedes proclamation.

Application

1. Bring Jesus your real grief

You do not need to pretend with Him.

2. God may be closer than you think

The risen Jesus is often present before He is recognized.

3. Listen for your name

Jesus still calls people personally.

4. Don't let Easter be a one-day spiritual cameo

The resurrection is not just something we celebrate: it is something we live.

Conclusion

The resurrection of Jesus means:

- death does not get the last word
- sin does not get the last word
- grief does not get the last word

- failure does not get the last word

Jesus does.

Because He lives...

- hope lives
- new creation has begun
- your story is not stuck where it hurts
- He still meets people in the dark and calls them by name into new life

Series Preview: Next Week

Because He Lives Week 2

“Peace Be With You... Even When You Doubt”

John 20:19-31

The risen Jesus does not shame fear or doubt; He meets them with peace and invites honest faith into His presence.