

Last Days of Jesus

Sunday | Day of Resurrection | John 20:1 – 31

Sermon Discussion Guide

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STUDY NOTES

Early (20:1). The Greek word for “early” was the technical word for the last of the four watches in which the night was divided, which ran from 3 a.m. to 6 a.m.

The Stone (20:1). The Greek word implies that it was not rolled away, but lifted up out of its groove in some violent way.

Strips of Linen (20:5-7). Grave robbers, in search of treasure entombed with the corpse, would either have taken the body still wrapped up or scattered the strips as they tore them off. The fact that the clothes were neatly laid by was one of the evidences that led the “other disciple” to faith (v. 8).

When Jesus was arrested, his disciples fled. They didn’t show their faces in public again until after Jesus had risen and appeared to Mary, Mary Magdalene, and others. Once these cowardly men fully realized who Jesus was and what he had done, they were changed forever. Jesus’ resurrection did not merely intrigue them or become a footnote in history – it was the turning point for the disciples and for us. With the Resurrection, Jesus sealed our forgiveness, brought us power for living, and gave us a new commission.

Read John 20:1 – 31.

1. John records three witnesses to the empty tomb: Mary Magdalene, Peter and “the other disciple” (John himself). What important details do we learn from each one? (John 20:1 – 9)
2. Why is it important to prove the tomb was empty?
3. John also records three appearances of the risen Christ: to Mary, to his disciples and to Thomas. Why do you think Mary doesn’t immediately recognize Jesus? (John 20:10 – 15)
4. Why do you think Mary recognized Jesus when He said her name? (John 20:16) (See John 10:3 – 4)
5. When Jesus appears to his disciples, what specific gifts and promises does he give them (John 20:19 – 23)? What do you think is the significance of each gift or promise?
6. Finally, Jesus appears to Thomas (John 20:24 – 29). How does Thomas’ attitude – both before and after Jesus appears to him – add credibility to the resurrection?



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Two angels in white (20:12).

The Gospels differ on whether there was one “man” (Mark), or an angel (Matthew), or two “men” (Luke) present. They also differ on how many women saw the personage.

Gardener (20:15). The tomb was located in a garden owned by Joseph (19:41). It would not be unlikely that as an aristocratic member of the Sanhedrin he would employ a gardener to care for his property.

Do not hold onto me (20:17).

The Greek means “Stop clinging to Me.” Mary was apparently holding Jesus in joy and worship, but He assured her that He *had not yet returned to the Father* – He would be around for a while and there was no need to cling to Him as though He might vanish.

Peace be with you (20:21). This is repeated in verse 21 and 26. The promise of peace was given in 14:27 and 16:33. It sums up the blessings and fullness of the new covenant that Jesus has made between the Father and his people (14:27).

Locked doors (20:26). This indicates that Jesus’ resurrection was not limited in the way a normal physical body might be limited. He was able to enter a locked room and simply appear. Nevertheless, his body could be felt (20:27) and he ate (20:19).

7. How does Thomas’ exclamation “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28) provide a fitting climax to John’s Gospel?
8. What can we learn about Jesus’ encounter with Thomas about dealing with people who have doubts about Christianity?
9. Is believing that Jesus rose from the dead as important as believing that he died on the cross for our sins? Explain.
10. John tells us why he has written his Gospel in John 20:30 – 31. Of all the “miraculous signs,” which have been most convincing to you? Why?
11. Jesus is alive today. What implications does this have for . . .
 - The way you pray?

 - Your confidence in God?

 - Your worries?

 - Your purpose in life?
