



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: The God Who Finds Us
Speaker: Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor
Scripture: John 20:11-23

Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

Jesus said to her, "Mary."

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

John 20:11-23 (NIV)

Sermon Outline:

In this passage, we see Mary Magdalene and the disciples gripped with fear after realizing that Jesus is no longer in the tomb. The first Easter was surrounded by pain, fear, and disappointment, much like we are experiencing today in the midst of the Covid19 pandemic. It is in this space of pain, disappointment, and in moments of suffering and hopelessness that Jesus births forth into the lives of Mary and the disciples, and to us today. There are two encounters in this story that we are to pay attention to.

The first encounter we see in this story is with Jesus and Mary. Mary had some troubling things about her past and had experienced some deep hurt and trauma, yet Jesus offered her tenderness and grace and made her feel like she belonged. Despite Mary feeling like all her hopes and dreams were gone, Jesus showed up. He appeared and asked Mary: "Who are you looking for?" Jesus knew everything about Mary and still called her by name. Aren't you glad that Jesus calls you by your name? Despite all the people in the world, Jesus knows you and everything about you, and still calls you by your name. The resurrected Jesus meets us in our sorrow and suffering and calls us by name.

The second encounter we find in this story is Jesus with the disciples. The disciples locked themselves in a room because they were gripped with fear, socially distanced themselves - just as we are currently socially distancing ourselves due to the Covid19 pandemic. Locking themselves in a room was not enough to keep out Jesus, or his love for them. Jesus came - in their moments of fear, confusion and wondering about their future, Jesus showed up; Jesus stood among them - no wall was too thick for Jesus to find them; and Jesus said "Peace be with you": Jesus offered the disciples peace, just as he offers it to us. Jesus offers us peace on Easter and every day.

Easter at his core is God declaring victory over death. The Resurrection is God's definitive "No" to death and God's decisive "Yes" to Life. At the core of Christianity is God making dead people come alive, where one day we will all be raised up to newness of life.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday, Lead Pastor Richard Villodas, preaches on one of the greatest stories in scripture and the best news in the world - Jesus is alive. He is risen!

Sermon Questions:

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. In your family of origin, how was pain dealt with? Was it ignored or embraced? Was there room to grieve or a rush to move on?
3. When you think of Jesus, when you turn to Him, who are you looking for? What are your expectations of Him?
4. Jesus has come to you today to offer peace. What walls or locked doors are up in your life that may be keeping Him out? Anger, fear, anxiety, something else?
5. How do you feel knowing that Jesus is coming to you right now, that there is no wall too thick for Him to find you, and that His peace is always available to you?
6. If this is your first time watching or wish to make the Lord your Savior today and receive peace pray: "Lord I repent and ask for Your forgiveness of my sin, I accept You as my Savior and believe you have died and have resurrected for me. Come into my life so I may know your peace." If you prayed this pray today follow up with someone at New Life by filling out this Pathway Card:

<https://newlifefellowship.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/135/responses/new>.