

201. The Gospel of John 20:11-15

The King is Risen-Part 3

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
(12-11-22)

Find this weeks' sermon audio and video message [HERE](#).

John 20:1–10 (NKJV)

¹ Now on the first *day* of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw *that* the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ² Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." ³ Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. ⁴ So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. ⁵ And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying *there*; yet he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying *there*, ⁷ and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. ⁹ For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.

It seems incredible that the followers of Jesus did not expect Him to come out of the tomb alive—after all, He had told them four different times that He would be crucified and on the third day—He would rise from the dead!

Early in His ministry He had said, "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*" (John 2:19).

Later Jesus used the Prophet Jonah to illustrate His own death, burial, and resurrection—

"For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Yet the morning of His resurrection—they were clueless as to why the tomb was empty.

John 20:11a (NKJV)

¹¹ **But Mary** [Magdalene] **stood outside by the tomb weeping...**

The first two words are striking—"But Mary."

The other two disciples (Peter and John) went home—"But Mary stood..."

Mary's love and devotion for her Lord was incredibly powerful—she had been forgiven much and therefore—she loved much!

Mary Magdalene has been wrongly called a *prostitute* by many—but that is biblically inaccurate. She is never called a prostitute in the Bible, but rather it says of her in the gospels that—Jesus cast 'seven demons' out of her (it seems she was involved in the occult in some way).

Mary, prior to meeting Jesus—had led a miserable life.

If you ask people why they get involved in the occult—they will often tell you, *'To gain power.'* But whatever *'power'* Satan bestows on people—it's always a *'hook'* to grab and control their lives, and in the end to destroy their lives—as Jesus said, *"The devil comes to steal, kill and destroy!"* (John 10:10)

We cannot imagine the torment of a person who is possessed by *one* demon—let alone *seven* demons! It must have been a life of absolute torture, misery and hopelessness.

It reminds us of another *'demoniac'*—

Mark 5:1–5 (NKJV)

¹ Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. ² And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, ³ who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, ⁴ because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. ⁵ And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.

This was Mary's existence before Jesus came into her life—but when she met Jesus, her life changed in ways that most people cannot even comprehend—truly *'old things'* passed away and everything in her life became brand new!

Jesus with simply the word of His power drove out the darkness of the devil and brought in the Light of God!

She was no longer the slave of Satan—Jesus set her free and she became a child of the Living God!

And don't you know she absolutely loved Jesus for setting her free from the powers of darkness that had enslaved her—and in response she committed her life to Him, fully and completely!

Her love for Jesus was so powerful—that she kept a lonely vigil outside the tomb, weeping because, as she thought, the body of her Lord had been stolen—probably by grave robbers or perhaps by His enemies.

John 20:11–12 (NKJV)

¹¹ **But Mary [Magdalene] stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. ¹² And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.**

When Mary looked into the tomb, she saw two angels in white—their position at either end of the shelf where the body had been lying makes us think of the cherubim on the mercy seat (Exodus 25:17–19).

It is as though God was saying, *"There is now a new mercy seat! My Son has paid the price for sin, and the way is open into the presence of God!"*

John 20:12–13 (NKJV)

¹² **And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. ¹³ Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."**

Mary apparently was not disturbed at seeing these men—and there is no evidence that she knew they were angels.

In the Bible when angels appeared to people on earth—the angels looked like men (without the halos or wings—Hebrews 13:2). Although, when someone like Isaiah and John are given a vision of angels in *heaven*—they do appear with wings (not halos since that is a Catholic thing and not biblical).

Back to Mary—the brief conversation (with these angels) neither dried her tears nor quieted her mind—she was determined to find the body of Jesus.

John 20:14–15a (NKJV)

¹⁴ Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing *there*, and did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” ...

➤ *Why didn't Mary recognize Jesus?*

Many commentators contend it was because she was crying, tears were blurring her vision, and her eyes were probably swollen—and that was the reason Mary didn't recognize Jesus the morning of His resurrection. But as we read the gospels and the post resurrection accounts—it seemed that none of the disciples of Jesus recognized Him after His resurrection—why?

We'll look at that question more when we get to Chapter 21 of John's gospel.

Jesus asked Mary the same question that the angels had asked, **“Woman, why are you weeping?”**

It is interesting how often we're *weeping* in light of
certain circumstances when—
if we were truly trusting in God—
and in the promises of His Word—we would be *praising!*

Jesus had told His disciples on four different occasions that He was going to be crucified but on the third day—He would rise from the dead.

Therefore, on this, the third day after His crucifixion, instead of weeping over a 'dead Messiah'—she (and the other disciples) should have been looking with joy and praise for a resurrected Savior!

“Whom are you seeking?”

Whether you realize it or not—that is one of the most profound and important questions in the Bible—in other words, *“What Jesus are you seeking?”*—a dead prophet or a resurrected Savior—sure.

But the question implies more than that.

One of the most beautiful carols sung during the Christmas season is the one written by William Dix. It starts out:

*What Child is this who laid to rest on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?*

We can only imagine that the question asked in this beloved carol must have been uppermost in the minds of the shepherds that were present the night Jesus was born.

One author said,

"We can almost hear the question being asked from one to another as they gazed into the humble manger. How difficult it must have been for them to understand that the babe who lay in such a lowly place was truly the promised Messiah."

Through the centuries people have continued to ponder who Jesus really is. In fact, that question, whether you realize it or not, is the most important question you will ever have to answer.

Who is Jesus Christ? —or as Jesus put it, "**Whom are you seeking?**"

There are many concepts that people hold today as to who Jesus really is—and what was His purpose and passion in life when He walked upon the earth.

1. **Jesus, the social reformer**

Some see Jesus as a ***social reformer***.

This is the concept held by those in the *Jesus Seminar*. The *Jesus Seminar* (founded in 1985) is made up of about 40-50 liberal scholars who meet twice a year for 4 days. They meet to sit in judgment on Jesus' words, voting on what they believe He did and did not actually say. They determined that He only said about 18% of the words attributed to Him in the Gospels.

One of the members of the Jesus Seminar is John Dominic Crossan, who wrote the book, "*Who is Jesus?*"

Crossan rejects the biblical Jesus in favor of one that he sees as a social, political activist—a Jesus that went around speaking out against racism, sexism, injustice and the systemic abuse of power in the Roman Empire.

This Jesus preached social reform—not repentance from sin.

2. **Jesus, the investment banker**

Next on the list we have a Jesus that is presented by many of the televangelists—one that we'll call ***Jesus, the investment banker***.

This is a Jesus that has come to make us all rich—even though He Himself had nowhere to lay His head and when He was crucified—all He owned were the clothes on His back. Yet these people contend that it's His desire that Christians all drive BMW's or Mercedes, that we live in palatial mansions, wear only designer clothes, and are able to take extravagant vacations.

All we have to do is invest our money with Him (which means giving it to the T.V. evangelist's ministry) and we will receive a tremendous return on our investment—a hundred-fold or more.

This Jesus ***isn't*** the Jesus who said, "*Don't lay up for yourselves treasures on the earth...*" and "*Deny yourself and take up your cross and follow Me.*"

No, this Jesus basically encourages greed and materialism—a Jesus that didn't come to save us from *perdition* but from poverty.

3. Jesus, the environmentalist

Third on the list is ***Jesus, the environmentalist***.

Several years ago, the Wall Street Journal ran an article entitled, “*Religious Leaders Target SUVs.*”

“*Top executives of the world’s two biggest auto makers plan to meet this week with religious leaders who are trying to make fuel economy of U.S. vehicles a religious as well as environmental issue. Among those leaders is an evangelical Christian group that plans to roll out a TV ad campaign arguing that gas-guzzlers are contrary to Christian moral teachings about protecting people and the earth. The tagline for the ads is “What Would Jesus Drive.”*”

(A play on the popular Christian motto: “*What Would Jesus Do*” or *WWJD*)

As Christians we should take care of God’s creation—it’s just that some people have turned the creation into a ‘god’ and Jesus into an environmentalist. It trivializes who Jesus really is and what He is most passionate about—as He Himself said, “*I have come to seek and to save (not the planet but) those that are lost.*”

Somehow, I just can’t see Him walking around the Sea of Galilee spearheading a “*Give a hoot, don’t pollute*” campaign.

4. Jesus, the psychologist

The fourth misconception of Jesus on our list is one we’ll call ***Jesus, the psychologist***.

Today the Church has become glorified group therapy—and Jesus has been turned into a psychologist whose sole purpose for existing is to make people *happy*. But contrary to what many believe today—the goal of our Christianity is to bring glory to God— not a better quality of life for ourselves.

To accomplish this God is at work in our lives—not to make us happy but to make us holy.

Because of this He often allows trials and tribulations to come our way to grow and mature us—because God is far more concerned about our *eternal rewards* than He is about our *temporal comforts*.

5. Jesus, the BFF

The fifth misconception of Jesus on our list is one we’ll call ***Jesus, the BFF (Best Friend Forever)***.

➤ Maybe you’re thinking, “*Is that a bad thing? Didn’t Jesus say, “You are My friends...?”*” (John 15:14-15)

First of all, understand that when God (in this case Jesus) calls you His *friend* He isn’t saying that you’re His ‘*buddy*’—like when one of *your* friends or buddies shows up at your door and you invite them in to have a beer and watch the game with you.

Jesus isn’t *that* kind of friend—He isn’t your “*buddy*” or “*homeboy*” or your “*bro*” as some have called Him.

The idea of being a ‘*friend of God*’ doesn’t negate our reverence for Him, our worship of Him—or our subservience to Him as our God!

It's just Jesus' way of saying that His disciples have entered into a brand-new relationship with Him under the New Covenant than Israel had with God under the Old (Mosaic) Covenant.

- In that culture no master would die for one of his slaves—but he might for a friend.
- In that culture no master would tell his slaves what he was doing—but he would a friend.

So, who's right? **Will the real Jesus please stand up!**

Some would say it isn't important who He really is—as long as we esteem Jesus in our hearts no matter who we perceive Him to be.

Apparently, Jesus didn't feel that way—He wasn't one to allow ambivalence in His disciples when it came to them understanding who He was and what He came to do:

Matthew 16:13-16 (NKJV)

¹³ When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" ¹⁴ So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Which brings us back to our hymn—*"What Child is this?"* The carol goes on to answer triumphantly—*"This, this is Christ the King!"*

You know, many people don't have a problem with the baby Jesus (as often portrayed at Christmas time). They tenderly imagine the Christ-child lying in that manger, so helpless—and might I add *harmless!* As long as He remains—*"the Babe, the Son of Mary"* they will tolerate Him and even feign love for Him.

But when He is proclaimed the Son of God, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, Who came the first time to die for sinners and is coming again to judge and send to hell those who reject Him as Savior and Lord—that's the Jesus they will not tolerate, cannot handle and refuse to bow the knee to.

A Baby Jesus is cute and harmless and makes no demands on a person's life—but a full-grown Jesus who is King, who demands they get off the throne of their life so that He can take His rightful place as their King and Lord—a Jesus who demands worship and obedience—*that* Jesus is a threat and a danger to them living however they please and that Jesus must be done away with! → (Listen: King Herod)

WHO IS JESUS?

He is the Son of God.

➤ ***Why did He come?***

➤ ***He came to save us from our sins.***

- Not from depression
- or poverty or
- global warming or
- even to give us a better quality of life—unless of course you're referring to the inward joy and peace and love that He fills us with when we get saved.

He is the Jesus Who is coming again to judge the living and the dead and to establish a Kingdom that will never end.
Someday the Bible says that every knee will bow to the real Jesus and proclaim He is Lord— if not here on earth, then on the Day of Judgment.

Jesus will be one of two things to every person who has ever lived—loving Savior or righteous Judge—and what you do with Jesus now will determine what He becomes to you then.

Don't give Jesus *lip* service, don't just *call* Him Lord—**make Him the Lord of your life by surrendering your life fully to Him!**

Luke 6:46 (NKJV)

⁴⁶ "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?..."

Matthew 7:21-23 (NKJV)

²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

"Whom are you seeking?"

Only you can answer that question—the right answer is:

"I'm seeking Jesus the Son of God Who died for my sins and rose from the dead. The Jesus Who is my Savior and King Who is coming again to judge the living and the dead and establish a never-ending Kingdom of righteousness, truth and love. That is the Jesus Whom I am seeking!"

Remember—*"Wise men still seek Him!"*

Jeremiah 29:13 (NKJV)

¹³ **And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.**

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reach out to us [here](#).

Want to know more? Click [here](#).