



Opening

I want to preach this to your soul today: "Weeping may last for a night but joy comes in the morning." Psalm 30:5b

Introduction

God has a plan and we don't always get it at the time. In your mourning the morning will come (why I prefer funerals over weddings – sorry brides – but I am a mourning person.) I am an Easter Sunday believer in a Good Friday world.

Why?

Standing at the foot of the cross. Standing near by in a garden. The pain of this episode of suffering was heart breaking, defeating and distressing. When Jesus died it crushed so much in those standing near by. Dreams were blown away and the traumatic nature of the event ran deep. The real magnitude of God's plan of salvation was still to come.

Every Easter Sunday is a hope filled recognition that tears can be turned to joy. Easter is a reminder of what we are all looking for and what can only be found in Jesus.

Ask: Who are you looking for?

11 Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in.

12 She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. **13** "Dear woman, why are you crying?" the angels asked her. "Because they have taken away my Lord," she replied, "and I don't know where they have put him."**14** She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognise him. **15** "Dear woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her. "Who are you looking for?" She thought he was the gardener. "Sir," she said, "if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him." **16** "Mary!" Jesus said. She turned to him and cried out, "Rabboni!" (which is Hebrew for "Teacher").

17 "Don't cling to me," Jesus said, "for I haven't yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" **18** Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she gave them his message. **John 20:11-18 NLT**

Empty

1. The tomb is probably like your bank account — empty.
2. Before Lara Croft comes upon the scene Jesus was the original Tomb Raider.
3. Why does nobody really know where the original tomb was located? — once Jesus was alive there was no need for anyone else to go back.
4. You will find yourself standing outside the tune crying Mary Magdalene on Friday she's standing near the cross distraught, and now here she wept in the garden, she looked in and the tomb was empty. Psalm 30:5b
5. This was truly heartbreaking where today's disappointment can be a bit shallow.
6. **Illustration** – Ben Nevis trip advisor.
7. What might have been Mary's garden tomb review?

8. Mary saw nothing except Jesus was gone 'they have crucified my Lord.'
9. The crushing lack of hope is palpable for now not only is Jesus crucified but I don't know where they've put him I can't even mourn properly because there isn't even a body! (I don't even have that!!!)
10. In the night Mary has just seen two angels but he's so overwhelmed she can't see what she can see.
11. Have you noticed that when Jesus speaks the real magnitude of what is said comes later? In fact Jesus has told everyone at least three times what was going to happen that the son of a man will rise again on the third day!
12. Jesus in his own garden experience before the cross says it is not what I want that is important I only desire to fulfil your plan.

To day

13. The truth is this it is a firsthand account of detail with descriptors such as early sunrise standing in crying that the tomb has been tampered with but the expensive items the linen clothes have been left behind. Not only that they've been folded up nobody breaks into your house and does your ironing, hoovering and cleaning for you! v7
14. Before the sunrise, the morning star has risen. Whilst it was still dark Jesus had already risen. Night is always moving to day. Then there is the powerful image of the ark with the Angels at the head and the foot.
15. So the angels are not very sensitive, 'why are you crying?' they are still amazed at the triumph of God's plan!
16. The cross is now empty but so is the tomb, and it's important to know Jesus, God, does not get stuck at any stage.
17. And some Mary seek and you will find puts herself out to seek for answers she's gone early before everyone else
18. And so standing there the third stand in Johns Gospel is Jesus.
19. 'Who are you looking for?' I love the gentleness of Jesus and how he treats Mary is how we treat us all so kindly.
20. 'I am here!' Jesus is here. Mary thinks it is the gardener
21. Irony – because the first man and woman lost the battle to sin in a garden and here Jesus setting forth a new creation is back in garden righting what was wrong.
22. When Jesus says "Mary" it clicks. He is speaking your name today. Mary's eyes are opened to the living Christ. Renewal — of the hopelessness to the glory

Conclusion

Friday demonstrates what Jesus did; but Sunday demonstrates who Jesus is. You will find yourself in dark moments dark days of despair in a dark world.

Have I hope in the future? What are we overcome with?
It's not what you know it's who you know.
What am I looking for? Why? Who are you looking for?

Application:

- What does this have to say about God? Us? The World? Life?
- To demonstrate the power of Easter
- That Easter is immensely up close and personal
- To bring people into a life changing relationship with Jesus
- To help people face to traumatic events with hope

Think: if you are looking for peace it's found in the Prince of peace if you're looking for purpose there is a Lord who calls you to follow if you're looking for forgiveness there is a saviour who sets you free.

Pray: Lord Almighty, you are the resurrected Lord and saviour thank you for taking my despair and my weeping and turning it into joy and hope. Amen.

Challenge for both Christian and Non:

Is Jesus your Lord and Saviour?

Each Easter are you overcome with praise for the victory of the Lord?

Can you see the gentleness and kindness of Jesus in your life?