

The Living Word

Key Verse: “*When he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.*”
—John 20:20

Selected Scripture:
John 20:1-23

TODAY’S LESSON DETAILS

John’s account of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. Mary Magdalene had come to the tomb hoping to anoint the body of the Master with spices. Upon her arrival, she found the sepulchre open and the Lord’s body missing. She frantically went and found Peter and another disciple, we assume John, and cried, “They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.” (John 20:2) Peter and John ran to the sepulchre to see for themselves. What they saw was startling—“the linen [grave] clothes lying, . . . And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.” (vss. 5,7) Although they believed what they saw with their own eyes, they did not understand, and went back to their homes. Recording these events many years later, John comments, “For as yet they knew [understood] not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.”—vs. 9

Mary, weeping for her beloved Master, stayed at the sepulchre. She soon noticed two individuals, realizing later they were angels, who asked her why she wept. Mary replied it was because “they have taken away my Lord.” (vs. 13) She then turned and noticed a person

who appeared to be the gardener of the tomb area. She inquired as to whether he perhaps had moved the body. If so, she would be glad to take it to another burial location. What followed is one of the most moving accounts in all scripture. The gardener “saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.” (vs. 16) This “gardener” was in fact the resurrected Jesus, and Mary’s recognition of him was in the manner in which he called her by name, “Mary.” She had heard his call many times before, during his ministry, and now recognized it once again. Her experience hearkened back to Jesus’ words concerning himself as the good shepherd, “he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them.”—chap. 10:3

Jesus said to Mary, “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.” (chap. 20:17) It would have been Mary’s natural inclination to cling to the Master and tarry with him, now that she knew he was no longer dead. However, she, too, did not know the full import of these events. Jesus explained to her that his appearance again in the flesh was only temporary, and soon he would ascend to his Father. For this reason, she should not cling to him according to the flesh, because she would again feel disappointment once he ascended. Jesus instructed Mary to go instead to the other disciples and tell them that he was risen from the dead. Obedient to the Master, she did so, telling them she had “seen the Lord.”—vs. 18

Later the same day at evening, Jesus miraculously appeared to the disciples, and said to them, “Peace be unto you.” (vs. 19) The words of our Key Verse show the joy and gladness of all the disciples, knowing that their Lord and Master had been resurrected from the dead. How these words echo to us today, “He is risen!”—Matt. 28:6