

Sermon notes  
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11.00am

### **In the Garden – John 20**

The Garden is an important place within the Bible. Creation centres on it. It was there that humanity shared perfection in themselves and within the creation as seen in the garden in which they were placed. Perfect in relationship with God and with one another. Beautiful!

Then they gave in to temptation and in not trusting God and believing the lie, the beautiful harmony was marred,

Many thousands of years later Jesus described by the Apostle Paul as the second Adam is in a garden. That of Gethsemane. Here he prays, yet rather than simply seek his own wellbeing, his overarching desire was for the Father's will to be done; even if that meant drinking the cup of God's wrath for all the sin of the entire world, for all time. That was Maundy Thursday which in turn led to Good Friday when Jesus drank that cup and in doing so opened up the way for the broken relationship between God and humanity to be restored.

In the same garden as the crucifixion where Jesus had been so cruelly put to death there was a new tomb that had never been used and it was here that the body of Jesus had been lovingly placed John 20.41. The authorities posted their own guards outside the tomb for fear of thieves and also had the tomb sealed, so that the stone could not be easily removed.

Yet when Mary arrived at the tomb – it was empty. John tells us that it was the first morning of the week. It was the 8<sup>th</sup> day. The Day of a new creation, with a new humanity.

The truth of this was discovered when Mary went to get Peter and John who ran to the tomb to find out what was going on.

John arrives there first; he looks in but does not enter. Peter goes in, and then John goes in and believes John 20.8 Yet we are told they still did not understand from the Bible that Jesus had to rise from the dead John 20.9. It must have been the bandages. Any robbers would not have left the burial clothes and certainly would not have folded them. I wonder was that typical of Jesus. Every human being is an individual and each of us have our own way of doing things. That would have been true of Jesus. Remember the feeding of the 5,000 all the extra food had to be collected in baskets. When Jesus himself raised Jairus daughter

from the dead, he instructed them to give her something to eat. Jesus had an eye for detail. Was it this that made John aware that Jesus was alive.

There is good evidence for believing that Jesus was raised from the dead.

Mary had not grasped this. She loved Jesus. He had brought her freedom from evil influences in her own life, she had witnessed his death and where he was laid. But where was he?

She looks for him, looking for his body in the garden, looking in the tomb, she sees angels but no Jesus and then a voice. It must be the gardener – it was a beautiful garden and a gardener would be needed. Theologically she was close. Jesus in John 15 describes himself as the Vine and God as the gardener.

Mary is asked a questions that seem a little stupid, she is asked this twice, firstly by the angels and then by this other person. Why are you crying? She was crying because Jesus had been cruelly put to death and now his body had gone. Then this other person, this gardener as she thought also asked – who is it you are looking for? Mary was looking for Jesus. Which is all the more ironic when he is standing behind her. It is as Mary is called by her name by this man that she turns and sees Jesus John 20.16. Jesus knows us by name and longs for us to recognize him.

Then later Jesus appeared to the disciples and they believed John 20.19. Thomas wanted that to. Resurrection was a future hope but here it was presented as a reality. Thomas missed out but needed to see Jesus to believe, John 20.27

For us there is not that opportunity but we can know him, through the evidence, the missing body, the burial clothes, through the eye witnesses, through the Bible, by hearing the voice of Jesus speaking to us, and through the testimonies of lives transformed, to mention just some of the ways it can happen for us. Lives transformed not only then but now. Chris our Youth & Children's Minister who discovered the reality of Jesus. Margaret and Harriet seen here on the Data Projector at their baptisms, their lives having being transformed and being transformed by the good news of Jesus. It still is happening and maybe today is your day, to discover the reality of the risen Jesus.

So a question - are you a believer? Do you believe in the reality of Christ and his death upon the cross for you and do you believe he is risen from the dead and therefore the risen Lord?. And will your belief lead you to follow him, to love him and to discover the person you were always created to be?

I'd love you to do that.

## **John 20**

### **The Empty Tomb**

<sup>1</sup> Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.

<sup>2</sup> So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!

<sup>3</sup> So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb.

<sup>4</sup> Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.

<sup>5</sup> He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in.

<sup>6</sup> Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there,

<sup>7</sup> as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen.

<sup>8</sup> Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed.

<sup>9</sup> (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)

### **Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene**

<sup>10</sup> Then the disciples went back to their homes,

<sup>11</sup> but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb

<sup>12</sup> and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> At this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realise that it was Jesus.

<sup>15</sup> Woman, he said, 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.

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, Mary. She turned towards him and cried out in Aramaic, Rabboni! (which means Teacher).

<sup>17</sup> Jesus said, Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'

<sup>18</sup> 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.

### **Jesus Appears to His Disciples**

<sup>19</sup> On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be with you!

<sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.