



Theme: Tell Me Something Good **– Good News in the Gospel of John** **“Sent with the Good News”**


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Weekly Memory Verse:

21 Again he said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.” 22 Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” – John 20

The season of Lent is the 40 days and 7 Sundays before Easter and we will be reading through the gospel of John together as a congregation. The Meditation Moments contain a reading plan for the Gospel and just a few minutes a day will take you through the entire book. If you get behind, or join us in the middle, don't worry or try to catch up...just join us where we are! Our hope is to experience something good, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, through these readings that bring life and light.

Meditation Moments for Monday, April 6 – John **20:1-10**. Early Sunday, Mary, Peter and “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” who most scholars assume is John, found the tomb empty. They were confused and afraid. Had the authorities, or grave robbers, taken Jesus’ body? Were they next? The disciples saw an unexpected sight. Scholar Craig Keener noted, “The face cloth separate from the linen is ‘folded up’... which could be an indication of neatness, or that it was still rolled the way it had been when it was wrapped around Jesus’ head—that his body had risen straight out of the wrappings and cloth.”

 John 11:44 tells that when Jesus raised Lazarus, “The dead man came out, his feet bound and his hands tied, and his face covered with a cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘Untie him’”. But the risen Jesus didn’t need anyone to untie him. His grave clothes, folded and left behind, were one sign that his resurrection was

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qualitatively different, the creation of a new level of human life. In your walk with God, have you ever met something that didn't fit your previous ideas about how life works? How do you remain open to see "and believe"?



We read that Mary went to the tomb, "while it was still dark." She didn't expect to find Jesus alive, but in love and devotion she was eager to care for his body as soon as possible. The Jewish laws, the very ones Jesus had challenged, forbid touching a dead body on the Sabbath. How can you nurture a desire to go to Jesus first, even in times of discouragement and darkness? Are there religious "rules" you need to let go of so you can receive Jesus fully in your life?

Prayer: *Lord God, your creative power is always at work in my life and in the world around me. Keep my mind open and willing to believe in all you want to do in my life. Amen.*

Tuesday, April 7 – Read **John 20:11-13**. We have learned that in John's gospel details matter. John tells us there are TWO angels, and they are SITTING inside the tomb on the ledge, "where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head and one at the foot." These details may be an allusion to the "mercy seat of God," which was what was depicted on the lid of the Ark of the Covenant which Jews believed held the stone remains of the 10 Commandments. John may have been trying to help us see that this place in the empty tomb was the new mercy seat. He wanted us to see, that through his sacrifice, Christ had reconnected humanity to God. Because of Jesus, we can now experience God directly.




Mary thought she was going to the tomb to finish preparing Jesus' body for burial. Why not weep? Expressing grief over a loss is healthy. Yet two angels "in white," which is not the color of sorrow, asked her, "Why are you crying?" Has God ever helped you see a painful or negative experience in a different light? What are you facing now that needs the touch of God's life and hope?




Mary, at first, could see only one likely explanation for the empty tomb when she said: "They have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they've put him." Have you ever faced a situation in which "they," whether "they" were faceless and nameless, or very well known, have tainted something you care about deeply? What helps you lift your focus from what "they" may have done to the living Lord of your life, letting him help you reframe the situation?

Prayer: *Living Lord, help me never to fear tears and sorrow—and not get stuck in them, either. Give me eyes to see people, situations, and myself in the light of your eternal love. Amen.*


Wednesday, April 8 – Read **John 20:14-18**, **Genesis 2:15** and **Romans 5:15-21**. Mary thought Jesus was "the gardener." Symbolically, he was. In Genesis and Romans, we read that while humanity failed in taking care of the garden, Jesus would tend earth's "garden" well and restore paradise. Mary didn't recognize Jesus. She may have been blinded by the light, her emotions, or her tears. It seems his voice, the way he said her name, was unmistakable. Then Jesus sent Mary to be the very first eyewitness to the risen Christ.


 At the sound of Jesus' voice, Mary moved in a flash from utter despair to unbelievable joy. How can you increasingly come to know the "sound" of Jesus' voice? What steps will help you keep your relationship with Jesus personal, a link between your heart and his, rather than just an academic exercise?

 In his commentary, *John for Everyone*, Scholar N. T. Wright said, "If someone in the first century had wanted to invent a convincing story about people seeing Jesus, they wouldn't have dreamed of giving the star part to a woman. Let alone Mary Magdalene." What does Jesus' trust in Mary to share the good news of Easter tell you about how Jesus saw the value of both women and men in his new creation?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, in the beginning you created. Then, when everything went wrong, you came and launched a new creation. I want to be part of the new things you are doing and join Mary in sharing the news of a risen Lord. Amen.*

Thursday, April 9 – Read **John 20:19-23**. Everything the disciples thought they understood about Jesus seemed lost. He was dead, and now his body was missing. The disciples were hiding and afraid the Jewish authorities would come after them next. But no one had stolen Jesus' body. He was still their Messiah, in ways that surpassed their wildest dreams. John tells us, "Jesus...stood among them," and gave them his peace, his purpose when he says, "As the Father sent me, so I am sending you." Then, Jesus gave him his power with the words, "Receive the Holy Spirit."


 For John, Jesus' resurrection was just the beginning for the disciples. On the night when the risen Christ finally appeared to his disciples, he breathed on them and said in verse 21, "As the father sent me, so I am sending you." We are meant to complete what Jesus started 2000 years ago. How can you be part of Jesus' work of extending the message of God's love and forgiveness to others? How can you help to restore the world to what God intended?


 John kept including clues to remind his readers of the creation stories in Genesis chapters 1 to 3. After Jesus commissioned the disciples in verse 21, "he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" This was a clear echo of Genesis 2:7 where God breathed life into the first humans. How has Jesus breathed new hope and purpose—new life—into you? In what ways can you tangibly share that peace and wholeness with those around you today?

Prayer: *Lord God, thank you for defeating death through Jesus' resurrection. Help me to embrace your peace and purpose, and to trust the Holy Spirit as my power source as I shine your light to those around me. Amen.*

Friday, April 10 – Read **John 20:24-28** and **1 Corinthians 15:42-47**. For unknown reasons, Thomas missed Jesus' first appearance to the disciples. He refused to take their word for the remarkable claim that Jesus was alive. But Jesus was patient with Thomas' fears and questions. He came again when Thomas was present and said, "Look at my hands. Put your hand into my side." The presence of his Lord and Savior who was clearly alive overcame all Thomas' doubt. He worshipped, calling Jesus, "my Lord and my God."


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 John began his Gospel in verse 1 with the words, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” At the end of his Gospel, Thomas became the first person in the entire gospel to fully get what that means: to look at Jesus and address him directly as “God.” Will you join him in bowing before Jesus and praying, “My Lord and my God”?

 Verse 26 tells us that the risen Jesus was different because he could pass through locked doors! But he was not just a ghost. That was the point of his words, “Put your hand into my side.” This was physically him, Jesus, the body that grave clothes could not contain. The Word who became flesh in John 1:14, arose as flesh still, with what Paul would call a “spiritual body.” In what ways can these hints about what the risen Jesus was like “flesh out” your hope and expectation for life with him eternally? Are there areas of your life that are locked like a door because of fear or anxiety? Take time in prayer to open those places to God’s work of healing and restoration.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, you are my Lord and my God. You are my Creator and my Redeemer. Come into the locked doors of my heart and bring your new life and healing. Because you live, I too will live forever. I thank you and I praise you today. Amen.*

Saturday, April 11 – Read **John 20: 29 to John 21: 25**. Today, we conclude reading the Gospel of John. John wrote as the generation of the apostles was dying, so Thomas’ experience had special significance. If people weren’t willing to trust the testimony of those who’d seen Jesus, the faith would soon die out. Jesus said, “Happy are those who don’t see and yet believe.” We don’t see Jesus as the apostles did. But an eyewitness wrote this gospel so that we may believe as they did and have eternal life.

 Chapter 20 was almost certainly the fourth gospel’s original ending. John’s gospel was not an exhaustive biography, written for abstract, academic purposes. No - “these things are written so that you will believe that Jesus is the Christ, God’s Son, and that believing, you will have life in his name.” Scholar William Barclay wrote, “We must read [the gospels], not primarily as historians seeking information, but as men and women seeking God.”¹ In what ways have you come to know God better as you’ve read the gospel of John? How can you more fully share the bread of life, the living water because of this journey with Jesus?

 Chapter 21 reads like a sequel, added to address critical issues in the early church. It served to clarify the death of the “beloved disciple,” reconcile and reinstate Peter as a leader, and affirm the reliability of the gospel’s testimony, likely addressing concerns from the late 1st century. Peter’s restoration is powerful and reminder that there is NOTHING that can separate us from God and God’s love for us. How can this promise strengthen you in the days ahead?

Prayer: *Dear God, I thank you that John used his consummate writing artistry to bear witness to Jesus, the Messiah. Guide me as I use whatever gifts I have to bear witness to my Savior. May I always remember that you will NEVER give up on me and that you made me to love me, You, and others. Amen.*