



Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church

Galatians

Hope in the Resurrection

John 20:1-9

04/21/2019

Main Point

Jesus' resurrection secures for us eternal hope.

Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Do you consider yourself a planner, or do you prefer to be more spontaneous?

For the planners in the group, how do you typically respond when things don't go according to your plans?

What is the most outrageous story you have of something not going according to plan?

Sometimes we have to make adjustments. No matter how much we like to plan things and feel like we are in control of our lives, sometimes things just don't go according to the plan. None of us plan for bad things to happen, but they do, and suffering produces uncertainty. After spending three years of their lives traveling, serving, and living with Jesus, they were forced to cope with the reality that Jesus had died on the cross. In John 20–21, we see that the disciples were committed to living in community with one another. This commitment to community allowed them to survive through their suffering and begin living in the power of Christ's resurrection.

Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 20:1-9.

What do these verses reveal about the relationship Jesus had with His followers? What do they reveal about the emotional state of Jesus' disciples after His death?

Peter, John, and Mary were all faithful followers of Jesus, and His death turned their world upside down. Undoubtedly, they experienced tremendous grief in the days following Jesus' crucifixion. In the midst of dealing with this devastating loss, they received word that Jesus' body was no longer in the tomb. Think about their situation for a second. They had buried a close friend and mentor, and now they were learning the body was missing.

If you were in this situation, what's the first thing that would go through your mind? What would you do?

Mary thought Jesus' body had been taken. Should they have known that Jesus would rise from the tomb? How?

Read Luke 9:21-22. How was the empty tomb part of Jesus' plan? Why didn't they remember Jesus saying this?

Jesus knew what He was getting in to. He knew He would die, and He told His disciples that He would raise on the third day. However, the idea of their leader dying was difficult, and the disciples missed out on Christ's glimpse into God's plan. They were heartbroken over His death, and resurrection seemed impossible to the disciples.

When Mary told the men about the empty tomb, they took off running in order to see it for themselves. They most likely assumed someone had stolen Jesus' body. Scripture says that John "entered the tomb, saw, and believed" (v. 8). For John, it was that simple. Everything that had occurred in John's life led up to this moment—his light bulb moment. A switch was flipped. From this point forward, John firmly believed the truth of the Messiah. He understood that Jesus was the Son of God.

Have you had a light bulb moment in your relationship with Jesus? If so, explain when it was, what caused it, and how it changed you.

What did the empty tomb prove to the disciples? To us?

What does the resurrection mean for our own understanding of Jesus and His mission?

To believe in God is to believe that He can accomplish the impossible. Faith inherently implies a belief in the supernatural. Before His death, Jesus shared with His disciples the events that would transpire—He would die and be raised to life three days later. Hearing Jesus share about this and understanding its meaning while looking at an empty tomb are two separate things. Like the disciples, our faith is based on an unseen God. We may marvel at His handiwork and place our trust in His Word, but we won't behold Him completely until we reach heaven.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ HEBREWS 10:19-25.

What does it mean that Jesus is our great High Priest (v. 21)? The writer of Hebrews gives us three commands that arise out of knowing that Jesus is our great High Priest (vv. 22-24). What are they?

How does knowing that Jesus is our Great High Priest make us able to obey these commands?

When we recognize Jesus as our great High Priest, we will draw near to God (v. 21), “hold fast the confession of our hope” (v. 23), and “consider how to stir up one another to love and good works” (v. 24). Trusting in Christ as our great High Priest allows us to draw near to God because Christ’s sacrifice has cleansed us of our sin. It allows us to remain firm in our commitment to God because Christ’s sacrifice was the ultimate act of faithfulness. And finally, Christ’s role as our great High Priest demonstrates the manner in which we are to encourage and serve one another as Jesus set aside the glory due to Him in order to meet our deepest need (see Phil. 2:5-11).

How might participating faithfully in the community at our church help you deal with uncertainty? How might it help you more clearly see the areas in your life that need to grow or change?

How can we promote love and good works in our church? How does our concern for each other demonstrate the gospel?

Why did the writer of Hebrews remind his readers that “the Day” is “drawing near” (v. 25)? Why might we need that reminder as we seek to build up the body of Christ here at our church?

The day referred to is the day of the Christ’s return. In other words, we are to commit to the church and encourage others to commit to the church until Jesus returns. Can you think of any better way to prepare the world for Christ’s return than to encourage as many people as possible to increase their love for God and their love for His church?

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What difference does the resurrection of Christ make in your daily life?

What hope does the truth of Christ's resurrection give you? What other areas of life are influenced by the events of Easter morning?

How might being a part of the faith community at our church encourage us as we face unexpected suffering?

Pray

Thank God for giving us eternal hope through the resurrection of Christ. Ask Him to help our church grow in their love for Him and for one another.

Commentary

JOHN 20:1-9.

20:1-2. We know from Matthew's account that Mary Magdalene was not alone on this visit (see Matt. 28:1). If we follow the flow of Matthew's text from 27:55 through the burial and resurrection, it would appear that "the other Mary" refers to Jesus' mother who had already taken a secondary place before the resurrection. Luke tells us it was early. This word refers to the last of the watches, probably between 3:00 and 6:00 p.m. John did not give us the details

available in the other Gospels, but used the word *blepo* (saw), indicating that Mary Magdalene glanced at the tomb. See the parallel account in Luke 24:1-12 for more context.

Startled, Mary ran to the disciples. John mentions Peter by name while implying he was the other recipient of this message. Luke tells us her report was rejected (24:11), so unbelieving were the disciples regarding Jesus' promise to rise again. Mary's fear and frustration must have propelled her back to the disciples' hiding place. We find it interesting that she recorded her findings to the person who had betrayed the Lord at the fire of the enemy. With no thought of a miraculous resurrection, Mary must have entertained all kinds of possibilities, none of which seemed to her a happy outcome.

20:3-5. This passage talks a lot about running. Mary ran back to the disciples. Although John made it sound as though they immediately dashed off to the tomb upon hearing her report, Luke gives a slightly different picture in Luke 24:11-12. All this is quite interesting since in first-century Palestinian culture, grown men did not run. In fact, the only other literal New Testament use apart from these verses appears in Matthew 28:8, describing the same event. The disciples had walked hundreds, maybe thousands, of miles with the Lord for three and one-half years. Now an empty tomb accelerated their pace.

John was certainly younger than Peter, and he may have been faster. He reached the tomb first and looked at the strips of linen. The text uses the same word for saw that appears in verse 1 describing Mary. Like Mary, John did not enter the tomb. We sense a certain hesitation and uncertainty, perhaps even fear. What lay beyond in that darkness? What horror might they find in the shadows of the burial cave? John was the only disciple to have seen the crucifixion, so we need not wonder at his unwillingness to look at that broken body again.

20:6-7. Whether motivated by shame or just acting according to character, Peter plunged into the darkness. We assume one of the men carried some kind of lantern or torch. The text says that Peter saw what John had seen and in addition, the burial cloth. But the word changes to one with a slightly different meaning, perhaps best translated as "noticed" rather than "looked at." Notice that the burial cloth was folded up by itself. This was obviously an intentional act on the part of someone. How clearly Peter must have remembered this night years later at the home of Cornelius (see Acts 10:39-43).

20:8-9. Three of Jesus' followers saw the empty tomb, but John was not finished with his report. He wanted his readers to know that after Peter entered the tomb, John himself finally found enough courage to follow him. Now we have yet another use of the English verb *saw* and yet a third Greek word appearing in the original text. This time John uses a word that means "to perceive with understanding." That is why our text reads that John saw and

believed. But lest readers of this Gospel get the wrong idea about the quality of the disciples' faith at this point, John appended a parenthesis telling us that neither he nor the rest of the disciples yet understood the connection between scriptural prophecy and the resurrection. That would await Jesus' post-resurrection teaching followed by the indwelling with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

What Scripture might John have had in mind when he wrote verse 9? Quite possibly Isaiah 53:10-12 or even Psalm 16:10. What did he actually believe if he did not understand the biblical background of resurrection? Perhaps the best option in the text is to conclude that John believed Jesus was alive but could not figure out why or what would happen next. That fits well with the great surprise of the disciples at post-resurrection appearances. Nevertheless, once they understood, the message of the living Savior permeated their preaching throughout the next thirty years.