



LEADER'S GUIDE – April 21

PRIMARY PASSAGE

John 20:1-18: 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. ² 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!”

³ So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. ⁴ Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, ⁷ as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. ⁸ Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. ⁹ (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) ¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

¹¹ Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb¹² and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

¹³ 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.” ¹⁴ At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

¹⁵ He asked her, “Woman, 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.”

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, “Mary.”

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”).

¹⁷ Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

¹⁸ 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.

1.) Read vv. 1-18. From this story, what stands out the most to you and why?

2.) Why is it so powerful that Mary is the first person to see Jesus? Mary was previously possessed by seven demons (Luke 8). Despite Mary's past, it did not disqualify her from being called by Jesus (v.16) and then sent by Jesus (v.18). Furthermore, when you consider the culture of the day and its view on women, the fact that Mary is the first person who sees Jesus is a beautiful reminder that God sees value in all people. Despite the culture not thinking highly of her or having a difficult past, Jesus valued her and he used her in a mighty way.

3.) What are some of the lies we believe that prevent us from allowing God to love us and do something special through us? You may have to prompt people on this. Some of the common lies that we hear, "I am too big of a screw up for God to accept me?" or "I can't get my life in order enough for God to use me?" or "I can't talk about Jesus with that person because I have too many issues myself." Etc.

4.) Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-23. How does Paul explain the importance of the resurrection? Jesus' claims to be God and our faith in him, hinges on the resurrection. If it does not happen, everything falls apart. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul shows that without the resurrection, our message is useless, our faith is futile, we still live in sin, and we are to be pitied. But since we know it is true, we can put our faith and hope in Christ. Here is a short explanation of first fruits: This was the offering that people gave to God. It was the first and best of their harvest. The sacrifice was a sign that a fruitful harvest was to follow. Thus, Christ's resurrection was a promise for our future resurrection from the dead.

5.) Read 1 Corinthians 15:58. Paul explains how the resurrection should change the way we live today. What would this verse look like in your life this week?

PERSONAL RESPONSE

Many of us have heard the resurrection story multiple times. No matter how familiar we are with the story, we must never forget its importance. It always should move us to gratitude and worship of Christ and change how we live today!

- **As you have focused on the resurrection this week, what is one thing that has stood out to you?**
- **What is one practical way that the resurrection should change how you live today?**