

Easter Brings Great Joy

John 20:1-18

PW Emerson – 05/26/2019 – Ten:27 Ministries

INTRODUCTION

ASK

- What occasion(s) in your life do you remember having great joy?

For the disciples, Easter was the greatest day they could have imagined.

- They had seen Jesus do *INCREDIBLE* miracles, but when he died on the cross, they were sure they missed something with the miracles

When the disciples saw Jesus resurrected, after having seen him crucified, after being flogged, the disciples knew it was a whole new ball game.

The disciples knew that Jesus' power was greater than that of the Roman Empire!

John 20:1-18

¹ 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 tomb ¹² 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.

ASK

- Ever have mom or dad call you in a way that you knew their feeling?
- What did it mean when they "middle named" you?

Bryan

Christian John

Dahlton Jerome

Austin Ray

Mom/Dad said your middle name to get the point across that you are in deep yogurt!

They wanted you to know that it was not a good time to mess around!

By the same token, when my name was called at seminary commencement, I was incredible excited ... first, middle & last name!!!

Jesus had been chatting with Mary Magdalene but she had no idea who he was.

- Mary thought she was talking with the gardener.

So he said her name in just the right way so she would know who he was.

Just from the way Jesus said Mary's name, she caught on.

The great news for us is that we don't have to have everything figured out.

Jesus doesn't wait for us to understand everything first – otherwise it would be a while.

Jesus calls out ... BRYAN CHRISTIAN DAHLTON AUSTIN

And God calls in a way **so that we will know it is God calling us!**

When God calls out to us, what does he want to say?

What lesson or knowledge is of the utmost importance for us to know?

First, we need to know that

GOD CAN OVERCOME ANY PART OF OUR PAST

Think about the woman *MARY* that Jesus calls by name:

- She was believed to have been a prostitute!

Luke 8:1-2

¹ After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, ² and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out;

Regardless of Mary's past, she is the first person Jesus calls out to after his resurrection.

WHY?

Because she followed Jesus around and acted like one of his disciples.

She didn't let her past define her and neither did God.

Mary's identity was based on who she was in Christ.

I remember once during the Christmas season I preached about the genealogy of Jesus

- Many of the people listed in the genealogy had done horrible things

But they did not allow their past to define who they were

They were remembered for who they were in God!!!

For all of us here, I suspect we can all think of events from our past that we regret and were quite bad. (For the teenagers thinking no, wait, that day will come.)

For me – when I turn to Christ, I am relieved to find that God remembers my sins no more!!

God can overcome *ANY* part of our past!

My past doesn't define me; it didn't for Mary Magdalene and it won't for ANY of us, as long as we turn to God!

There's something else God makes clear when he calls out to us:

GOD IS WITH US NOW!!!!

God appeared to Mary and made it clear that she is not alone.

God appeared to Peter, who denied Jesus 3 times before the rooster crowed, and made it clear that he is not alone.

God appeared to the doubting Thomas and told him to put his fingers in the holes in Jesus' hands, to *KNOW* that Jesus was with him!

God wants us to KNOW that He is now with us!!!

John 14:18-20

¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ Before long, the world will not see me anymore, **but you will see me**. Because I live, you also will live.

²⁰ On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, **and I am in you.**

Sometimes God is that “still small voice” telling us exactly what we need to hear.

Sometimes God is the burning bush, telling us to go out on a limb.

Sometimes God waits for us to be still, so we will know it is His voice and nothing else.

Sometimes God waits for us to take a step he has told us to take, and only once we’ve taken that step will God tell us more.

Sometimes God tells us something so off the wall because He is set apart from the world and he wants us to be set apart from the world.

Saul, the Apostle Paul, got to find out what happens, not only when we don’t listen to God, but do the exact opposite of what he wants.

- He wasn’t the only one – Pharaoh, Baalam, Jonah and others

I’ve also done that – how about you?

Giving all to protect the young & powerless

Some time ago I read a fascinating story in National Geographic magazine. An explorer had made a tremendous accomplishment. He managed, for the first time in history, to record on videotape the birth of a panda cub in the wild. This was amazing, in part, because of how violent the mother panda bear can be when intruders are near their young. The newborn cub was no larger than a gerbil. He could fit in the palm of your hand. The most amazing thing happened after this cub was born. In order to protect the cub from the elements, and to give the cub an opportunity to grow sheltered from the dangers of the outside world, she spread her enormous body across this tiny cub and did not move for twenty-eight days. She did not eat, sleep, or even defecate at all during this time. Her massive presence remained steadily hovering over this tiny being. It has since been discovered that this

is a common practice when the panda bear is protecting her young. So it is with God, as His omnipotent presence hovers over us as a shield from our circumstances in life.

Hebrews 13:5

⁵ Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said,

“Never will I leave you;
never will I forsake you.”^l

CONCLUSION

Look at the change in Mary ...

- From she was crying
- To proclaiming to Jesus’ disciples, “I have seen the Lord!”

Easter brings about great change and great joy.

A woman, who had been diagnosed with cancer, had been given three month to live. Her doctor told her to start making preparations to die.

So she contacted her pastor and had him come to her house to discuss certain aspects of her final wishes. She told him which songs she wanted sung at the service, what scriptures she would like read, and what she wanted to be wearing.

The woman also told her pastor that she wanted to be buried with her favorite Bible. Everything was in order and the pastor was preparing to leave when the woman suddenly remembered something very important to her. "There's one more thing," she said excitedly.

"What's that?" came the pastor's reply.

"This is very important." The woman continued, "I want to be buried with a fork in my right hand."

The pastor stood looking at the woman not knowing quite what to say.

"That shocks you, doesn't it?" the woman asked.

Well, to be honest, I'm puzzled by the request," said the pastor.

The woman explained. "In all my years of attending church socials and functions where food was involved, and let's be honest, food is an important part of any church event, spiritual or otherwise, my favorite part was when whoever was clearing away the dishes of the main course would lean over and say 'you can keep your fork.' It was my favorite part because I knew that something better was coming. When they told me to keep my fork, I knew that something great was about to be given to me. It wasn't Jell-O or pudding. It was cake or pie - something with substance.

So I just want people to see me there in that casket with a fork in my hand and I want them to wonder, 'What's with the fork?' Then I want you to tell them, 'Something better is coming'

Judges 6:12

When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.

I Samuel 3:10

The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!

Exodus 3:4

When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!

Throughout history, God has called people.

God continues to call to people today.

I pray your response will be that of Mary Magdalene – one of joy and service