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## Gospel lesson

Hear the surprising new start of the week for the disciples after Jesus died and was laid in a tomb.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/jesus-alive/>;  
credit: Courtesy of Lumo Project  
Films - [www.lumoproject.com](http://www.lumoproject.com).

### John 20:1-18

NRSV

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

<sup>2</sup>So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him."

<sup>3</sup>Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb.

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

<sup>5</sup>He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in.

<sup>6</sup>Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there,

<sup>7</sup>and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not

lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself.

<sup>8</sup> Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed;

<sup>9</sup> for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

<sup>10</sup> Then the disciples returned to their homes.

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

<sup>12</sup> and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet.

<sup>13</sup> They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."

<sup>14</sup> When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

<sup>15</sup> Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away."

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher).

<sup>17</sup> Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

<sup>18</sup> Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

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*The Word of God for the people of God*

*<Hymn "Christ Is Risen">*

*UMH #307>*

## Message: A New Start



*picture from*

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/journeys-end-a-new-start/easter-sunday-year-a-lectionary-planning-notes/easter-sunday-year-a-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Risen Lord of life,

as we take time now to further consider today's scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may die to sin with You, and start anew in the life You make possible through love. Amen.

*"Easter is a new start for all of us who journey together in grace as the Body of Christ, for it is*

the good news that binds us together and empowers us to continue on the path set before us.”

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After an apple is eaten, usually only a core remains. Most people consider the core to be trash and throw it away. But God includes the gift of apple seeds in each apple core. If an apple core is left untended on the ground, a seed may still sprout and begin growing into an apple tree (from which apples may later be harvested).

- ✦ If someone finds the seedling, they may not recognize it for what it is and walk away from the opportunity it offers.
- ✦ If someone finds it and decides they do not want it there, they may even destroy it, preventing others from getting fruit from the new tree.
- ✦ If someone who wants fruit finds it, they may bring it home for their whole household to enjoy the apples produced later – even if that was not the kind of fruit they expected.

Someone who understands the potential of God’s gift might intentionally bury the apple seeds in fertile dirt, for more trees to grow. Our focus impacts whether we reap the fruit of new life.

Paul told the Colossians to “Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.” Our mindset impacts how we receive the gift of new life from Jesus’s resurrection.

The temple leaders and Roman military rejected Jesus;

instead of seeing God's gift, they crucified and discarded Him. But God included a great gift in Jesus. Planted with love in a tomb, Jesus arose to bring new life for all to cherish.

- ✝ Mary, Peter, and the disciple Jesus loved initially did not recognize what the empty tomb was. The men went home, walking away before they learned about the new life of the resurrection.
- ✝ Imagine if the head priests or military found the resurrected Jesus when they did not want Him alive. They might have attacked Him, trying to prevent anyone from learning of the resurrection.
- ✝ Mary stayed at the tomb. She saw the angels and then saw Jesus. She was overjoyed and ran to bring the news home to the other disciples, that all of them could celebrate the resurrection, even though it was not what they had really expected.

Jesus was God's gift to our sin-filled world, not only giving Himself intentionally but planting grace in the disciples, that more people could know the love of God and have new life. Our focus, our mindset impacts whether we reap the fruit of that new life.

What mindsets hear the resurrection story today?

- ✝ Some people do not recognize God's work in the world, and they walk away, disregarding Jesus. They may enjoy the fruits that others produce in faith, seeing them as random acts of kindness.
- ✝ Some people have preconceived notions about how the world should be, and see Jesus as a threat to their way of life. They seek to discredit Him and

may turn others away from Christ.

- ✝ Believers embrace the resurrection story and the joy & hope it brings. They have new life and their entire household is blessed for it.

Many share the Good News with others, intentionally planting seeds of hope and love that can later grow into new life through God's grace.

What is our mindset when we hear the resurrection story? Will you receive the truth of Jesus and find new life in God's love? Will you share the story with others, that they can rejoice in the love too?

Spread the Word about Jesus's resurrection, that the Holy Spirit may transform you, our community, and our world with God's grace!