

John 20:10-18 | Dave Stough

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[0 : 00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church, Knowing Jesus, Making Jesus Known. This morning, we continue our study on the Gospel According to John.

The smells, the sounds, and the sights, except sometimes those birds are pretty annoying early in the morning, right Gene? I went to bed late last night, and was it about 5.30?

The birds just wouldn't quit, so I was up. But I enjoy that sound. I enjoy the smell of fresh flowers. I like seeing dogwood trees come blossom with their white.

It's like God is testifying through His creation to us every year that He's the one that restores things and gives life. Now, on TV, restoring things has become kind of popular, hasn't it?

This old house, Antiques Roadshow, just to name a few. Take these old items and, you know, make them really nice.

[1 : 08] My next-door neighbor purchased a 1940, I know you know what it was when I seen it, but it was a Willys AmeriCar, a 1940, looks like a little dragster.

He said it was sitting in a field for almost 40 years before he got it. So when he brought it back to his driveway, this was sometime right after 2000.

I guess it was after 2005. That's when we moved there, right? Okay. Sometime about then. It was just a bunch of rusty old parts. Couldn't even really tell what it was, hardly.

Looked pretty useless to me. Now, it's a beautifully restored machine that he races in quarter-mile events. This same idea about restoration is also, I understand from the Bible, on God's heart.

Did you know that the Bible says that you and I, we need restoring? Why is that? Well, simply stated, sin has a bad effect on each one of us.

[2 : 22] It causes suffering. I'm not saying all suffering is because we sin and we suffer, but sin in the world in general causes suffering.

It causes pain in many ways. Worst of all, sin separates us from our Creator. But God wants to bring us back to himself, to be restored by him.

Just like my neighbor, Tom, he had to buy that vehicle. It was in the field there. He had to pay a price to get the chance to restore the vehicle.

Just like that, God did that. He paid a price and is willing to restore anybody who would believe in him. Today, we're going to look at God's Word and celebrate what is surely, without a doubt, the most important event in all of human history.

Now, you might not hear that taught in public schools or wherever, but the death, the burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Now, there was a man by the name of Lee Strobel.

[3 : 36] He was an investigative journalist and the legal editor of the Chicago Tribune in the 1970s. Excuse me. He was in charge of the legal editing of the paper for the Chicago Tribune in the 1970s.

He was also an atheist whose wife became a born-again Christian. He felt like he was losing his wife and kids to this crazy belief system for weak people.

So what he decided to do was set out to disprove the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead using his investigative skills as a journalist like a lawyer would in a courtroom.

So, Lee Strobel knew that Christianity's entire belief system would be proven false, would be a hoax, if he could disprove the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

He did this. His motivation, he thought at the time, was to get his family back. What he found out was nothing short of miraculous. I got a little video clip for you to watch.

[5 : 02] The evidence accumulated over time until November the 8th of 1981, which is sort of when I reached a critical mass. I remember going alone in my room and I took a yellow legal pad and put a line down the middle.

And on one side, I started to list all of the evidence I had encountered for Jesus Christ being the Son of God. And on the other side, all the negative evidence against that. And I wrote and I wrote page after page.

And finally, I put my pen down. I said, wait a minute. In light of this avalanche of evidence pointing toward the truth of Christianity, it would require more faith for me to maintain my atheism than to become a follower of Jesus Christ.

And so that's the moment that I decided, consistent with the evidence, the most logical, the most rational step I could take was a step of faith in the same direction the evidence was pointing and put my trust in Jesus.

And after I did that, I thought, you know, maybe Leslie would like to hear about this. I thought it was too good to be true. My heart was pounding. I was in tears.

[6 : 08] I was so excited. I just threw my arms around him and kissed him and hugged him and told him how I'd been praying and how lots of people had been praying that this day would come. She threw her arms around me and she said, you hard-hearted son of a Baptist.

She said, I've been telling you this for two years. I mean, come on. And that began a transformational process for me where over time my philosophy and my attitudes, relationships, parenting, worldview, all of that began to change over time for good, really for good.

When Lee became a Christian, his whole life started to change to the extent that our five-year-old daughter, who also saw those changes, went to her Sunday school teacher and told her that she wanted Jesus to do in her life what he had done in her daddy's life.

Jesus said, you shall know the truth and the truth will set you free. And, you know, that's my story. It was someone who said, I'm going to investigate this stuff with an open mind. Let it take me wherever the evidence will take me.

And what I discovered in the end is Jesus made the claim that he is the truth, that everything hinges on his identity. In fact, everything hinges on the resurrection.

[7 : 26] Because anybody can claim to be the son of God. If Jesus really did return from the dead, then he is who he claimed to be. And that changes everything. But what about your own...

That, by the way, is a movie in the theaters right now. Case for Christ. They made a movie out of that. Now, Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, that if Christ be not raised from the dead, we are found, that is the apostles, we are found to be false witnesses of God because we testified that he raised Christ from the dead.

And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is in vain. Your faith is useless and you're still in your sins. That's what 1 Corinthians chapter 15 says.

It goes on to say, but now Christ is raised and is the first fruits of those believers whose bodies are now waiting in the grave. Biblical Christianity is based on a historical event, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

It's not just a bunch of teachings that people try to follow. It is on this firm basis of fact, this historical event, that the Christian faith, biblical Christianity, is built.

[8 : 50] Jesus Christ said and did things that can only be done by God. Unlike any other religion in the world, Christianity's founder claimed to be God.

Jesus claimed to be God. No one has seen God at any time, but the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. Jesus said, I and the Father are one.

Jesus Christ is the only man, excuse me, Jesus Christ is the only man who ever lived a sinless life. Jesus asked His accusers, which one of you convicts me of sin? Even Pilate, who had Him crucified, said, I find no fault in Him.

Jesus told His followers, who were at that time looking for a king to set up a kingdom, that He was going to die, give His life a ransom for many, be buried, and on the third day, rise again.

[10 : 05] Islam's founder, Muhammad, did He say such things? Did Muhammad rise from the dead? No, He's still in the grave. He never said He would die for sin.

Buddhism, Hinduism, they're merely teachings to follow and meditation to do, whose founders are also in the grave.

Evolution and atheism only mock Christianity, offer no real proof or any hope, and whose founder, Charles Darwin, is in the grave.

Biblical Christianity is distinguished from any man-made religion of the world. For who could give life to the dead but God Himself?

The Bible teaches us that Jesus Christ came forth from the grave in a glorified, eternal, yet physical body, still physical, and He lived among His disciples for 40 days before He ascended to heaven. [11:14] It says that He ate fish, He was touched, handled, He was heard, He was seen. When Jesus told them, His disciples, beforehand that He would be crucified and on the third day rise again, I don't think the disciples, as a matter of fact, I know, they didn't really hear the part about Him rising again.

They did not look for it after the crucifixion. They didn't believe it until they seen it. Now, He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, which we're going to read about in a few moments. And then shortly thereafter, He appeared to the rest of the Marys, then to Peter, I think by Himself, then to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, who didn't recognize Him when He was first talking to them until they recognized Him in the breaking of the bread. Then He appeared to the ten disciples. Remember, Judas is gone now. He had committed suicide after He betrayed the Lord. And Thomas wasn't present then. Then shortly after that, He appeared again to the eleven disciples. Thomas was there, and this is when Jesus said, Thomas, because you have seen, you believe. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet still believe.

[12:40] Then, after that, He appeared to Peter, James, and John, who were brothers, and to Nathaniel, and to two other disciples who were in a boat fishing up on the Sea of Galilee. Then Paul says in 1 Corinthians, He appeared to 500 people, 500 believers, all at one time.

Then Jesus appeared to His half-brother, James. Then again, to the eleven disciples in Galilee. And then one last time, to all the disciples on the Mount of Olives just before His ascension, Acts chapter 1.

Our text today is found in John's Gospel. Can you pull that up? Thank you. John's Gospel, chapter 20, and it's verses 11 through 18.

We're going to, I'm sorry, we're actually going to pick it up at the beginning of the chapter so we have the context. John chapter 1, I'm sorry, chapter 20, verse 1. Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance.

She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, they have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb and we don't know where they have put him.

[14:02] Peter and the other disciples started out for the tomb. They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn't go in.

Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in and he saw and believed. For as yet, they still hadn't understood the scripture that said, Jesus must rise from the dead.

Then they went home. But Mary stood outside the tomb weeping. And as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain.

Then they said to her, Woman, why are you weeping? She said to them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.

[15:09] Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, Woman, why are you weeping?

Whom are you seeking? She supposing him to be the gardener said to him, Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him and I will take him away.

Jesus said to her, Mary. She turned around and said to him, Rabboni, which is to say teacher.

Jesus said to her, Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father.

But go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that she had, and he had spoken these things to her.

Now what else do we know from Scripture about Mary Magdalene? We know from Luke's Gospel that she met Jesus through the act of him casting, it says, seven demons out of her.

[16:24] She was kind of messed up. We know she believed that he was the Messiah, the Savior. Matthew's Gospel account says she followed Jesus.

She was with the disciples. She followed Jesus and ministered to him. She ministered to him. She also was present at the cross and witnessed our Lord's death by crucifixion. Although grief and shock must have consumed her and the other, her and the other women, even though they were in that state, went ahead and prepared to go anoint the body of Jesus for a proper Jewish burial.

Mary Magdalene loved much because she knew she had been forgiven much. Mary was determined to show her love for her Lord one last time by taking care of his body.

Did you notice the determination she had in her voice, or, I don't know about her voice, but in her statements that she made? Verse 13, They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.

[17 : 41] In verse 17, Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away. Can you picture that? Peter and John have already left.

She's there weeping, not understanding he's rose from the dead. And she thinks this person is a gardener, and she's going to go get this body wherever his gardener took it.

It's all stiffed and wrapped up. And what is she going to do? Drag it? To where? All she knows, she was going to do whatever it took to give him a proper burial.

God bless her for her devotion. Now, as incomplete as her understanding was of the situation that was presented in our text today, this woman loved the Lord Jesus.

Even to the point of showing it to his body, to a dead body. To what she thought was going to be a dead body. Can you imagine the grief and the confusion and the sheer sorrow she must have had?

[18 : 50] That she had to feel? Think about this. She knew that Jesus was the Messiah. she knew that she seen him for who he was, the Son of God.

All her hope in the future was in Jesus. The one who raised Lazarus from the dead just days earlier. All of that, now, he died.

The one who was the giver of life, he died. She had to be in utter shock and despair. They all were. Like I said before, they didn't quite hear what Jesus was saying to them.

Which makes me ask a question. Have I really heard what Jesus is saying? Have you really heard what Jesus is saying?

Matthew chapter 16 records for us earlier in the ministry of Jesus a question that he asked the disciples.

[20 : 01] He said, who do men say that I am? And they gave him some answers. And then he asked them, who do you say that I am?

Peter, speaking for all of them, which he did a lot, he said, you are the Christ. the son of the living God. Good going, Peter.

You got that one right. Peter kind of stick his foot in his mouth a lot though because he spoke too much, which I understand how that is. Right then though, at that time, Jesus began, right after that statement, he began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, suffer many things, and be killed, and on the third day, rise him again.

You know what Peter did? He grabbed the Lord and he took him, he rebuked him. He said, far be it from you, Lord. That's not going to happen to you. Now, the rise again portion of what Jesus just said to them earlier, I'm sure didn't sink in because they weren't even going to deal with the dying part.

Right? No, now at this point, Mary and the rest of the disciples, all they knew, the one they had their hope in is now gone.

[21 : 20] He's dead. So they thought. Mary and her grief in this passage was talking to two angels and didn't even know they were angels.

She was not disturbed by seeing them in the Bible any time angels reveal themselves to humans without veiling the fact that they're angels.

The humans are in much amazement and even fear. They usually say, fear not. Now, shortly before this meeting with Mary, the angels, there were the other women that the angels appeared to them and they said to them, whom do you seek?

He is risen just as he said. And those women were in great fear and amazement and they took off. Now, the primary ministry of an angel is to deliver a message from God.

That's what the Bible says. Here the message is posed as a question. Woman, why are you crying? What is implied in that question is, don't you remember what he told you?

[22 : 33] he was going to rise from the dead? These two angels, like I said, they didn't say what they said to the other women. Now, the Lord Jesus asked her the same question.

Woman, why are you crying? Then he added, whom are you seeking? obviously, the Lord knew the answer to those questions before he asked her.

But he wanted her to express what was in her heart just before he revealed himself to her, alive and victorious over sin and death.

did you notice that Mary didn't recognize Jesus when she saw him but she instantly recognized him when he called her by name.

He said, Mary. Mary's recognition of the risen Lord was of his, because of his personal call to her.

[23 : 41] it was the familiar sound of Jesus' voice that brought her attention to what was really going on. Now, earlier in John's Gospel, Jesus said, my sheep hear my voice and they follow me and I give unto them, I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish.

In this story, I see something pictured here that's very important for us. Many of us are so hurt and grieving that like Mary, we can't see the answer to our problems though it's sitting right there in front of us.

the Bible tells us that death and suffering, as I said earlier, are a result of sin.

Adam's sin, my sin, your sin, sin separates us from God. I don't have to tell you but I'll say it, we live in a world full of chaos and evil and it's becoming more apparent as the days go on, right?

So when we suffer, certain questions usually arise from within us like, if God is truly powerful and all-loving, why is there this suffering?

[25 : 25] Was I just born so I could die? Can't God take care of these things? Now some people will conclude that God is incapable of fixing it and so they may become an atheist or say that they don't believe in God.

Others will think he's unwilling and they'll question the goodness and the love of God and some just may become bitter. Now I know from my own experience and from watching others is that we humans we're a prideful bunch aren't we?

Our pride wants us to think we're okay just the way we are but the Bible teaches us that the real problem of the human condition it says that we're not okay it says that all of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God it says we are spiritually dead on the inside we're born spiritually dead this is the root cause of all suffering death is a result of sin it's the outcome do you know why that is? Sin separates from the creator from the life giver there's a spiritual disconnect in every one of us it takes an intervention from God himself in order for us to even see we need to be saved from our despair and saved from his judgment upon sin many people do not know it but what they're really searching for is reconciliation with their creator deep down inside where you live with you and in places that you and the almighty are the only ones that know about there's a hole in your heart and I can say that because it's true of every one of us Bible says that God has placed eternity into our hearts that we may know that we're incomplete without him so we're boxed into this time and space life under the sun and

God has it so that we can't really have an answer for these things apart from him from looking to him for salvation so it could be that the reason you're going through that I go through pain and suffering is to get us to look up for an answer the good news of Jesus Christ is this Paul said in first Corinthians I can deliver to you that first of all which I received that Christ Jesus died for our sins according to the scriptures sinners you know those things that you don't like about yourself things that I don't like about myself says in the Bible that that while we were still God shows his love to us this way and that while we were still sinners at the point where we could do nothing we're separated from him while we're still sinners

[29 : 23] God shows his love to us this way that Christ died for us and he was buried and on the third day he rose again according to the scriptures the gospel is a simple simple message that mankind even in the name of Christ has made very complicated because of power structures greed the glory of man but Jesus says I came to die for you do you believe God gives life to us eternal life spiritual life as a gift because that's the only way we could receive it one last thing Isaiah 45 that last scripture verse the natural heart rebels against the simplicity

God gives God gives his gospel message the message of salvation he tells us though in Isaiah 45 22 here he says just 12 words look to me and be saved all you ends of the earth now this indeed I think is a bold proclamation it says look to me and be saved just look it doesn't take much effort to

just look does it you don't have to go to college and study to just look you don't have to get up and go to work in the morning to just look you don't have to go help the thing that you're looking at to just look it does however take a recognition that you can't save yourself some of you are looking to yourselves no use looking there something you're going to find there is more despair and guilt forgiveness from sin and relief from guilt comes only by looking to Jesus who paid the price and personally calls you by name just as he did Mary Magdalene Jesus Christ says look to me I'm all that you need man other