



WEEKLY STUDY

EASTER

Those who journeyed with us from Palm Sunday, through Holy Thursday and Good Friday experienced a glorious pronouncement of the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter weekend. “Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!” This week, we spend time studying and praying through the best part of the best story ever told. At the center of the Christian faith is an empty tomb, a resurrection, the hope for new life after death. May you live a resurrected life today and every day!

Peace of Christ,
Dr. Mark Youngman
Pastor of Discipleship

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture and follow the daily prayer prompt.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: JOHN 20.1-2

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!”

- What a morning surprise for Mary Magdalene. She was going to grieve and sit in her sadness and loss, but she left with shock and maybe a small taste of hope. Her immediate theory was that someone had taken Jesus’ body. She responded very normally as someone who was personally very close to her deceased loved one. Was there a moment during her running and relaying the news to others when she began to recall the things Jesus had said about himself? Did she consider that this was the third day after his cruel crucifixion on the cross? **Describe how disorienting it was when you lost someone you were close to. When did you begin to find hope even in the face of death?**
- *Jesus, we feel the loss of Good Friday. We feel the sense of God’s absence and we look for a return to the hope of life. Thank you for inviting us to run to the empty tomb. Amen.*

TUESDAY: JOHN 20.3-10

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.

- We can imagine the fear and anger that motivated Peter and John's footrace to the tomb. Why would John need to share that he won the race? Yet it was Peter who went straight into the tomb. After John joined him there to find the grave clothes still lying in an otherwise empty tomb, he believed. **How many times have you seen evidence of Jesus' resurrection? When was the most recent time you found evidence that Jesus is alive?**
- *Lord, my belief is up and down. I run because of doubt and I run because of faith. Steady me as I come face to face with the empty tomb and the signs of resurrection all around me. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: JOHN 20.11-16

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").

- The response of the angels and the supposed gardener seems insensitive at first. You don't ask a grieving person why they are crying...unless you know something they don't know. Jesus was alive! And Jesus was standing right next to her. We can see her quickly move from the grief of losing a friend to a recognition that he had always been something much more than a close friend to his disciples. He was the teacher who pointed the way to the Kingdom of God. **How does Jesus show up as both friend and teacher to you?**
- *God, you have made a way for me to see Jesus face to face and to hear him call my name. I listen today for his voice that speaks with power. Amen.*

THURSDAY: JOHN 20.17-18

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.*

- John's account of Easter morning involves a lot of traveling back and forth for Mary Magdalene! She first saw the emptiness of the tomb, then upon returning she encountered the risen Jesus. Why did it take two trips to see Jesus? Sometimes we have to stay in the story long enough to have a deep encounter with the risen One. **Can you think of times when you left too early and missed out on something great?**
- *God, I know that you sent Jesus for a purpose. But you shine so beautifully through him that I want to hold on to the dynamic encounters. Give me grace to see where you are calling me to proclaim that "I have seen the Lord!" Amen.*

FRIDAY: ACTS 2.14a, 36-40

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.

"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."

³⁷ *When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"*

³⁸ *Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."*

⁴⁰ *With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."⁴¹ Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.*

- For this to become a part of your story, you have to respond to the good news of resurrection. The crowds in Acts 2 heard from Peter that Jesus is the Messiah. They were cut to the heart and had to figure out how to respond. The response offered to them was to turn their lives around and be baptized. But the promise of forgiveness of sins was for entire households and people who were far away from God. **How is your life a response to the resurrection of Jesus Christ and his grace offered to you?**
- *Jesus, I join with Peter, the disciples and all the saints in proclaiming that you are the Messiah. Amen.*

SATURDAY: PSALM 116.1-4, 12-19

*I love the LORD, for he heard my voice;
he heard my cry for mercy.*

² *Because he turned his ear to me,
I will call on him as long as I live.*

³ *The cords of death entangled me,
the anguish of the grave came over me;
I was overcome by distress and sorrow.*

⁴ Then I called on the name of the LORD:
“LORD, save me!”

What shall I return to the LORD
for all his goodness to me

¹³ I will lift up the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the LORD.

¹⁴ I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all his people.

¹⁵ Precious in the sight of the LORD
is the death of his faithful servants.

¹⁶ Truly I am your servant, LORD;
I serve you just as my mother did;
you have freed me from my chains.

¹⁷ I will sacrifice a thank offering to you
and call on the name of the LORD.

¹⁸ I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all his people,

¹⁹ in the courts of the house of the LORD—
in your midst, Jerusalem.

- Jesus’ death and resurrection were God’s answer to every cry for salvation from the beginning of time to today. I see how I am situated within the greatest story ever told. **Think about your own story. When has God heard your cry and responded with mercy? From what chains has God freed you?**
- *Lord, today I see that the greatest part of that story means that I can be saved through your merciful acts in Jesus Christ. Amen.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Answer these questions together.

1. Which scripture from this week’s study spoke most deeply to you?
2. How is God calling you to respond to the resurrection of Jesus Christ?