

Sermon Title:
"From Discouragement to Divine Encounter"
Sermon by Pastor Tom Harrington
Week of April 24, 2011

Sermon Based Small Group Discussion Guide

Icebreaker

Think of a time when you felt discouraged. How did it affect your daily routine?

What brought you out of it?

Big Idea:

No matter how discouraged you may feel, you need to realize that the cure is in the empty tomb.

Sermon Text:

John 20:1-18 NIV

The Empty Tomb

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.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

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.

Digging Deeper Learning more about the lesson

Discouragement- feeling of despair in the face of obstacles.
a feeling of having lost hope.

Discouragement is no doubt what the disciples and those close to Jesus were feeling after the crucifixion.

Reread verses 1-3.

1) What did Mary Magdalene assume when she saw the empty grave?

Reread verses 4-9.

The two disciples that Mary Magdalene went to tell were John and Simon Peter. Immediately they both ran to the grave.

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.

2) What is the significance of the way in which the burial clothes were found?

⁸ Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed.

3) What did John believe?

At that moment John realized that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead.

Reread verses 10-16.

Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb and looked inside again

4) What do you think she was hoping to find?

5) Do you think some people today still seek a dead Christ? Why or why not?

Luke 15:4 Suppose one you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the 99 in the open country and to after the lost sheep until he finds it?

Reread verses 15-16

6) At what point does Mary realize that the man she is talking to is Jesus?

John10:3 He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

7) What things could cause us to not recognize Christ when he is calling to us?

Reread verses 17-18

Jesus tells Mary to go to "his brothers" and give them a message. He had previously referred to them as servants and as friends, but now refers to them as brothers.

Taking it Home

How will I live it? Apply it?

1) Take time throughout the week following Easter to reread this passage.

2) Thank God for the empty tomb which allows us to realize that we have the "cure" for discouragement.

3) Share this good news with someone this week.

Looking Ahead

How can I prepare for the next small group meeting?

- Invite your group members to attend "Community," 9:00-10:00 Sundays in the fellowship hall.
- Sermon text for next Sunday, May 1, 2011, Psalm 118-5-9

Prayer Requests and Praises: