



SPRING 2023 // WEEK 1

Life Group Questions

Easter Here and Now // April 15-16, 2023

The Resurrected Jesus and Our Sorrow // John 20:1-18

Introduction

Welcome back for our Spring session! Together we'll explore how Jesus is the Living Christ; just as present to us today as He was to Mary Magdalene in the garden on the morning after His resurrection. Jesus met her in her sorrow, and He meets us there too.

To think through the main ideas in the sermon and prepare for your discussion together, we invite you to look over all the questions on the following pages and write your thoughts down before you meet with your group. Due to preferences over a wide range of groups, we do not expect you will cover every question each week.

Warm Up *(Suggested time: 30 min)*

1. What is one worship song or lyric that has really spoken to your heart?
2. What are you looking forward to in this post-Easter session of Life Group?

Getting Started

Transition into group discussion.

- 1) Open group discussion with prayer. Here are a few potential prayer items:
 - a. For the Spirit of God to lead you in truth
 - b. For the fruit of the Spirit to be cultivated in your lives
 - c. For grace to hear and apply what the Spirit says to you
 - 2) Choose someone to read the passage aloud for the group.
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Study Questions *(Suggested time: 40 min)*

- 1) How did the weekend service have an impact on you as you went about your week?
- 2) What do you see in the text this week (and last week) that helps us to see and believe that Jesus rose bodily from the dead and the resurrection is a credible historical event?

How does this make a difference in your faith and in how you live your life?

- 3) John gives us a very personal look at Mary and Jesus in our passage this week. **What words are used to describe their relationship?**

How does Jesus meet Mary in her sorrow?

Think of a time when you experienced sorrow and disappointment. **What was your relationship with Jesus like through that experience? If you are comfortable, share with your group.**

- 4) Mary repeats the same concern in verses 2 and 13, *"they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they put Him,"* and she seems to have no thought of the resurrection. **Why do you suppose this is her repeated response during this time of sorrow?**

When have you noticed grief and sorrow impacting your perspective on reality and your ability to see truth? What was that like for you and the others around you?

- 5) In our Winter Session, we also talked about what grieving is like for those who believe in Jesus. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 and compare it to the words Jesus spoke to Mary in John 20:17. **What is the message of hope that Jesus gives?**

How does having that kind of hope affect you here and now?

- 6) At the close of this scene, we see Mary proclaiming the good news, “I have seen the Lord.” **What do you think made the difference in Mary remaining a faithful disciple rather than falling into fear and hiding as some of the other disciples did?**

When in your life have you sensed Jesus asking you to tell others, “I have seen the Lord”? What was that like for you? (Did you waffle between faith and fear, did you step out by faith, or do you regret a missed opportunity?)

*See the Prayer Focus below for follow-up to this question.

Personal Spiritual Exercises

Just like physical exercises help strengthen and stretch our bodies for healthy living, these spiritual exercises are meant to move us spiritually in ways that may be new so we might experience inner growth. Since God longs for us to experience Him with our whole selves—mind, body, spirit—we invite you along each week to strengthen your souls with suggestions and prompts. **Next week in Life Group, take a few moments to share how the Lord may have used this exercise in your life.**

Prayer Focus: Mary Magdalene was an unlikely first witness to the risen Jesus Christ. Yet, she didn’t let the way others viewed her hold her back from the mission Jesus had given her. She boldly announced, “I have seen the Lord.”

1. Pray to be aware of opportunities to share times you have seen the Lord Jesus work in your life.
2. Ask God to give you boldness when you have a chance to share.
3. Pray for other members of your group to also take steps of faith in sharing about Jesus with others.

Scripture Focus: Read Psalm 40 throughout the week, paying special attention to the way God sees, hears, and meets the needs of the writer. How does this remind you of the way Jesus came to Mary in the garden? You may want to journal a response or listen to an audio version Psalm 40 to make it a multi-sensory exercise.

Prayer *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

A significant part of “coming together” is being open and honest with our lives. Sitting in a group of people for prayer may be new or it may be familiar to you. If you would rather not pray aloud when it is your turn, feel free to pray silently and then say “Amen” aloud signaling the next person in the group to pray. Whether or not you choose to verbalize your prayer, everyone is a participant in sharing this time before God together.

Take a few moments to prepare a prayer request. What did the message, working through the above questions or the discussion cause you to notice about your own relationship with Jesus? Would you be willing to share your prayer request with the group?