

The Great Day

(John 20:11-29)

Yearly Theme: *“Love Is...”*

Series Title: *Truth and Justice*

April 28th, 2019

Something to think about:

As we close out this series this morning we come to a story of mistaken identity; a story about blindness, so-to-speak. As we celebrated last week, Jesus has risen from the grave! Now, standing in front of the empty tomb, Mary Magdalene is broken. Later that very day, the disciples are gathered together in a locked room in Jerusalem, and Thomas (one of the 12) is also completely broken in disbelief and sorrow.

Let’s pick up their story today...

Turn in your Bible to: *John 20:11-29*

What did it take for Mary and Thomas to believe? It took their eyes to be opened to the truth. And here’s the point this morning...

Key Point: *“Our eyes ultimately open to the truth when it calls us by name.”*

Our own sorrow and discouragement can so blind us that the truth can stare us right in the face and we wouldn’t recognize it. This is what Mary and Thomas experienced...

- **Mary recognized the truth when Jesus called her by name.**

John 20:15-16 (NLT),¹⁵ “Dear woman, why are you crying?” Jesus asked her. “Who are you looking for?” She thought he was the gardener. “Sir,” she said, “if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him.”¹⁶ “Mary!” Jesus said.

She turned to him and cried out, “Rabboni!” (which is Hebrew for “Teacher”).

- **Thomas recognized the truth when he saw Jesus face to face.**

John 20:27-28 (NLT),²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don’t be faithless any longer. Believe!”²⁸ “My Lord and my God!” Thomas exclaimed.

Something to take home:

Today’s message is entitled “The Great Day,” because it is the great day of recognition. It’s the great day of revealing. It’s the great day of truth winning out over evil. It’s the answer to Pilates question, “What is truth?”¹

When Mary heard her name from the lips of Jesus, the scales fell from her eyes and she was able to see what she couldn’t before. Streams of light broke through her tear-filled eyes, and the cloud of confusion lifted. When Thomas saw with his own eyes the nail prints in Jesus’ hands and the scar in Jesus’ side, he was able to finally proclaim, “My Lord and my God!”

Do you struggle believing today? Do you struggle to hear Jesus calling out your name? Do you need to see the scars in the hands and side of Jesus in order to believe?

That voice that called out to Mary near the tomb is a voice that still calls out today. And, today He’s calling your name? Do you hear Him? Today, those nail scarred hands continue to reach out in compassion and love, having conquered sin and death through the cross and the empty tomb. Today, Jesus is alive, and His message of hope and love and forgiveness is just as relevant as it was to Mary and Thomas. Do you believe?

Key Point: *“Our eyes ultimately open to the truth when it calls us by name.”*

¹ John 18:38.

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KICK STARTERS:

⇒ Have you ever lost something only to realize that it was right in front of you the whole time? Describe what happened...

SCRIPTURE: (Before studying this material, consider listening to the corresponding message online at: <http://www.northmaincog.org/media/sermon-media>)

John 20:11-29 (NLT)

¹¹ Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in. ¹² She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. ¹³ “Dear woman, why are you crying?” the angels asked her.

“Because they have taken away my Lord,” she replied, “and I don’t know where they have put him.”

¹⁴ She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn’t recognize him.

¹⁵ “Dear woman, why are you crying?” Jesus asked her. “Who are you looking for?”

She thought he was the gardener. “Sir,” she said, “if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him.”

¹⁶ “Mary!” Jesus said.

She turned to him and cried out, “Rabboni!” (which is Hebrew for “Teacher”).

¹⁷ “Don’t cling to me,” Jesus said, “for I haven’t yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them that I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”

¹⁸ Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, “I have seen the Lord!” Then she gave them his message.

¹⁹ That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! “Peace be with you,” he said. ²⁰ As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord! ²¹ Again he said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.” ²² Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

²⁴ One of the disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), was not with the others when Jesus came. ²⁵ They told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he replied, “I won’t believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side.”

²⁶ Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. “Peace be with you,” he said.

²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don’t be faithless any longer. Believe!”

²⁸ “My Lord and my God!” Thomas exclaimed.

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, “You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.”

GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. There is a lot going on in this passage of Scripture. As best you can, describe what’s going on:

2. After Peter and John leave the tomb, Mary is left there in her distress. Peering in to the tomb, what does she see and how does she react to what she sees (vv. 11-13)? Do you think it’s strange that this sight doesn’t phase her? Why, or why not?

3. Turning to leave the tomb she sees another sight, describe what she sees and what her reaction is (vv. 14-15) Why do you suppose Mary didn’t recognize Jesus? How does great distress and sorrow blind us to what is around us?

4. How does Mary recognize Jesus (v. 16)? Why do you think it only took calling her by name for her to recognize Jesus?

5. Later on, Jesus appears to the disciples and talks with them, but Thomas is not with them. When told about their encounter with the risen Lord, Thomas refuses to believe. What does he say will make him believe (vv. 24-25)? Why will some people not believe unless they see something with their own eyes?

6. Eight days later, Thomas is with the others and Jesus appears again, describe what happens (vv. 26-28). Once Thomas sees with his own eyes, he then believes, and he makes a statement of faith in Jesus as being Lord and God. What does Jesus say in response to this scene (v. 29)?

7. In the initial instance when Jesus appears to the disciples Thomas is not with them. He is overwhelmed by grief and sorrow at the loss of the One who was his teacher and master. How does excluding ourselves from the community of faith prove problematic in the long run? Why, in the midst of tragedy or pain to many people seclude themselves from others? How can a person overcome this compulsive need to run away?

SELF-EVALUATION/APPLICATION:

- ⇒ **DO YOU STRUGGLE BELIEVING TODAY?** Do you struggle to hear Jesus calling out your name? Do you need to see the scars in the hands and side of Jesus in order to believe?
- ⇒ **THAT VOICE THAT CALLED OUT TO MARY** near the tomb is a voice that still calls out today. And, today He’s calling your name? Do you hear Him? Today, those nail scarred hands continue to reach out in compassion and love, having conquered sin and death through the cross and the empty tomb. Today, Jesus is alive, and His message of hope and love and forgiveness is just as relevant as it was to Mary and Thomas. Do you believe?
- ⇒ **MEMORY VERSES:** *John 20:29* and *John 14:6*.