

The Cross: From Hope Less to Hope Filled

ICE BREAKER QUESTIONS

Talk about a time someone convinced you to do something that you ended up enjoying. What changed your mind?

WORD

Together we've learned so much about The Cross and its foundational to everything we do. And how If we want to remain faithful to the call God has given us, we must continue to be Christ-centered. And we've been doing this by looking at different characters who encountered Christ's suffering, crucifixion, death, and resurrection, and looking at how they were changed and impacted by the power of the cross. And as we come near to the end of this series, we hope to understand that the cross is foundational to and the centre of everything we do, so that we can be faithful to God's call in our lives

John 20:11-18 ESV

11 But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. 12 And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. 13 They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." 14 Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, [b] "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet

ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her.

Based off of this scripture we can see that Mary has a very rough life before meeting Jesus. It says here in Luke that Mary among several other women was set free from seven demons and also healed from infirmities.

With just this, we can make the connection that Mary lived a very tough life. As a woman within this culture she was already given very little freedom and voice and her opinion and thoughts didn't seem to have any merit or value. But along with that she was someone who had been known to have demons living inside of her and to have infirmities (injuries, diseases, birth defects). And of course this then leads to her being ostracized, shunned, and excluded. But then what we see in the second half of this verse, She becomes freed from the demons and healed of her infirmities through her encounter with Jesus Christ

And at this point within Luke Jesus had already healed her but now she was following Jesus breaking the cultural norm of not being taught or educated in religious matters.

DISCUSSION

When you reflect on your own journey with Christ, what moments of freedom or transformation do you see? How did you respond to what Christ has done for you?

WORD

There are specifically three things that we as a congregation should pay attention to. And the first one.

MARY FELT LOST

John 20:11-13 ESV

11 But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. 12 And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. 13 They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."

In this moment of losing someone dear to her, she had felt lost and in pain. And we can imagine that her best way of coping with that feeling was by visiting the one person who gave her hope, even if it was just his grave. But even at this point Jesus was once again taken from her but even farther than before. For us in moments like this it's easy to feel incredibly far from God, which then often spirals into feeling even more despair and hopelessness. In moments where we have felt low especially throughout our walk with God. There's a point where we ask God, where did you go? And this is important to understand because it's often at this moment that our old identities as sinners come creeping back into our minds. It's at moments like this where we begin to doubt everything that we know or even forget it completely, because of that feeling of distance between ourselves and God.

And in this scripture we even see angels questioning Mary "Woman, why are you weeping?" The answer to Mary maybe seemed so obvious, I mean hello she just lost someone dear to her. But to the angels they knew who she was before, they knew her past. And they know Jesus is coming back. And so the question, although seeming to be very insensitive, almost sounds like, "Mary, have you forgotten who He is? And what He's freed you from?" They seem to question her mourning because they are affirming her identity as one who has been freed, one who has been healed, one who has been loyal and obedient to Jesus. And in that moment Mary had forgotten that.

And now to relate this back to us as the readers here, How many of us here have forgotten who we are? How many of us have forgotten what

Christ has done for us? How many of us have forgotten what Jesus has freed us from?

MARY WAS BLINDED BY HER GRIEF

John 20:14-15 ESV

14 Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.

She literally turns to see Jesus but doesn't process that it's him and then proceeds to ask him where he is or rather where he went. And it completely went over her head that he was right in front of her. In the midst of her grief she was so distraught that she couldn't see and process what was in front of her. And for some of us we might agree that it seems a bit silly, but again let's relate this back to us as the readers. In reality it's the same for us. Jesus gives us an answer, Jesus reveals himself to us through a word or through a sermon or through a scripture. But we still remain in despair. Our eyes have been closed or fogged up with the despair of our situation and we remain in that feeling. And in moments where Jesus comes bearing the answer, in moments where Jesus comes wanting to give you comfort. You're unable to receive it.

And for Mary, especially given her situation, maybe it was because she had accepted the fact that Jesus was dead. And she had accepted the separation between her and her saviour.

MARY'S HOPE RESTORED

John 20:16 ESV

16 Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, [b] “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher).

What we see here is Jesus calling out her name, and in that moment her eyes could see her ears had heard, and here Hope had been restored. Jesus had risen.

But this was Jesus' response to her.

John 20:17-18 ESV

17 Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her.

Now in this encounter we see Jesus gives her a command and without any hesitation she goes, But this task is so much more complicated than it sounds. Remember we talked about this in the beginning. The word of a woman was not considered reliable during that time. The women were not expected, maybe not even allowed to spend time around a religious figure. And the women were seen as background characters. And so a command like this in the culture she's living in, would have been challenging, daunting, maybe even impossible. But despite the obstacles, despite any fear that should have been in her mind, and despite any hesitation she should have felt. She ran without a second thought. Because the realization of the revival of Jesus Christ put her in this situation where she couldn't help but go and spread the good news.

The first time she encountered Jesus, she was healed and she began a life of obedience and loyalty to Jesus, being involved in the ministry. But at the encounter of the Cross and the revival and finished work of Jesus Christ, she was given this fire to go and do the impossible.

DISCUSSION

For everyone who follows Christ, He knows us by name and is intentional about His plans for us. How have you experienced this in your own life?

LIFE APPLICATION

“The difference between knowing Jesus, and experiencing Jesus through the cross. Is that when you experience the cross, you know...it is finished” As we understand that the work is already done on the cross, then our mindset changes and we stop treating this relationship with God as if we are paying back a debt because we are not paying for something that has already been paid off. Let us stop to pay back a debt or favor and shift to just reciprocating the selfless love of Jesus. And with this comes a new found confidence, to preach at your work, at our school, to our neighbors. To do things that you never thought you could do before.

You know with Mary she was supporting Jesus from the background, but now she's the one preaching the message

DISCUSSION

Share about how your own life has been transformed after encountering Christ

VERSE TO MEDITATE ON

2 Corinthians 5:17-18 ESV

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. [a] The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;

PRAYER

Share your prayer request and answered prayer. Pray for one another and throughout this week.



All rights reserved. This material may be copied for personal use, but may not be republished, modified, or sold in any manner without written consent of Every Nation Church East Calgary

