

Gospel lesson

Hear these words from the Gospel of John, after Jesus was laid in the tomb and the Sabbath day passed.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/jesus-alive/>;
credit: LUMO

John 20:1-18

NRSV

¹Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb.

²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him."

³Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb.

⁴The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.

⁵He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in.

⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there,

⁷and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a

place by itself.

⁸ Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed;

⁹ for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

¹⁰ Then the disciples returned to their homes.

¹¹ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb;

¹² and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other 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 When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

¹⁵ Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" 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 Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher).

¹⁷ Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because

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.'

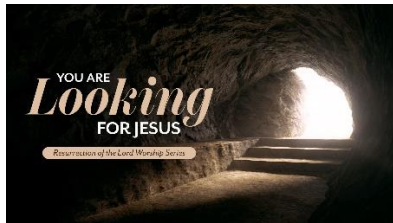
¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

The word of God for the people of God

<Hymn "The Day of Resurrection"

UMH #303

Message: You Are Looking for Jesus



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/you-are-looking-for-jesus/easter-sunday-year-b-lectionary-planning-notes/easter-sunday-year-b-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Gracious Lord of the unexpected,

as we take time now to further consider today's scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may find and celebrate life in You with the world! Amen.

Happy Easter!

"Easter Sunday is here. [Let's b]ring our very best, adorn the sanctuary in flowers and signs of

new life, be {amazed and amazing, declaring the good news of the Resurrection}, [and] sing our hearts out with songs of joy and new life!”

I had some leftover strawberries that I put in my fridge, on the 2nd shelf on the lefthand side. When I went to retrieve them, I found a whole bunch of stuff there but did not see any strawberries. I was a little annoyed, because I was looking forward to having some, but now there were none.

I asked my husband what happened to them, wondering why they were gone. He pointed out a fresh supply of strawberries on the top shelf, front and center where I could not miss them; he had picked up a fresh container of them when he went shopping (just like he said he would) and removed the old (which were starting to grow mold).

I was not lacking what I wanted; they were just not where I expected them nor in the packaging I expected. The reality of them being there did not register in my brain because I was so focused on my preconceptions.

Mary and the disciples had that problem too. Even though Jesus had told them what would happen, the empty tomb confused them. Even though the prophet Isaiah had told the Israelites long ago that God would “swallow up death forever,” that Jesus was

alive was beyond their expectations. Jesus was right in front of Mary, where she could not miss Him, and yet He had to call her by name before she realized it.

How often in life do we miss Jesus standing in front of us, calling us to celebrate God's love in our midst, because of our preconceptions about how things should be? How many people refuse to believe because the familiar world says what God does is impossible?

Let go of what the world expects and look for God moving in our lives - you will find something beyond your wildest imagination! God is blessing us abundantly - do not miss out simply because it is unexpected!

- † Trust that God - our Creator - has all of creation in hand, that our Creator is more powerful than anything we or this created world can do.
- † Trust in the love of Jesus, that nothing can separate us, not even death. He came back to us, to those who betrayed, abandoned, denied, and crucified Him.
- † Trust in the presence of the Holy Spirit, God with us in all places and all experiences.

And on this day when we celebrate the risen Christ, remember to look for Jesus in the unexpected places, to partake of the fresh, new life He provides for us, and to proclaim God's glorious work in all the world!

