

Introduction

Check-in & Introductions

Mary Turned Twice

Old Testament Lesson

Isaiah 25:6-9 (NRSV)

⁶On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines,
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.

⁷And he will destroy on this mountain
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
the sheet that is spread over all nations;

⁸ he will swallow up death forever.

Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces,
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken.

⁹It will be said on that day,

Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us.

This is the LORD for whom we have waited;

let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Gospel Lesson

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. ⁸Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples returned to their homes. ¹¹But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹²and 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. ¹³They 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." ¹⁴When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus 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." ¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus 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.'" ¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Bible/Sermon Focus

Easter Sunday is a day that is set apart in so many ways. We pull out all of the stops. We sing Alleluia (something that does not happen during Lent). We celebrate! After all, Christ is risen!

And by the end of the day, many of us are full with dinner and desserts and we are ready to put away the easter baskets and be done. However, Easter isn't just a day, It's a season. If during Lent we were preparing for Easter, preparing for the cross, preparing for death, AND resurrection...then Easter is the embodiment of that new reality. A reality of resurrection and redemption.

In our Gospel lesson for today we meet Mary at the tomb. Scholars have many different ideas and theories about why Mary did not recognize Jesus. Was it too early and dark for her to see clearly? Was his identity purposely hidden for some divine reason? Had the cross made him unrecognizable? Was he disfigured because of what the cross had done to him? Do resurrected and redeemed bodies look different?

When Mary does recognize Jesus, it is by his voice, and as her teacher.

Sometimes on Easter, we try to fit everything we know about Jesus into one day. We try to fit all of the stories about him, all of the different aspects of our earthly Jesus and the cosmic Christ into one moment of him standing outside of that tomb. But we don't have to. The reality of the resurrection can be holy as it comes slowly to us. In one moment, we may hear the voice. In the next we may recognize our teacher. And so on.

Easter as a season is a good time for us to let the resurrected and redeemed savior reveal himself to us. There is no need to rush through this feeling, or be overwhelmed by the hoopla of one wonderful day.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think that Mary didn't recognize Jesus?
2. When have you found yourself "turning" a couple of times to see something in a new way?
3. Is it important to you to seen and known by God on a personal level?
4. Reflect on this quote from Marjorie Suchocki: "We are internally affected by the other, and therefore dependent upon the other. ... we receive from the past in our innermost nature, and through our creative response to that past, we become ourselves. In our own becoming we in our turn influence others, who must take our influence into their own becoming, and so the dance of relationship fills our days with variations of pain and pleasure."

Prayer

Glory, Glory, Glory to you, O God! Lord, you do miraculous and wonderful things. You surprise and overjoy our very being with the truth that the tomb is empty and that the resurrection and redemption of all things is at hand. Give us fresh eyes to see and ears to hear. Teach us to witness the truth of Easter all around us, every day. Amen.

