

“Lent: Giving up... Giving In”

The Reflection Series

Scripture:

John 20:1-18 (NIV)

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. ² So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!” ³ So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. ⁴ Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, ⁷ as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen.

⁸ Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. ⁹ (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) ¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to where they were staying. ¹¹ Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹² and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. ¹³ They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?” “They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” ¹⁴ At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?” Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.” ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”).

¹⁷ Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.

Subject Question: What three questions concerning the resurrected Christ does John answer in his telling of the first Easter?

Compliment answer: Where are You, Why are You, and Who are You?

Big Idea: The three questions concerning the resurrected Christ that John answers in his telling of the first Easter are: Where are You, Why are You, and Who are You?

Homiletical Idea: “He is Risen, How about You? ”

Purpose: I want the congregation to understand and ponder for themselves the significance of John's three questions implied to us but directed toward the resurrected Christ.

Introduction: He is risen! He is risen indeed! Every theological and eternal aspect of Christianity rises or falls on this statement. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, *¹³If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.* But I think the real consideration for us this day isn't so much a question of whether or not He was raised from the dead as much as it is, what does it mean if He truly did? What should we think? What does that mean? How does that event shake and shape my life? Today we travel to the empty tomb to try to discern and answer not only the aforementioned questions but three specific questions concerning Jesus that the scriptures beg for us to consider.

(Giving up... Giving in)

Ground Work:

MacLaren's Expositions

THE RESURRECTION MORNING John 20:1 - John 20:18.

John's purpose in his narrative of the resurrection is not only to establish the fact, but also to depict the gradual growth of faith in it, among the disciples. The two main incidents in this passage, the visit of Peter and John to the tomb and the appearance of our Lord to Mary, give the dawning of faith before sight and the rapturous faith born of sight. In the remainder of the chapter are two more instances of faith following vision, and the teaching of the whole is summed up in Christ's words to the doubter, 'Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed!'

I. The open sepulcher and the bewildered alarm it excited.

The act of resurrection took place before sunrise. 'At midnight,' probably, 'the Bridegroom came.' It was fitting that He who was to scatter the darkness of the grave should rise while darkness covered the earth, and that no eye should behold 'how' that dead was 'raised up.' The earthquake and the descent of angels and the rolling away of the stone were after the tomb was empty.

John's note of time seems somewhat earlier than that of the other Gospels, but is not so much so as to require the supposition that Mary preceded the other women. She appears alone here, because the reason for mentioning her at all is to explain how Peter and John knew of the empty tomb, and she alone had been the informant. In these Eastern lands, 'as it began to dawn,' 'very early at the rising of the sun,' and 'while it was yet dark,' are times very near each other, and Mary may have reached the sepulcher a little before the others. Her own words, 'We know not,' show that she had spoken with others who had seen the empty grave. We must therefore suppose that she had with the others come to it, seen that

the sacred corpse was gone and their spices useless, exchanged hurried words of alarm and bewilderment, and then had hastened away before the appearance of the angels. The impulse to tell the leaders of the forlorn band the news, which she thinks to be so bad, was womanly and natural. It was not hope, but wonder and sorrow that quickened her steps as she ran through the still morning to find them. Whether they were in one house or not is uncertain; but, at all events, Peter's denial had not cut him off from his brethren, and the two who were so constantly associated before and afterwards were not far apart that morning. The disciple who had stood by the Cross to almost the last had an open heart, and probably an open house for the denier. 'Restore such an one, . . . considering thyself.' Mary had seen the tomb empty, and springs to the conclusion that 'they'-some unknown persons-have taken away the dead body, which, with clinging love that tries to ignore death, she still calls 'the Lord.' Possibly she may have thought that the resting-place in Joseph's new sepulcher was only meant for temporary shelter {ver. 15}. At all events the corpse was gone, and the fact suggested no hope to her. How often do we, in like manner, misinterpret as dark what is really pregnant with light, and blindly attribute to 'them' what Jesus does! A tone of mind thus remote from anticipation of the great fact is a precious proof of the historical truth of the resurrection; for here was no soil in which hallucinations would spring, and such people would not have believed Him risen unless they had seen Him living.

II. Peter and John at the tomb, the dawning of faith, and the continuance of bewildered wonder.

In the account, we may observe, first, the characteristic conduct of each of the two. Peter is first to set out, and John follows, both men doing according to their kind. The younger runs faster than his companion. He looked into the tomb, and saw the wrappings lying; but the reverent awe which holds back finer natures kept him from venturing in. Peter is not said to have looked before entering. He loved with all his heart, but his love was impetuous and practical, and he went straight in, and felt no reason why he should pause. His boldness encouraged his friend, as the example of strong natures does. Some of my readers will recall Bushnell's noble sermon on 'Unconscious Influence' from this incident, and I need say no more about it.

Observe, too, the further witness of the folded grave-clothes. John from outside had not seen the napkin, lying carefully rolled up apart from the other cloths. It was probably laid in a part of the tomb invisible from without. But the careful disposal of these came to him, when he saw them, with a great flash of illumination. There had been no hurried removal.

Here had been no hostile hands, or there would not have been this deliberation; nor friendly hands, or there would not have been such dishonor to the sacred dead as to carry away the body nude. What did it mean? Could He Himself have done for Himself what He had bade them do for Lazarus? Could He have laid aside the garments of the grave as needing them no more? 'They have taken away'-what if it were not 'they' but He? No trace of hurry or struggle was there. He did 'not go out with haste, nor go by flight,' but calmly, deliberately, in the majesty of His lordship over death, He rose from His slumber and left order in the land of confusion.

Observe, too, the birth of the Apostle's faith. John connects it with the sight of the folded garments. 'Believed' here must mean more than recognition of the fact that the grave was

empty. The next clause seems to imply that it means belief in the resurrection. The scripture, which they 'knew' as scripture, was for John suddenly interpreted, and he was lifted out of the ignorance of its meaning, which till that moment he had shared with his fellow-disciples. Their failure to understand Christ's frequent distinct prophecies that He would rise again the third day has been thought incredible, but is surely intelligible enough if we remember how unexampled such a thing was, and how marvelous is our power of hearing and yet not hearing the plainest truth. We all in the course of our lives are lost in astonishment when things befall us which we have been plainly told will befall. The fulfilment of all divine promises {and threatening's} is a surprise, and no warnings beforehand teach one tith so clearly as experience.

John believed, but Peter still was in the dark. Again the former had outrun his friend. His more sensitive nature, not to say his deeper love-for that would be unjust, since their love differed in quality more than in degree-had gifted him with a more subtle and swifter-working perception. Perhaps if Peter's heart had not been oppressed by his sin, he would have been readier to feel the sunshine of the wonderful hope. We condemn ourselves to the shade when we deny our Lord by deed or word.

III. The first appearance of the Lord, and revelation of the new form of intercourse.

Nothing had been said of Mary's return to the tomb; but how could she stay away? The disciples might go, but she lingered, woman-like, to indulge in the bitter-sweet of tears. Eyes so filled are more apt to see angels. No wonder that these calm watchers, in their garb of purity and joy, had not been seen by the two men. The laws of such appearance are not those of ordinary optics. Spiritual susceptibility and need determine who shall see angels, and who shall see but the empty place. Wonder and adoration held these bright forms there. They had hovered over the cradle and stood by the shepherds at Bethlehem, but they bowed in yet more awestruck reverence at the grave, and death revealed to them a deeper depth of divine love.

The presence of angels was a trifle to Mary, who had only one thought-the absence of her Lord. Surely that touch in her unmoved answer, as if speaking to men, is beyond the reach of art. She says 'My Lord' now, and 'I know not,' but otherwise repeats her former words, unmoved by any hope caught from John. Her clinging love needed more than an empty grave and folded clothes arid waiting angels to stay its tears, and she turned indifferently and wearily away from the interruption of the question to plunge again into her sorrow. Chrysostom suggests that she 'turned herself' because she saw in the angels' looks that they saw Christ suddenly appearing behind her; but the preceding explanation seems better. Her not knowing Jesus might be accounted for by her absorbing grief. One who looked at white-robed angels, and saw nothing extraordinary, would give but a careless glance at the approaching figure, and might well fail to recognize Him. But probably, as in the case of the two travelers to Emmaus, her 'eyes were holden,' and the cause of non-recognition was not so much a change in Jesus as an operation on her.

Be that as it may, it is noteworthy that His voice, which was immediately to reveal Him, at first suggested nothing to her; and even His gentle question, with the significant addition to the angels' words, in 'Whom seekest thou?' which indicated His knowledge that her tears fell

for some person dear and lost, only made her think of Him as being 'the gardener,' and therefore probably concerned in the removal of the body. If He were so, He would be friendly; and so she ventured her pathetic petition, which does not name Jesus {so full is her mind of the One, that she thinks everybody must know whom she means}, and which so overrated her own strength in saying, 'I will take Him away,' The first words of the risen Christ are on His lips yet to all sad hearts. He seeks our confidences, and would have us tell Him the occasions of our tears. He would have us recognise that all our griefs and all our desires point to one Person-Himself-as the one real Object of our 'seeking,' whom finding, we need weep no more.

Verse 16 tells us that Mary turned herself to see Him when He next spoke, so that, at the close of her first answer to Him, she must have once more resumed her gaze into the tomb, as if she despaired of the newcomer giving the help she had asked.

Who can say anything about that transcendent recognition, in which all the stooping love of the risen Lord is smelted into one word, and the burst of rapture, awe, astonishment, and devotion pours itself through the narrow channel of one other? If this narrative is the work of some anonymous author late in the second century, he is indeed a 'Great Unknown,' and has managed to imagine one of the two or three most pathetic 'situations' in literature. Surely it is more reasonable to suppose him no obscure genius, but a well-known recorder of what he had seen, and knew for fact. Christ's calling by name ever reveals His loving presence. We may be sure that He knows us by name, and we should reply by the same swift cry of absolute submission as sprung to Mary's lips. 'Rabboni! Master!' is the fit answer to His call.

But Mary's exclamation was imperfect in that it expressed the resumption of no more than the old bond, and her gladness needed enlightenment. Things were not to be as they had been. Christ's 'Mary!' had indeed assured her of His faithful remembrance and of her present place in His love; but when she clung to His feet she was seeking to keep what she had to learn to give up. Therefore Jesus, who invited the touch which was to establish faith and banish doubt {[Luke 24:39](#); [John 20:27](#)}, bids her unclasp her hands, and gently instils the ending of the blessed past by opening to her the superior joys of the begun future. His words contain for us all the very heart of our possible relation to Him, and teach us that we need envy none who companied with Him here. His ascension to the Father is the condition of our truest approach to Him. His prohibition encloses a permission. 'Touch Me not! for I am not yet ascended,' implies 'When I am, you may.'

Further, the ascended Christ is still our Brother. Neither the mystery of death nor the impending mystery of dominion broke the tie. Again, the Resurrection is the beginning of Ascension, and is only then rightly understood when it is considered as the first upward step to the throne. 'I ascend,' not 'I have risen, and will soon leave you,' as if the Ascension only began forty days after on Olivet. It is already in process. Once more the ascended Christ, our Brother still, and capable of the touch of reverent love, is yet separated from us by the character, even while united to us by the fact, of His filial and dependent relation to God. He cannot say 'Our Father' as if standing on the common human ground. He is 'Son' as we are not, and we are 'sons' through Him, and can only call God our Father because He is Christ's. Such were the immortal hopes and new thoughts which Mary hastened from the presence of her recovered Lord to bring to the disciples. Fragrant though but partially understood,

they were like half-opened blossoms from the tree of life planted in the midst of that garden, to bloom unfading, and ever disclosing new beauty in believing hearts till the end of time.

Benson Commentary

John 20:1-9. *The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene alone early, when it was yet dark* — See notes on [Matthew 28:1](#); [Mark 16:1-2](#); [Luke 24:1](#); where the circumstance of John's mentioning only Mary Magdalene as visiting the sepulcher, is accounted for, and explained at large. *And seeth* — With the other women, mentioned by the three other evangelists; *the stone taken away from the sepulcher* — And that the tomb was open. Probably, in consequence of the distinguished ardor of her affection for her dear Lord and Master, she had advanced a little way before the others, and therefore first discovered that the stone was removed. *Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter* — That is, after she and the other women had entered into the sepulcher, had made search for the body there, and had not found it, ([Luke 24:3](#);) but before she and they had seen the angels, who informed them that he was risen: for after that it is very improbable that she should speak as the evangelist says she did to Peter, in the next words, *They have taken away the Lord, &c., and we know not where they have laid him. Peter, therefore* — Upon hearing that the stone was removed, and the body gone; *went forth, and that other disciple* — Immediately, and made all possible haste to the sepulcher, to satisfy themselves whether what was told them was a fact, and to see if they could make any further discoveries. Some think the other disciples were with Peter and John, when Mary gave them this information; but it seems more probable that she told it only to them; at least, it is evident that only these two went to the sepulcher. *So they ran both together* — Being eager and anxious to have their doubts cleared up. *And the other disciple* — John, being probably the younger man; *outran Peter, and came first to the sepulcher* — He did not, however, go in, perhaps being afraid; he only stooped down; *and saw the linen clothes lying* — Or rollers which had been about Christ's body. *Then cometh Simon Peter* — Following him very quickly; *and went into the sepulcher* — Without hesitation; *and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin, &c.* — And that in such regular order as fully satisfied him that the body had not been taken away in a hasty manner, by persons who feared being interrupted or detected. Doubtless, the angels who ministered to him, when he rose, folded up the napkin and the linen clothes, and laid them in this order. *Then went in also that other disciple* — Who, being less adventurous than Peter, had hitherto stood without; *and he saw* — That the body was not there; *and believed* — That it had been taken away, as Mary had told them. Thus Grotius, Bengelius, Wesley, Macknight, Campbell, and most commentators understand the clause, which sense certainly the next words favor. Whitby, however, and Doddridge, view it in a different light. "Peter," says the former, "only saw and admired what was done; ([Luke 24:12](#);) but John saw and believed, not the words of Mary, for we find not that either of them suspected her of falsehood, but the resurrection of Jesus, or the words of Christ, *After three days I will rise again*. This, John saith, was the reason of his faith, not the predictions of the Old Testament; for, as for the apostles, ([John 20:9](#);) *as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead*." Dr. Doddridge speaks to the same purpose. "I understand it," says he, "as a modest intimation, that he, (John,) first indeed of all others, believed the truth of Christ's resurrection, inferring it, as he reasonably might from the order in which he found the sepulcher. The words,"

adds he, “have a force and grace in this interpretation, which I think no other can give them.” In consistency with this view of the passage, he translates and paraphrases the next verse as follows. “For hitherto they did not know, or had not known, as **ουδεπω ηδεισαν** properly means; the full meaning of the various intimations of *Scripture*, to which Jesus had so often referred, to convince them that he must certainly rise from the dead; which if they had considered, they would cheerfully have expected the accomplishment of them, and would not have been so much surprised at the news which Mary brought them.”

Whichever be the sense of the clause, it must, at least, be acknowledged, that the circumstances of which these two disciples were now spectators “were very awakening, and very proper to prepare their minds for something extraordinary, since nothing but the resurrection of Jesus could, in right reason, be concluded from them. The body, they saw, was gone; but by whom could it be taken away, and for what purpose? Not by *friends*; for then, in all probability, they would have known something about it. Not by *Jews*; for they had nothing to do with it. Pilate, to whom alone the disposal of it belonged, as the body of a malefactor executed by his orders, had given it to his disciples, who laid it in the sepulcher but two days before: and wherefore should they remove it again so soon? Not to bury it; for in that case they would not have left the linen clothes or winding-sheet, and the napkin, folded up behind them. Whoever, therefore, had removed the body, they could not have done it with a design to bury it, and yet no other purpose for the removal of it could be imagined. Besides, it must have been removed in the night by stealth, and consequently in a hurry. How then came the winding-sheet and napkin to be folded up, and disposed in so orderly a manner in the sepulcher? Add to this, that the stone was very large; and therefore many people must have been concerned in this transaction; not one of whom was there to give an answer to any such questions. These, and such like reflections, could not but rise in their minds, and these difficulties could not but dispose them to expect some extraordinary event; especially as they knew the life of Jesus was a life of miracles, and that his death was attended with prodigies and wonders; all which would now come crowding into their memories.” Still, however, they did not understand from the prophets, that the Messiah was to rise again from the dead: on the contrary, they supposed them to have predicted that he should *not die*, but *abide forever*; which was an additional cause of perplexity to them, and an obstacle to their believing Jesus was risen. See West.

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary

20:1-10 If Christ gave his life a ransom, and had not taken it again, it would not have appeared that his giving it was accepted as satisfaction. It was a great trial to Mary, that the body was gone. Weak believers often make that the matter of complaint, which is really just ground of hope, and matter of joy. It is well when those more honored than others with the privileges of disciples, are more active than others in the duty of disciples; more willing to take pains, and run hazards, in a good work. We must do our best, and neither envy those who can do better, nor despise those who do as well as they can, though they come behind. The disciple whom Jesus loved in a special manner, and who therefore in a special manner loved Jesus, was foremost. The love of Christ will make us to abound in every duty more than anything else. He that was behind was Peter, who had denied Christ. A sense of guilt hinders us in the

service of God. As yet the disciples knew not the Scripture; they Christ must rise again from the dead.

20:11-18 We are likely to seek and find, when we seek with affection, and seek in tears. But many believers complain of the clouds and darkness they are under, which are methods of grace for humbling their souls, mortifying their sins, and endearing Christ to them. A sight of angels and their smiles, will not suffice, without a sight of Jesus, and God's smiles in him. None know, but those who have tasted it, the sorrows of a deserted soul, which has had comfortable evidences of the love of God in Christ, and hopes of heaven, but has now lost them, and walks in darkness; such a wounded spirit who can bear? Christ, in manifesting himself to those that seek him, often outdoes their expectations. See how Mary's heart was in earnest to find Jesus. Christ's way of making himself known to his people is by his word; his word applied to their souls, speaking to them in particular. It might be read, Is it my Master? See with what pleasure those who love Jesus speak of his authority over them. He forbids her to expect that his bodily presence look further, than the present state of things. Observe the relation to God, from union with Christ. We, partaking of a Divine nature, Christ's Father is our Father; and he, partaking of the human nature, our God is his God. Christ's ascension into heaven, there to plead for us, is likewise an unspeakable comfort. Let them not think this earth is to be their home and rest; their eye and aim, and earnest desires, must be upon another world, and this ever upon their hearts, I ascend, therefore I must seek the things which are above. And let those who know the word of Christ, endeavour that others should get good from their knowledge.

(Giving up... Giving in)

- A. Where are You? (Vs.1-7) *Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. ² So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" ³ So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. ⁴ Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, ⁷ as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen.*
- B. Let me lay out the scene as Mary, Peter, and John come to the empty tomb: The act of resurrection took place before sunrise. 'At midnight,' probably, 'the Bridegroom came.' **It was fitting that He who was to scatter the darkness of the grave should rise while darkness covered the earth, and that no eye should behold 'how' that dead was 'raised up.'** The earthquake and the descent of angels and the rolling away of the stone were after the tomb was empty. John's note of time seems somewhat earlier than that of the other Gospels, but is not so much so as to require the supposition that Mary preceded the other women. She appears alone here, because the reason for mentioning her at all is to explain

how Peter and John knew of the empty tomb, and she alone had been the informant. In these Eastern lands, 'as it began to dawn,' 'very early at the rising of the sun,' and 'while it was yet dark,' are times very near each other, and **Mary may have reached the sepulcher a little before the others. Her own words, 'We know not,' show that she had spoken with others who had seen the empty grave. We must therefore suppose that she had with the others come to it, seen that the sacred corpse was gone and their spices useless, exchanged hurried words of alarm and bewilderment, and then had hastened away before the appearance of the angels.**

The impulse to tell the leaders of the forlorn band the news, which she thinks to be so bad, was womanly and natural. It was not hope, but wonder and sorrow that quickened her steps as she ran through the still morning to find them. Whether they were in one house or not is uncertain; but, at all events, Peter's denial had not cut him off from his brethren, and the two who were so constantly associated before and afterwards were not far apart that morning. The disciple who had stood by the Cross to almost the last had an open heart, and probably an open house for the denier. 'Restore such an one, . . . considering thyself.'

Mary had seen the tomb empty, and springs to the conclusion that 'they'-some unknown persons-have taken away the dead body, which, with clinging love that tries to ignore death, she still calls 'the Lord.' Possibly she may have thought that the resting-place in Joseph's new sepulcher was only meant for temporary shelter {ver. 15}. At all events the corpse was gone, and the fact suggested no hope to her. How often do we, in like manner, misinterpret as dark what is really pregnant with light, and blindly attribute to 'them' what Jesus does! A tone of mind thus remote from anticipation of the great fact is a precious proof of the historical truth of the resurrection; for here was no soil in which hallucinations would spring, and such people would not have believed Him risen unless they had seen Him living.

- C. Can we not feel the broken heartedness of Mary, having seen the man she loved crucified and now this, no last chance to wrap the body with some sweet spices that reflected the sweetness of her adoration and love? Or Peter, still stinging with guilt, he had denied Jesus now what else would the others think about him... Or John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, the one who had laid his head on the very bosom of Jesus at the last supper and heard the heartbeat of God... and had also watched as on the cross that divine heart stopped beating ... and Jesus died... and so did John, more than a little that day.
- D. Where is Jesus? The question still... the haunting question of all lovers that lose a precious loved one, of all the guilt ridden ones who only want to make peace with themselves, to all the good hearted ones that are almost too good for this world in which cruelty and evil are rampant. Or perhaps even your heart... this morning? Where is Jesus when my precious wife passes away? Where is Jesus when my husband walks out

the door, where is Jesus when that person in authority does unspeakable things to me... It's not an easy question to answer and this world can be a bad, bad, so bad and hurtful and disappointing place... But, still, there is something within each one of us, no matter how life has unfolded that longs to reach out, to connect with, and to somehow find this someone with not only some answers but more, someone who can help me live with me... to somehow gain a footing, to somewhat be made whole, to at least for sometime to be happy and contented, who can give me some good news for a change, who loves me in spite of my circumstances... On this Easter morning it's a good question to consider... If nothing else this Resurrection morn, Mary, Peter and John's, question of "Where is." lets us know that we're at least in familiar company, that others have felt somehow abandoned...and that maybe, that by getting beyond the where in our story we begin to find some life answers... as we move from the where is to the why are

(Giving up... Giving in)

- A. Why are You? (Vs.8-16) ⁸ *Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. ⁹ (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) ¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to where they were staying. ¹¹ Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹² and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. ¹³ They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." ¹⁴ At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").*
- B. After the initial shock of seeing Jesus alive... talking with him, and all that would transpire over the next 40 days, the real question that Mary and the disciples and yes, you and I, is why? Why? What gives? What's going on here? Why did Jesus come back to life—seemingly have to come back to life? It's almost as if we can hear Mary say, or at least think in her mind *what are you doing here... like this, I thought you were dead... the body I expected to find wasn't living and breathing... I watched you die... but you're alive! Why...? What am I missing.."*

C. Trevin Wax of the Gospel Coalition writes in His article: 4 reasons why Christ had to be resurrected, a good biblical explanation:

1. **TO FULFILL THE SCRIPTURES:** 1 Corinthians 15 tells us that Jesus was raised from the dead in accordance with the Scriptures. If we seek to understand Old Testament passages about resurrection, we find that the Bible gives us a very simple picture. At the end of time, God will raise all the dead back to life. He will open their graves, pull them out, condemn some to everlasting destruction, and others to new life. Those who are receiving resurrection bodies will inhabit a new heaven and new earth and their bodies will be perfect, glorious, Spirit-filled. This is what many of the Jews in Jesus' day expected. So what happens with Jesus? This event that is supposed to take place at the end of time, actually takes place in the middle of time to one person. That is the surprise! The new creation promised at the end of time actually begins simultaneously. So we have Old Creation and New Creation continuing now.
2. **TO PROVIDE OUR SALVATION:** Are you saved because of Jesus' death or because of his resurrection? Or both? Would salvation exist if Jesus had died, and not been raised?
Paul makes it clear in 1 Corinthians 15 that there is no atonement without the resurrection. If Jesus has been raised, then we too have hope for a future resurrection. If Jesus has not been raised, then there is no hope. We are still in our sins. Jesus is just a false messiah. Jesus' disciples are false witnesses. Our salvation was not provided only by Jesus' cross. Jesus' resurrection was absolutely necessary. It wasn't enough for Jesus to die. He had to defeat the final enemy, death itself.
3. **TO GUARANTEE OUR RESURRECTION:** This is crucial. Paul's explanation in 1 Corinthians 15:20-23 is that Jesus' resurrection serves as the down payment, the first fruits, the guarantee of our own future resurrection. There can't be one without the other. Because Jesus rose from the dead, we are assured that each of us, that are in Him, will also be raised from the dead.
4. **TO DEFEAT DEATH:** Death is always an enemy. Watch someone die and you know that something is wrong with our world. Death is never a friend. It is a curse on God's good creation. It mars this world with pain and suffering. Death is to be fought, not embraced.
Jesus defeated death. Death had no hold on him. And because we are in Christ, death will have no hold on us. We are rescued from the clutches of this enemy and then promised eternal life.

D. The answer to the questions why..., why Jesus came, why Jesus died, and why Jesus was raised from the dead provides us an inexhaustible biblical list of wondrous things for us to grasp and look forward to ... Which to some is indeed life itself; a hope-filled and glorious daily experience and hopeful and seemingly grand future... and yet to others,

a biblical explanation means nothing more than a bunch of religious gobbily goop. What these folks want isn't so much a complicated biblical explanation as a more of just a rudimentary, straightforward clarification—how can this mean something to me...? And here is your answer, the why Jesus was resurrected, why he had to come back to life is simply a three letter word... YOU. Consider if you will, that God knew you'd be here this morning... consider more, that you know that God has been trying to get your attention for years. Consider as well, that it's not the preacher whose telling you that Jesus is alive today, that deep in your heart you know it, and more, deep in your soul you know that He not only died for you but rose again and even now is in this place for you... beckoning you to come... come home... come back—it's not my voice you hear, it's His... He longs to make himself real to you—to prove this seemingly ridiculous claim, that He is alive. Let me ask you this morning; are you a big enough person to take him up on His challenge? Will you admit that you are a sinner who needs a Savior? Will you invite Christ to come into your life... Are you willing to turn away from sinful behaviors in order to let Christ prove his existence. Are you willing for Him to prove that it's always been about you...in his heart? In His mind? Are you ready for an Easter resurrection, a new beginning yourself? And finally,

(Giving up... Giving in)

- A. Who are You? (Vs.17-18) *¹⁷ Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.*
- B. Who are You...? Mary must have thought who says... *My Father=your Father and my God=your God... Ok, first you're dead, and then you're alive, now you say you are leaving? I don't want you to go... my life is just now getting back some semblance of normality... if you could call having a dead man talk to me... normal. Who are You..?* To which of course, Jesus would give no answer. He would just imply to Mary as He does to you and Me: Think about what I have said, think about what I did... ponder if you will, my words... For God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son... Consider my claims: I am the Good Shepherd, The Lamb of God, The Son of Man, The Son of God, a King... Of course, in time, she

would grow to understand that Jesus needed to go away for the Holy Spirit to come and of course the promise of Jesus coming back. But who did He remain for her all through her life. What did she find to her, who is this question? And more, who is this, or who can this person be to me?

C. Let me name a few titles: from A to Z...

Who is Jesus? (By Pastor Jim Garlick, Full Gospel Church, Tasmania. Used with permission.)	
Let me describe Him to you...	
A	He is Alpha and Omega, the Anointed One, Author and Finisher of our faith, Author of life, the Altogether lovely One, All in all, the Advocate, Ancient of Days, Anchor of my soul, Almighty God, the Amen, Apostle and high priest of my confession, the Arm of the Lord.
B	He is the Blessed and only Potentate, Bright and morning star, Beginning and the End, the Brightness of the Father's glory, He's my Brother, my Bridegroom, my Beloved, my Banner, He's the Bread of life, the Branch of the Lord, Baptiser in the Holy Spirit and my Blessed hope of a coming kingdom.
C	He's Creator of all things, Commander and Captain of the Lord's host, the Chief corner stone, Chosen of God and precious; He's my Confidence, Counsellor and Comforter. He's the Consolation of Israel. The Chief Shepherd, Circumciser of the heart, He is Christ.
D	He's the Desire of all nations, the Door into everlasting life, Diadem of beauty, my Dwelling place, my Defence, and Deliverer. He's David's seed the Destroyer of demons and He's my Doctor.
E	He is the Express Image of God, the Everlasting Father, the End of the law to everyone that believes, Eternal Light, the Exceeding great reward. He is Emmanuel - 'God with us'.
F	He is a Friend that sticks closer than a brother, the First born, First Begotten from the dead, the First fruit, Faithful and true witness, our Forerunner into heaven for us. He's the Fairest of all, Former of all things, Fountain of living waters, Fortress of salvation and the Foundation that no one else can lay. He is the Forgiveness and Forgiver of my sin.
G	He is God, Governor of the nations, my Guide, the Glory of God, Giver of Salvation, the Gate and the Gift of God. He's the Good Shepherd and Guarantee of our salvation. He is the Glory and the Lifter of my head. He is the Giver of the Grace of God.
H	He is the Head of all principality and power, the Holy One, Heir of all things, High Priest. Head of the Body, the Church. He my Hope, my Hiding place, my Holiness, the Horn of my salvation and the Hope of Glory.
I	He is the great I AM, the Image of the invisible God, Immortal, Invincible, Incorruptible. He is my Intercessor who ever lives for me.
J	He is Jesus the Just and Justifier of all who believe in Him. The Judge of all, and the Joy of the Lord who gives me strength.
K	He is the King of kings, King of glory, King of Ages, King of Israel, King of Zion. He's the Kindness and love of God toward man appeared.
L	He's the Light of the world; He is Love, Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Lamb of God that was slain to take away the sin of the world. He is the Lamp of God, Leader of the Church, the Life giving Spirit, and Lily of the valley. The Last Adam, the Living One, Lord of lords, Lord of Hosts, Lord of heaven

	and earth, Lord of the living and the dead, Lord of the harvest and Lord of all.
M	He the Messiah, the Man at God's right hand, Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The Maker, Mighty to save, Most holy, Mediator of a better covenant and the Messenger of God. He is the Minister of the truth. Manner from heaven, Mighty God the Morning Star and Most exalted One. He is my Master.
N	He is the Nazarene, Near not far, the Name above all names.
O	Offspring of David, One who was and is and is to come, Only wise God, Only Begotten Son, Overseer of our souls and Offering for my sin.
P	He is the Passover sacrificed for us, Prince of Peace, Perfecter of faith, the Power of God, and a Prophet like unto Moses. He is Priest and Purifier, the Pearl of great price, Precious, my great Physician. My Provider and Provision.
Q	He is the Quickening Spirit and Quencher of darkness.
R	He is the Resurrection and the Life, Root and offspring of David, Ruler of God's creation, the kings of the earth and Israel. He is my Rabbi, Rock of Ages, Radiance of God's glory, my Redeemer. He's the Righteousness of God, a Refuge in a time of storm, a River of the water of life, Rose of Sharon, Renewer of my mind and Restorer of my Soul.
S	He is our Salvation, Saviour and Servant, the Seed of the woman who bruised the serpent's head, Seed of Abraham through which all nations will be blessed. Shiloh, Son of God, Son of David, Shepherd and the Stone rejected. A Stumbling block to those who do not believe in Him, Sun of Righteousness who rises with healing in His wings, He's my Shield, my Strength, my Sword and Soon coming King. He is the SAME yesterday, today and forever.
T	He's the Tested Stone, Teacher, the Truth, True Light, True Witness and the True God. He is my Thanksgiving to God.
U- Z	He is the Vine, the Way, the Wisdom of God; He is Wonderful Counsellor, Word of God made flesh who lived amongst us, Word of Life.
<p>He is all this and more! He is THE LORD JESUS CHRIST!</p> <p>“Which if all that Jesus has done were written of Him; there would not be enough books in the world to contain them.” (John 21:25)</p> <p>By acknowledging Jesus as Lord and inviting Him to take care of you, opens the door to the wonderful partnership with Him and you.</p>	

D. Where are you? Why are you? Who are you? Good questions for Jesus. Better questions for you and I this morning.