

"You Shall Be My People"
"The First Witness"

Christ is risen! Hallelujah! As we continue celebrating our Risen Lord, through Eastertide, we continue looking at the early witnesses of Christ's resurrection and the promise of life eternal. This week we focused on Mary Magdalene's witness of the empty tomb. As you go throughout your week be reminded of the sadness followed by shock that Mary must have felt. May the joy of resurrection continue to live on in your hearts! – Pastor Rebecca

Things I'd like to remember from today's sermon: "The First Witness"

Prayer for the Week

God, if there is some mysterious order of things that holds the world together, we don't really know about it. What we know is what we see and feel and touch, what we partake of with the senses. We know how to feed each other, we take in beauty, we share moments with created things, to remember that we are tethered to each other for a greater and deeper good, for a true and lasting holiness. This seems to be Kingdom as best we can understand it. This seems to be Kingdom where Kingdom can be understood in tiny bits and pieces, tiny things that keep us longing for more of you. Amen. (Kaitlin B. Curtice)

Study Guide

Monday, April 9, 2018 John 20:1-9

We are familiar with this story where the first witness of the empty tomb is Mary Magdalene. The importance of Mary running to Simon Peter and the other disciple was to make what she had seen an accountable witness. The Jewish law in Deuteronomy 19:15 says that "A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." Think about the significance of confessing communities and the power of witness by number. Had Mary not run to receive two male witnesses, the empty tomb would have never been realized and people wouldn't have believed.

Prayer: *God, thank you for the gift of community, help me to be a faithful witness to the empty tomb, Amen.*

Tuesday, April 10, 2018 John 20:11-13

But Mary stood weeping... when we lose a close friend we weep, this is a natural pattern of how we grieve loss. Mary's dedication to Jesus Christ is such that she has come with oils and spices to place on his body which she anticipated would still be in the tomb. She is alarmed to not find the body, and is weeping tears of sadness but also tears of disorientation, she is caught off guard because her Messiah is missing! Prayer: *God, even when we weep you are there with us. Even when we are shocked or caught off guard you never leave our side. Amen.*

Wednesday, April 11, 2018 John 20:14-18

We cling tight to things we value. Mary values Jesus and wants to hold onto him that he might stay with her. Jesus responds, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father..." In these Easter encounters, Jesus is still present but in a resurrection body, he is revealing himself in this new body so that others might see and believe. Mary's first witness of this resurrection body is the first fruit for what is yet to come when heaven and earth kiss and we are all united again with Christ for life eternal. Prayer: *Precious Jesus, we adore you with our full hearts and yearn for life eternal with you. Amen.*

Thursday, April 12, 2018 1 John 1:1-5

Have you seen it? Have you touched it? Can you testify? Because of Christ's resurrection from the dead, we have seen the first act of life eternal. Our task at hand is to live, breathe, and act as people who have witnessed the resurrection! Prayer: *Eternal One, as I go through the motions of life, center me on your divine promises of resurrection and a reconciled life with you. Amen.*

Friday, April 13, 2018 1 John 2:7-10

Darkness is passing away and true light is already shining. Spring and Eastertide go wonderfully together. As we are experiencing longer days and more light, we are reminded of the everlasting light of Jesus Christ who put darkness behind us by his death and resurrection. Today, you are challenged to find ways to reclaim light in your life! We know what it is, we must reclaim the power of light in a world filled with darkness. Prayer: *God, make me a child of your light. Amen.*