



Small Groups

Small Group Discussion Guide

Beyond the Tomb Part 1: A Glimpse Beyond the Tomb John 20:11-18

(Discussion Guide by Lisa Smith)

Easter: April 11-12, 2020

JESUS IS RISEN!

He blesses every love which weeps and grieves
And now he blesses hers who stood and wept
And would not be consoled, or leave her love's
Last touching place, but watched as low light crept
Up from the east. A sound behind her stirs
A scatter of bright birdsong through the air.
She turns, but cannot focus through her tears,
Or recognize the Gardener standing there.
She hardly hears his gentle question "Why,
Why are you weeping?", or sees the play of light
That brightens as she chokes out her reply
"They took my love away, my day is night"
And then she hears her name, she hears Love say
The Word that turns her night, and ours, to Day.
"XV Easter Dawn," Malcolm Guite, *Sounding the Seasons*

Opening Question: During this time of quarantine, have you discovered a new Easter tradition that might continue past this year?

I. Life Dethrones Death

Psalm 42:8 (NIV) "By day the LORD directs his love, at night his song is with me— a prayer to the God of my **life**."

John 14:6a (NIV) "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the **life**.'"

1. In John 20, Mary Magdalene is crying in her sorrow at Jesus' death.
 - a. What do you think scares people the most about death?
 - b. How do you think most people deal with the reality of death?
2. Pastor Shawn noted that the two angels in John 20 may represent Israel's Ark of the Covenant, the tangible presence of God in the Old Testament.

- a. How has your relationship with Jesus and God's presence in your life affected your view of death?
- b. If someone were to ask you to describe the life of Christ in you, what words would you use?

II. Hope Destroys Despair

Psalm 31:24 (NIV) "Be strong and take heart, all you who **hope** in the LORD."

Matthew 12:21 (NIV) "In [Jesus] name the nations will put their **hope**."

1. Despair can cause depression, lack of motivation, and hopelessness.
 - a. What do you think causes the most despair in today's world?
 - b. How have you been battling the despair that may have come because of our struggle with COVID-19 and stay-at-home orders?
2. Mary's despair turns to hope with just one word from Jesus—her name.
 - a. What is it about Jesus using Mary's name that so affects her?
 - b. Mary calls Jesus "Teacher." What teaching from Jesus has given you hope in a time of despair?
 - c. Do you believe Jesus knows your name? What evidence has He given you that He knows you personally?

III. Joy Defeats Disappointment

Psalm 16:11 (NIV) "You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with **joy** in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand."

Luke 10:21 (NIV) "At that time Jesus, full of **joy** through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children."

1. Surely disappointment was one of the strongest emotions the followers of Jesus were feeling after his death.
 - a. Can you describe a time you felt disappointed in God? How did you work through it?
2. The life of a follower of Jesus is often presented in the Bible as one of joy.
 - a. What about Jesus gives you the most joy?
 - b. During this pandemic, how can you intentionally choose joy every day? Share with each other ideas that help you choose joy.
3. Read Psalm 2, a Messianic psalm, in praise of Jesus' victory today!