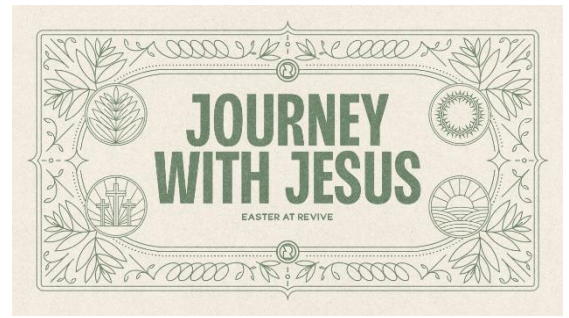


GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

John 20:11–18

Encountering the Risen Christ



About this Week's Message:

On that first Easter morning, Jesus didn't appear to the masses—He appeared to one person. A woman. A misunderstood, faithful, and formerly tormented disciple named Mary Magdalene. Her story shows us that resurrection isn't just a doctrine or a date—it's an invitation to encounter Jesus personally. This week's discussion centers on how Jesus meets us in our grief, our confusion, and our need—and calls us by name.

Goals of This Week's Discussion/ Study:

This study helps us see the resurrection not just as an event to believe in, but as a relationship to enter. As we walk through Mary Magdalene's encounter with Jesus, we'll explore what it looks like to move from knowing *about* Jesus to recognizing Him—and responding with love and surrender.

Connections with the 7 Marks of a Jesus Follower:

- **Keep in Step: Choose Surrender** - Mary doesn't hold onto her version of Jesus—she lets go to trust His mission.
 - **Share your Story:** After her encounter, Mary goes and tells others. Encounter leads to mission.
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Suggested Starter Questions:

- When have you felt seen by God in a personal or unexpected way?

- What stands out to you about Mary being the first person Jesus appears to after the resurrection?
 - What does it look like to *encounter* Jesus instead of just learning about Him?
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Read John 20:11–13

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?"

- Why do you think Mary didn't recognize the angels for who they were?
 - How do grief and unmet expectations sometimes cloud our vision of what God is doing?
 - What does this moment show us about Jesus' compassion for our pain?
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Read John 20:14–16

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."

- What's significant about Jesus calling Mary by name?
 - How do you think Mary felt when she realized it was Jesus?
 - What does this passage teach us about how Jesus pursues us personally?
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Read John 20:17–18

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.

- Why do you think Jesus tells Mary not to hold onto Him?
 - What's the connection between encountering Jesus and being sent out to tell others?
 - How does this challenge or encourage your own faith journey?
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Applying the Text:

- What does this passage reveal about how we come to faith?
Key Takeaway: Faith isn't just information—it's sparked by Jesus revealing Himself to us. We need His help to believe.
 - What do we learn about the kind of people Jesus chooses to reveal Himself to?
Key Takeaway: Jesus shows up to the desperate, the loyal, and the least expected—He still calls people by name.
 - How does encountering Jesus change our priorities?
Key Takeaway: When we meet the risen Christ, we're moved from grief to purpose—His story becomes our mission.
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Practical Application:

- Where do you most need to hear Jesus call your name right now?
- What's one area of your life where you need to let go and trust His mission over your plans?

- Who in your life needs to hear that Jesus is alive—and how might you share that hope this week?
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Pray:

- Thank Jesus for being a Savior who comes close and knows you by name.
- Ask for ears to hear His voice and a heart ready to respond.
- Pray for boldness to live as someone who has truly encountered the risen Christ.