

# SERMON NOTES

*Reason to Believe: The Great Conflict*  
*John 20:1-18*  
*(Matthew 28:1-15; Mark 16:1-11; Luke 24:1-12)*

Preaching on Mars Hill, about 20 years after the death of Jesus, Paul makes clear that the resurrection is an “unavoidable truth.” Listen to what he said:

“Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.” *Acts 17:30-31*

As we process the resurrection narrative in John’s gospel, we are confronted with the reality of the literal, physical resurrection of Jesus. We learn...

## The resurrection is a mystery that confirms and inspires faith, and also confronts unbelief!

“Mystery”- *mysterion* – Doesn’t mean something unsolvable. Mystery in the NT refers to something that has previously been hidden. “That which has been previously hidden will be revealed.” *1 Corinthians 15:51*

### • The flow of the resurrection narrative

Matthew 28:1-15; Mark 16:1-11; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-18

### • The facts of the resurrection narrative (Luke 11:29-36; 1 Corinthians 15)

- No one saw the resurrection, but many saw the resurrected Christ.
- No Bible writer tries to explain the resurrection, it is a supernatural event.
- Mary was not anticipating the resurrection.
- The disciples were not anticipating the resurrection.
- Jewish leaders were afraid of the resurrection.
- The tomb was empty.
- Women saw the empty tomb.
- Peter and John saw the empty tomb.
- Angels testified to His resurrection.
- The Sanhedrin tried to cover up the resurrection.
- The soldiers lied about the body being stolen.
- Sunday became the day the church met for worship.
- The resurrection became the pivotal preaching point for the early church.

## The resurrection explains God’s grace to sinners!

“The purpose of salvation is a resurrected people.” *1 Peter 2:9-10*

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” *1 Peter 2:9-10*

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Why would a holy God send His son to take on flesh, die on a cross, and raise Him from the dead? To the world this is foolishness, non-sensical.

“For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” *1 Corinthians 1:18 (NASB95)*

- **A picture of God’s grace** (Luke 8:2; Mark 16:9)

“The resurrection story begins with a woman whose love for Jesus was the most important thing in her life.”  
*John Phillips*

Why was Mary so prominent in the resurrection story? Who is this woman? She was a follower, a supporter, an eyewitness to the crucifixion and the risen Christ. Often, she has been mislabeled as a prostitute.

“Now after He had risen early on the first day of the week, He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons.” *Mark 16:9*

“And also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out.” *Luke 8:2*

Mary, a woman, was the first to:

- See the risen Christ
- Hear His voice
- Touch Him
- Be commissioned by Him
- Tell the good news of the resurrection to others

- **A person filled with gratitude**

Her gratitude was the motivation for the intensity of her devotion.

She was prominent at Jesus’ death: Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40; John 19:25

She was present after His resurrection: Matthew 28:1; Mark 15:47; Luke 24:10; John 20:1-18

## A personal encounter with the resurrected Christ is life giving and life changing!

“Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’ Martha said to Him, ‘I know that He will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies.’” *John 11:23–25 (NASB95)*

- **A personal encounter with Jesus is possible** – (Exodus 25:17-19)
- **A personal encounter gives you an eternal purpose** – “go tell”

Our message is built and centered on the fact of the resurrection. Mary’s meeting with Jesus made her a missionary.