

More Than a Metaphor

Lent 2023

John 20.1-18

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- * What did you hear?
- * What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- * What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

KEY VERSES

⁸Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed, ⁹for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and she told them that he had said these things to her.

REFLECTION

Dr. Bob Williams, a renowned astronomer, made an important discovery through the lens of the Hubble telescope in 1995 about a dark strip of sky. Amazingly, galaxy after galaxy was revealed through the lens of the Hubble – light indeed, that had not yet been detected.

This idea of the contrast of light and darkness is central to Christianity, and we have experienced this contrast throughout Lent and into Easter. Reflect on your Lenten journey. **Were you able to fully immerse yourself in the darkness? Were you more prepared to celebrate the light of Christ's resurrection on Easter morning? What practices or opportunities drew you in and impacted you this season?**

The disciples experienced extreme darkness in the aftermath of Christ's death, when everything their lives had stood for was turned upside down. Light began to creep back into their lives, however, when Jesus was raised from the dead. It was for this reason that they dropped everything to travel around and make one claim: He is risen! In verses 8 and 18, the disciples and Mary Magdalene "saw and believed." They could not explain *how* he rose again, but they *believed* it - and consequently many were persecuted, even killed for it. **How have you encountered the risen Jesus? Do you believe it just with your heart, or do you believe it with your mind, too?**

For the disciples, the darkness they experienced wasn't truly darkness, there was light there that they had not yet been able to detect. This is the difference that the resurrection makes. Darkness is something that cannot be avoided, but it will not be the end of our stories. Light is real, and if we believe he is risen, it changes our world and lives, and the way we live and die. **What are you struggling to believe? Where do you need hope to move out of the darkness?**