

Sermon Starter – A Day of Contrasts

John 20:1-18

Scripture reading:

This is a lovely passage but also one that's very well-known to long-time church attenders. To help them listen anew, consider reading it reader's theater style (narrator, Mary Magdalene, two angels, and Jesus), or asking someone to learn it by heart and present it to the congregation from memory.

Sermon notes:

Easter Sunday is a time of joyful celebration, but at the first Easter and in our own lives, this celebration grows out of very real grief and fear. In today's texts, we're aware of the movement from one extreme to another: from death to life, from cross to empty tomb, from uncertainty to certainty, from darkness to light, from old to new, from the grave to resurrection. Christ is alive! And we may have some catching up to do.

In the Gospel passage, Jesus reveals himself to Mary who quickly takes the word of his resurrection to the disciples. Are we like Mary or the disciples? What do we feel and see... or perhaps not notice? We have been trusted with the announcements of the resurrection. How are we sharing the good news? How might we, like Mary, proclaim "I have seen the Lord?"

In preparing for today's sermon, note the many contrasts which include waiting and running, the expected and the unexpected, questions and answers, doubting and believing, lack of understanding and recognition.

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