



**JOHN - SMALL GROUP SERIES
LESSON 3**

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Lesson 3

Bible: John 20

Topics: Jesus is resurrected.

Read John 20:1-10:

1 Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance.

2 She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, "They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

3 Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb.

4 They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.

5 He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn't go in.

6 Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, 7 while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings.

8 Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed 9 for until then they still hadn't understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead.

10 Then they went home.

Say: Mary sees the stone rolled away and the tomb empty.

She quickly lets Peter and "the other disciple," which we know to be John, know about the situation.

Then we have a serious scene, with a bit of competitive comedy to it.

Both Peter and John run to the tomb.

John notes that “the other disciple”—himself—“outran Peter and reached the tomb first.”

I can almost picture a grin on his face as he wrote those words.

Then he notes that Peter arrived and went inside. He follows Peter.

It says that now John believes—which is huge since, as he said, they had not even begun to fully process all that had happened and all the Scriptures that had been fulfilled in front of them over the last three years—and the last three days!

This section ends oddly with them going home.

Discussion Questions

1. It is interesting to note that John points out that a woman—Mary—is the first to find the tomb empty. In Jesus’ day, it would have been more acceptable to have a man as the first witness. That John includes these details lends to the authenticity of it, since someone making this story up wouldn’t have chosen to write it that way. What other details about Jesus’ resurrection would be different if it were fiction instead of fact?
2. Peter and John were two of Jesus’ closest disciples, so it seems fitting that they would be two of the first to arrive and find the tomb empty after hearing Mary’s story. Knowing what you do about Peter, what do you think he was thinking and feeling when they found the tomb this way? What about John?
3. John records that he “believes” that Jesus had been raised from the dead. Interestingly, he doesn’t say anything about whether Peter believed. Keep in mind, Peter had just two nights ago denied three times that he knew who Jesus was. Do you think he was wondering if Jesus could forgive him for that? How do you relate to either Peter or John in their situation?
4. Peter and John “go home” on foot after seeing the empty tomb. Imagine you could be with them for that journey. What do you imagine they talked about? Or did they walk in silence? What do you think they said to their family and fellow disciples?

Read John 20:11-18:

11 Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in. 12 She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. 13 “Dear woman, why are you crying?” the angels asked her.

“Because they have taken away my Lord,” she replied, “and I don’t know where they have put him.”

14 *She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn’t recognize him. 15 “Dear woman, why are you crying?” Jesus asked her. “Who are you looking for?”*

She thought he was the gardener. “Sir,” she said, “if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him.”

16 *“Mary!” Jesus said.*

She turned to him and cried out, “Rabboni!” (which is Hebrew for “Teacher”).

17 *“Don’t cling to me,” Jesus said, “for I haven’t yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”*

18 *Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, “I have seen the Lord!” Then she gave them his message.*

Say: In this scene, John and Peter have left, but Mary is still at the tomb.

She gets a personal encounter with Jesus!

Then He sends her to tell the disciples that not only did she find the tomb empty, but now she has seen Jesus alive again!!!

Discussion Questions

1. If you are a female, how significant or special is it to you that the first person to find the empty tomb and the first person to see Jesus alive again is a woman? (If you look back, were most of the people described at Jesus crucifixion men or women?)
2. Here we see Jesus’ love and compassion as He tenderly comforts Mary and then entrusts her with the responsibility of sharing this good news with the disciples—whom He calls “brothers.” Today, Jesus gives us the honor of telling people about Him and His resurrection. We are also supposed to show love and compassion. What has this looked like in your life? Or what could this look like?
3. What lesson can we learn from our interactions with other people from how Jesus treats Mary in this encounter?

Read John 20:19-29:

19 *That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! “Peace be with you,” he said.*

20 *As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord!*

21 *Again he said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.”*

22 *Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.*

23 *If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”*

24 *One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), was not with the others when Jesus came. **25** They told him, “We have seen the Lord!”*

But he replied, “I won’t believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side.”

26 *Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. “Peace be with you,” he said.*

27 *Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don’t be faithless any longer. Believe!”*

28 *“My Lord and my God!” Thomas exclaimed.*

29 *Then Jesus told him, “You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.”*

Say: Most of the day has passed. It is now Sunday evening, and the disciples are so scared of the Jewish leaders after what they did to Jesus, that they are meeting together behind locked doors.

And then JESUS shows up!

For some reason, Thomas didn’t get the memo and wasn’t at that meeting.

When his fellow disciples tell him what he missed, he expresses his doubts by demanding proof.

Eight days later they are again meeting behind locked doors—over a week after seeing Jesus and knowing he is alive again. This time Thomas is with them.

Now Jesus shows up, and He gives Thomas the proof he had asked for a week before.

He also offers a little blessing for us: “Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.”

Discussion Questions

1. The disciples were a mix of fear and faith. If you’ve read through the Gospels, you have seen that in their time with Jesus. Now, in the first week after His crucifixion, they are again a mix of fear and faith. Describe what you believe they were thinking and feeling from Friday through this gathering a week later.
2. Thomas has doubts, but instead of rejecting him, Jesus addresses his doubts to help him believe. Sometimes, we feel like we must hide our doubts when we are disciples. Share honestly about doubts you have had or still have when it comes to your faith.
3. Sometimes we are quick to shut down someone who has doubts or to dismiss them. What can we learn from Jesus’ example so that we can compassionately help people with their doubts?

Read John 20:30-31:

30 The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book.

31 But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.

Say: Towards the end of his book, John tells us his thesis.

He included what he did in his Gospel, which was written several decades after the other three.

He wrote this Gospel partially to fight against false teaching and help the reader believe in Jesus—the Messiah, Anointed One, Rescuer.

He hoped to help his listeners to have real, eternal life through that belief.

Discussion Questions

1. When you read verse 30, what other parts of Jesus' life do you wish someone had written down so you could know about them today? Why do you pick these parts?
2. We have looked at a few people, such as Joseph, Nicodemus, Mary, Peter, and John, who saw Jesus in person and believed He was the Messiah, the Son of God. How do their stories and examples help you to believe, even though you haven't seen Jesus in-person?
3. If you haven't become a Christian yet, has this study so far helped you to believe in Jesus or raised more questions—maybe both? Please explain.
4. If you are a Christian, has this study helped you to “continue to believe” in Jesus? If so, please explain.
5. Who do you know that is not yet a follower of Jesus? How can you help introduce them to Jesus and help them get to know Him? Has anyone done this already who can share some tips?