

LC STUDY GUIDE
Post-Easter – Campus Pastor Sunday
The Passage: John 20:1-10
April 24 – May 6

Introduction:

Welcome back from Easter.

Spend a few minutes reflecting on the following two things:

- Life for the past couple weeks
- Easter Celebration last Sunday

Transition to our text:

Today we want to linger a little more around Easter and the empty tomb by looking in the Gospel of John.

Dramatically and unexpectedly, Jesus has risen from the dead. Mary Magdalene finds the tomb empty and runs back to tell the disciples. How do mere humans attempt to process the magnitude of such a revolutionary moment – “Is it possible that the dead can rise?”

As we take in the victory of Jesus, let’s also keep an eye open for the human interactions that are taking place between John and Peter and Mary Magdalene... and where we might be able to identify a bit of ourselves as we process Jesus’ resurrection.

John 20:1-10

¹ Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. ² So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!”

³ So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. ⁴ Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, ⁷ as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen.

⁸ Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. ⁹ (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)

¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

O – What do you find interesting or profound in these ten verses that captures your attention?

I – Why do you think John goes into a full description of who got to the tomb first, who went in, how the burial cloths were left, and various details?

(One possible reason that John goes into such detail is to give a full report on what they did and didn't do. A chief concern was that someone had moved or stolen the body and John wanted everyone to know Peter's and his exact reactions and actions. As awful as it is to think about, why would the thieves unwrap the body? And it would be quite a task given the wrapping customs of the day. Another reason to consider is the ongoing dynamic between John, Peter, and all the disciples.)

All that said, commentators have debated for centuries why John described the most climatic moment in history as such. What we can appreciate today is the element of our human reactions when they come across something truly miraculous, transcendent and life-changing.)

O – Re-read verses 4-8, imagining yourself as the third disciple running alongside John and Peter. Imagine what you would have done upon arriving to the tomb (and just for fun, would you have arrived first, second, or third?)

I – It would be helpful for us to return to the fact that it was Mary Magdalene who discovered the tomb was empty first. In an ancient, patriarchal society, where a woman's testimony was not valid in court, why does John include her in the account?

(Simple answer is because that's exactly how it happened.)

In the Gospel of John, this is Mary Magdalene's second appearance, the first being at the foot of the cross with "the other Marys." Most of what we know about her comes from the other Gospels but here, John records her encounter in the following verses, 11-18.)

A – Describe a time when your sense of competition and rivalry took over your life. Why did you feel that you had to win?

A – What everyday practices and mindsets have we found helpful that have kept our focus on the resurrected Jesus and have helped us to keep the sins of our pride in check?

- a. Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting. Take some time to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best. Select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your Life Community group.
- b. Complement these questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?)
- c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage participation. Avoid answering your own questions!
- d. Application: Pace the study to conclude with difference-making application.
- e. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching” rather than facilitating, causing people to feel distracted or de-powered.