

Easter At Sun Valley | Knowing God

Introduction

This week, we explored the story of Mary Magdalene's encounter with the resurrected Jesus in John 20. Jesus' earthly life is bookended by two women named Mary. His mother Mary was devout, religious, and found favor with God. But at the end of His life, the first person to see the resurrected Jesus was Mary Magdalene—a woman with a very different story. She had been possessed by seven demons and had a sordid past. Yet Jesus chose her as the first witness to His resurrection. Whether you relate more to the religious Mary or the broken Mary, Jesus wants you to be part of His story. No matter where you've been, what you've done, or what's been done to you, Jesus is calling your name. In times of pain, it can be hard to find Jesus. Jesus can be near and not recognized. But He personally calls to you and is waiting for you to answer.

Conversation Starters (10 minutes)

- What are some of your favorite Easter traditions?

Sermon Notes Review (15 minutes)

What caught your attention, stood out to you, or challenged you from this weekend's teaching?

Group Discussion (50 minutes)

Starter Questions:

1. If you have said Yes to Jesus, share your story of when you first said Yes.
2. When have you felt like God was distant or silent, only to later realize He was working all along?

Scripture Observation:

3. Read [John 20:11-13](#). In your Bible, underline Mary's words: "*They have taken my Lord away.*" What does her response reveal about her emotional state and expectations?

Scripture Interpretation/Discussion:

4. Mary was disappointed because the plan didn't go the way she thought it would. When have you experienced disappointment with God because things didn't turn out as you expected?
5. In this weekend's message, Chad said, "The presence of pain does not mean the absence of God." How does Mary's story illustrate this truth?

Personal Application:

6. Mary couldn't recognize Jesus even though He was standing right in front of her. What might be blinding you from seeing what God is doing in your life right now?
7. Jesus called Mary by name, and she immediately recognized Him. How does knowing that Jesus knows your name and your story personally impact the way you relate to Him?
8. Is there any area of your life you have been holding back from Jesus that you would like to invite him into today?

Prayer (5 minutes)

Close your group time in prayer. You can use these words or your own:

"Jesus, thank You for calling us by name and inviting us into Your story. Help us to recognize Your presence even in our pain. Open our eyes to see what You're doing in our lives right now. We trust You. We love you. In your name we pray, Amen."

Practices to Help You Grow This Week

- Journal about a time when you couldn't see God working, but later realized He was there all along
- Listen for Jesus calling your name this week and respond in trust
- It's not too late to participate in our special offering for Convoy of Hope. Your one day can change someone's every day. Give online at oneday.sv.cc.