



April 20, 2025
Jesus at the Festivals
FIRST FRUITS
John 20:1-18



1. Opening Discussion: (You will probably want to use only one of these openers)

- a. Easter traditions in America have changed significantly over the years. What were the traditions of your family or church as you grew up? If you have one what was your earliest memory about Easter? Is there a tradition that you wish was still being followed?
- b. Have you ever run into someone you know in a completely unexpected location (perhaps while traveling overseas or in a different state)? Did you immediately recognize the individual, or did it perhaps take a while for your brain to process the situation?
- c. What was the most surprising thing that has ever happened to you? Describe the event, why it was surprising, and how you reacted.

2. Prayer:

- a. Adoration – Pray Psalm 8 or another passage of Scripture that enables you to focus on praising God for who He is in all His majesty and glory, the only One worthy of praise.
- b. Confession – Spend time in silence, allowing the Holy Spirit to bring to mind any sins you need to confess. Keep a paper and pencil handy in case He reminds you of one that requires you to ask forgiveness of someone. Close by reading 1 John 1:9
- c. Thanksgiving – In the spirit of Ephesians 5:20, thank God for answered prayers, His blessings and gifts, and the opportunities He provides to serve. Make a point to thank Him for at least one thing that you've never given thanks for before.
- d. Supplications – Pray for the needs of others, both physical and spiritual; for the activities of His Church, both locally and around the world; for those who serve Him, including missionaries, pastors, and volunteers; for your personal needs; and for at least some of the items on LRBC's weekly *Praises & Prayer Requests*. Close by reading 1 John 5:14-15.

3. Sermon Key Points for John 20:1-18

- a. At the Feast of First Fruits, Jesus Rose As the First Fruit from the Dead
 - i. The feast of First Fruits celebrates God's provision and promise of the future harvest
 - ii. Jesus was the first to rise from the dead and He fulfilled First Fruits
- b. Because Jesus is the First Fruit, All Who Believe In Him Will Also Rise to Eternal Life
 - i. Jesus is the First Fruit Who guarantees the future rising of everyone who believes in Him
 - ii. Share the Good News and expand the coming harvest

4. Bible Study:

a. ***Sunday Afternoon*** – As soon as possible after the sermon, make time to consider:

- i. What stood out to you the most in this sermon?
- ii. What new truth did you learn, or what truth were you reminded of?
- iii. Is there a particular Scripture passage you feel God is leading you to meditate on or commit to memory?
- iv. What is one thing God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
- v. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?

b. ***Monday:***

- i. The week's focal passage is the account of Jesus' Resurrection recorded in John 20:1-18. Because this most important event is reported with different details in each Gospel, we will look at all four rather than just considering John's account. Start the week by reading and meditating on Matthew 28:1-15.
- ii. In order to compare the four accounts, you may want to record answers to these questions in the margins:
 1. What time did the events Matthew recorded occur?
 2. Who was present?
 3. What was their objective or purpose according to Matthew?
- iii. What are the noteworthy aspects of the angel of the Lord's appearance and action to you?
 1. What significance, if any, do you see in the earthquake (see Matthew 27:51)? In the fact that after rolling back the stone, he sat on it?
 2. Why do you think the guards' reaction was so different from the women?
- iv. What information did the angel give the women? What instructions?
- v. What was their emotional state when they left the tomb? How did it change when Jesus greeted them?
- vi. Why do you think Matthew included the information about the guards' report and the subsequent "cover-up"? Why does the fact that the priests were willing to pay a sufficient (large) sum of money to the guards suggest that they actually believed the guards? If they did, what does it say about their spiritual condition?

c. ***Tuesday:***

- i. Read Mark's account of the Resurrection in Mark 16:1-8.
- ii. Again, record your answers:
 1. What times did the events Mark recorded occur?
 2. Who was present?

3. What was their objective or purpose according to Mark?
- iii. What new details does Mark provide in verse 1? When would the women have done this? Why would they not have gone immediately to the tomb?
- iv. What timeline information does Mark provide in verse 4 to show us that the women did not see the events that so terrified the guards? With that in mind, why is there no reason to see any discrepancy between Matthew and Mark regarding the being that gave the women the message that Jesus had risen?
- v. Read Mark 16:9-11. These verses are probably marked to show that they are missing from early manuscripts, but nonetheless, they will help complete the account. Who did Jesus appear to first?

d. Wednesday:

- i. Read Luke's account in Luke 23:55-24:12.
- ii. Record your answers:
 1. At what times did the events Luke recorded occur?
 2. Who was present?
 3. What was their objective or purpose according to Luke?
- iii. A common objection to the resurrection is to say that the women (and later the disciples) went to the wrong tomb. How does Luke invalidate that proposal?
- iv. Luke says that after seeing the tomb, they went home and prepared spices and perfume (Friday evening), but Mark says they purchased spices after the Sabbath (Saturday evening). What are several good explanations for how both statements can be true?
- v. Why did the disciples and others with them not believe the women? If you had been there with them, do you think you would have believed the women?

e. Thursday:

- i. Now read the focal passage John 20:1-18.
- ii. Once again:
 1. At what times did the events John recorded occur?
 2. Who was present?
 3. What was her objective or purpose, according to John?
- iii. In presenting his version of the Resurrection, John interweaves two stories: Mary's and the two disciples (Peter and John). Why do you think he focuses on these two aspects in particular?
- iv. Interestingly, John does not tell us if Mary entered or even looked into the tomb in verse 1. From what he does tell us in that verse, why might we think she did not, and that, for some reason, she just assumed the body had been taken? Why might we think otherwise?

- v. While John focuses on telling the account from Mary's perspective, how does verse 2 demonstrate that Mary had not been alone, and so does not conflict with the other Gospels?
- vi. Verses 3-10 tell us of the two disciples' experience. First John (the other disciple), then Peter saw "the linen cloths lying there." What is the significance of that statement?
 - 1. According to verse 8, John "believed" after entering the tomb, but we are unsure if Peter did. Why would John only mention his own belief? What lesson might we learn from this and apply when we are considering
 - 2. What does verse 9 tell us about the nature of their belief? What similar principle applies to our belief (faith)? What should this encourage us to do daily?
 - 3. Why do you think the Holy Spirit wanted us to know they went back to their homes?
- f. **Friday:**
 - i. Read and meditate on the account of Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene in John 20:11-18.
 - ii. Both the angels and Jesus asked Mary the same question, "Woman, why are you weeping?". Since repetition in the Bible is usually a sign that something is important, what might the Holy Spirit be communicating to us by showing us the question twice?
 - iii. While you have probably seen this event dramatized in a video or movie, try to set aside those memories and just try to imagine the scene in your own mind based only on the words of scripture. How do you think Mary's facial expression changed between verses 15 and 17? What tone of voice would she have had when she said "Rabboni?"
 - iv. How did Mary respond to Jesus' command? What do you think her emotions were like in verse 18 as she told the disciples what had happened? Do we show the same enthusiasm when sharing what we have experienced in Christ?
- g. **Saturday:**
 - i. Read the focal passage, John 20:1-18, again and then read 1 Corinthians 15:1-22.
 - ii. How important is the Resurrection to you? Why?

5. Application:

- a. When Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene, He gave her a command, and she obeyed – immediately and probably enthusiastically. Jesus gives us a similar command in Matthew 28:19. In light of our Resurrection benefits, we should respond in like manner. Are we?
- b. John and Peter personally experienced the empty tomb, yet they still did not understand what the Scriptures taught and had to grow in knowledge through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. The same applies to each of us (Ephesians 4:14-16 and Colossians 1:9-10). There is no substitute for time spent in reading, studying, and meditating on God's Word.