



## EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

The Gospel of John Sermon Series  
Supports Session 6: I Have Seen  
Sermon Title: "He's Alive" (John 20:1-18)

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### Connection to Session 6

Mary Magdalene, followed by John and Simon Peter, witnessed Jesus's empty tomb. Jesus had been resurrected; He was—and is—alive!

### Introduction/Opening

Each year around Easter, the media interviews clergy to hear their thoughts on the Resurrection. Sometimes these religious leaders deny the bodily resurrection and describe a spiritual resurrection. Sometimes they cling to the older theories that sought to explain the Resurrection. These include the conspiracy hypothesis (the disciples stole the body), the apparent death hypothesis (Jesus was not dead; He later revived and then escaped the tomb), the wrong tomb hypothesis (the women and then the disciples went to the wrong tomb), the displaced body hypothesis (Joseph of Arimathea moved the body), and the hallucination hypothesis (the disciples and others were in such an emotional state, they only *thought* they saw the Resurrected Christ).

Without the Resurrection, Christianity is a falsehood, and every person who has ever believed in the Lord Jesus has perished in sin. In fact, 1 Corinthians 15:17-18 says, "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Those, then, who have fallen asleep in Christ have also perished." The Resurrection is the linchpin, the cornerstone, and the very foundation of the Christian faith. The Resurrection displays God's power in raising Christ from the dead. The Resurrection confirms the satisfaction of Christ's atoning death for sinners. The Resurrection is the apex of history. The greatest event that has ever happened secured salvation and eternity for the people of God.

### Outline

1. Discovery (vv. 1-10)
  - a. The first discovery was of the removed stone. Mary Magdalene, from whom seven demons had been cast, journeyed early to the tomb while it was still dark. By the time she and the other women (noted in the other Gospels) arrived, the sun had risen. Astonishingly, the stone was moved from the opening of the grave. There was a measure of worry about the stone as recorded in Mark's Gospel. "They were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone from the entrance to the tomb for us?" (Mark 16:3). Mary Magdalene immediately ran to Simon Peter and John (the one Jesus loved) and reported what she had seen. The concept of resurrection was out of her thought

process. Perhaps her mind drifted to the enemies of the Lord Jesus. Perhaps she thought they killed Him and had taken His body to add insult to injury. Peter and John ran together to the tomb with John, who was younger and faster, arriving first.

- b. The second discovery was the tomb was empty. John stopped at the entrance of the tomb and saw the burial cloths but did not go in. Peter arrived and true to his impulsive nature went inside. He saw the burial cloths and the head wrapping. The one thing Peter did not find and John did not see was Jesus Himself. The burial cloths were on the stone slab of the tomb without a body inside. The body of the Lord Jesus was no longer in the tomb.
- c. The third discovery was one of belief. Upon reaching the tomb, John “went in, saw, and believed” (v. 8). Mary Magdalene’s message was correct, the tomb was empty. The resurrection had occurred.

## 2. Disillusion (vv. 11-13)

- a. Still in grief, despair, and hopelessness, Mary Magdalene stood outside the tomb weeping. She then stooped down and investigated the tomb. In the tomb, were two angels who asked her why she was weeping. At this point Mary believed Jesus’s body had been stolen, and she was determined to find it.
- b. The one event that has the power to eliminate disillusion, despair, discouragement, and grief is the Resurrection. If there is no Resurrection, there is no hope (1 Corinthians 15:16-19). Disillusionment in the Christian journey is often the result of the loss of hope. Hope is lost when it seems that no matter how hard we try to move forward we still fall back. Hope is lost when things for which we have prayed and sought God did not come to pass. Hope is lost when illness or accident causes the death of loved ones or dear friends. Hope can only be restored by faith in Jesus’s Resurrection, which gives all believers hope in a future resurrection of all the saints and a reunion in glory.

## 3. Declaration (vv. 14-18)

- a. After Mary Magdalene expressed her despair to the angels, she turned back to the garden. When she turned, she saw Jesus but did not recognize Him. She still sought to know where Jesus’s body had been taken.
- b. Jesus’s greeting (v. 16). Perhaps Mary Magdalene’s inability to recognize Jesus was because of the tears, perhaps it was because of the angle of the sun on that first Easter morning, or perhaps He looked somewhat different after the Resurrection. These speculations remain unanswered. We do know when Jesus spoke her name she knew immediately who He was.
- c. Mary’s response (v. 16). When Mary heard His voice and recognized Jesus, she clung to Him. She did not want to lose the Lord she loved. What can we learn from her response? Her actions demonstrated honor, worship, and humility. Above all, her response was one of love.
- d. The command from Jesus (v. 17). Jesus commanded Mary not to cling to Him, but “go to my brothers and tell them that I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God” (v. 17).
- e. The message from Mary (v. 18). Mary’s message was simple and straightforward: “I have seen the Lord” (v. 18). She also gave the other details Jesus shared with her.

## Conclusion

What then are we going to do with Mary's message? Will we conclude the Resurrection of Jesus is a hoax? Will we agree with those who say it was a conspiracy concocted by the disciples who stole the body? Will we accept the apparent death, the wrong tomb, the moved body, or His appearances were all hallucinations? Or will we affirm His Resurrection?

Because –  
He's alive, He's alive, He's alive and I'm forgiven,  
Heavens gates are open wide.  
He's alive, He's alive, He's alive and I'm forgiven,  
Heavens gates are open wide.  
He's alive, He's alive, He's alive and I'm forgiven,  
Heavens gates are open wide.  
He's alive!<sup>1</sup>

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*All Scripture quotations are taken from the Christian Standard Bible<sup>®</sup>, Copyright 2020 by Holman Bible Publishers.*

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1. Don Francisco, *He's Alive*, Vinyl (Nashville, TN: New Pax Music Press, 1977).