

John 20:1-23 - "The Resurrection"

Starter: Would you say that you've ever been "filled" with the Holy Spirit? If so explain the event.

Last Sunday was Pentecost Sunday and we talked about what some theologians call the "Johannine Pentecost" - Pentecost as John records it. I don't think that John is recording Pentecost - Luke does that after the ascension of Jesus in Acts. John is talking about something that many of us are a lot more used to; receiving the Holy Spirit. But before we get there, we have several other verses to tackle.

Read John 20:1-10 and try and picture the scene as an observer.

Bearing in mind Jesus said a lot more stuff than is recorded in the gospels (John 21:25):

Q. How is it possible that the disciples (Peter, John and Mary) didn't realize exactly what had happened?

Q. What do you think John means when saying about himself, "He went in [to the tomb] and he saw and believed, for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead" (v9)?

Read John 20:11-18

Mary didn't seem to be afraid at the sight of the angels. Then she sees who she assumes to be the gardener. Maybe she's thinking that the gardener thought the new tomb to be a bit too good for Jesus - a simple Jew. So she asks him where Jesus' body is so she can give it a proper burial despite Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus' burial which was extremely extravagant. When Jesus calls Mary's name she knows immediately that it's him - she recognizes the voice of God (think back to Samuel who didn't recognize when God called his name). The excitement that overcame her would have been immense!

Q. Does Jesus mean anything special by, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father?" Can you think of any previous passages of John which shed light on this passage?

Q. Mary goes and tells the disciples (minus Peter and John probably - v10) that she has seen Jesus. Why don't they immediately run out to find Jesus?

Read John 20:19-23

This is the controversial part of the passage for three reasons:

1. Jesus appears in the room even though the doors are locked.
2. Jesus gives the Spirit to the disciples but this is before Pentecost.
3. Jesus says that the disciples can forgive people's sins!

Q. Are any of these real problems? Can you use Scripture to debunk these from being issues?

Q. What part can we play in the forgiveness of sins of others? See also 1 Peter 4:8 and James 5:16.

Q. To finish (or for the road) - is there a difference between being filled by the Holy Spirit and receiving the Holy Spirit? Can and should everyone expect to be filled with the Holy Spirit?