**Sermon Series: The Women at the Cross**

**Sermon Title: “You Don’t Know Like I Know”**

**Biblical Passage: John 20:10-18**

**Passage Background and Summary**

In the scripture for today, most of the disciples have returned home from the empty tomb, but Mary Magdalene remains, weeping. She looks in the tomb, and she sees two angels sitting where Jesus’s body had been laid who ask her why she is weeping. She responds in verse 13, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” At that moment, Jesus appears, but she does not initially recognize him. He inquiries about her weeping and who she is looking for. Assuming he is the gardener, she asks if he can tell her where Jesus’ body has been taken, if he has taken it. Then Jesus speaks her name, and she recognizes him. He informs her that she cannot touch him because he has not yet ascended, and then he tells her to tell the other disciples of his ascension. Mary then goes and tells the other disciples that she has seen him and what he said to her.

**Sermon Points**

There is a profound sense in which we go through this life alone. Though family, friends, and colleagues who care about us are present, they cannot walk in our shoes and feel what we feel. They don’t know what we know. In some ways, this pandemic season has been one of separation. Some of us may feel like we’re staring into an abyss wondering when it will all end, like Mary at the beginning of the scriptural passage for today. Mary is standing at the tomb alone, alone in her grief, depression, and pain. There may be times where we too feel alone like Mary. She is standing outside the tomb. Sometimes we may feel like we’re standing outside of the life we once knew. While all the disciples struggle with Jesus’s crucifixion, they respond in different ways. Pastor Warnock notes that Peter looks in the tomb and doesn’t know what to do. John looks in the tomb and believes. Both leave after looking in the tomb, so why does Mary stay?

Mary stays out of her unique testimony. She was the one out of which Jesus delivered seven demons. Jesus has brightened her life, and now that he is gone, she feels like she’s in the dark again. All she could do was stand there and wait, and sometimes all we can do is stand and wait. We may be in a situation where we’re hoping for the best but preparing for the worst. It is while she is waiting that voices speak to her from inside and outside of the tomb asking who she is looking for. Mary feels robbed.

Fifty-three years ago, on April 4th, the nation was robbed of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Since then, the nation has resurrected him, but a different version of him than who he was when he was alive. Their Dr. King isn’t a threat to anyone and doesn’t challenge America’s current injustices. Like Dr. King, Jesus is often a victim of identity theft. People claim to know Jesus but fail to speak out on the fact of injustices, such as voting rights being taken away. They don’t know who Jesus is. Yet, Mary knows him and is seeking him out. While she is looking for Jesus, she ends up looking at him. Mary is looking for him and looking at him at the same time. Sometimes we’re looking at God and God is looking at us. But we can’t see the face of God because sometimes God shows up in ways we wouldn’t imagine. Mary is looking at Jesus, but she is so caught up in her grief that she can’t see him. Like Mary, there may be times that we’re so caught up in our struggles that we can’t see God. She doesn’t see him until he calls her name. Something insider her clicks when he calls her name. We can trust and be assured that Jesus is calling us by name, and we ought to answer.

**Reflection Questions**

1. How has this pandemic season impacted you?
2. How have you dealt with moments in your life where you felt alone?
3. Have you ever had a moment in your life where all you could do was ‘stand and wait’? If so, what did you discover about God and/or yourself in the waiting?
4. What are some of the ways the Dr. King resurrected by this nation fails to live up to the values and life Dr. King espoused (embraced)?
5. Share a time in your life when God showed up in a way you did not expect?
6. What is your major takeaway from this passage?
7. What did you learn about God in this scripture?
8. How do you respond when Jesus calls your name?