

## From Tears to Triumph

John 20:1–18

### A. Introduction: When Darkness Feels Final

1. There are moments in life when it feels like the light has gone out.
2. A hospital room grows quiet. graveside fills with tears.
3. A prayer seems to echo back unanswered. That is where John 20 begins.
4. Not with celebration, but with sorrow. Not with triumph, but with tears.

### B. The Crucifixion Had Brought Earth's Darkest Day

1. Calvary had been a day like no other, even creation seemed to mourn.
2. Darkness covered the land as the Son of God hung on a cross.
3. Imagine the dark despair that swept in on the followers of Christ.
4. For them, with the death of Jesus, everything had collapsed.
5. Their hopes were shattered, expectations buried, their future uncertain
6. They had heard His promises, but in their grief, they either forgot to believe.
7. We understand, because we too have stood at graves & wept.
8. But what Mary and the others did not yet understand is this:
9. Friday was not the end of the story.

### C. Troubled Women Make Their Way to the Tomb

1. John tells us *early on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb.*
2. While others stayed behind, Mary moved toward Jesus, running ahead.
3. She came with spices—not hope, expecting death—not resurrection.
4. Why did Mary come so early? Because grief does not wait.
5. Mary came early because she loved deeply.
6. Come to Jesus with your burdens.
7. Mary came carrying spices—but also sorrow. And that is how we come too.
8. We come carrying grief, guilt, confusion, & fear
9. Scripture says: “*Cast all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you.*”

### D. We Ought to Come to Jesus While It's Still Dark (v. 1)

1. John adds this detail: “*while it was still dark.*” That is not accidental.
2. Mary came in the dark -both physically & spiritually, Mary knew darkness well.
3. She had been bound by it, possessed, tormented, & overwhelmed. (Luke 8:2)
4. But Jesus had set her free, bringing light into her life. He is Light of the World.
5. The gospel still turns darkness into light, breaks chains, restores what sin ruined.
6. You don't clean yourself up first—you come, and He brings the light.

### E. Mary Was Crying at an Empty Grave, Believing The Worst

1. By the time Mary stands outside the tomb, something incredible has happened.
2. The grave is empty, Jesus is alive, Victory has been won.
3. Heaven is celebrating, yet Mary is crying. The angels even ask her why.
4. Because often we weep not because of reality, but what we believe about reality.
5. Mary had seen the empty tomb, but she misinterpreted it, doubting His promise.

6. Jesus had told them plainly: *“I will rise again.”* But grief clouded her memory.
7. And when we forget God’s promises, anxiety rushes in to take their place.
8. She expected death, coming as an undertaker, but left as a witness to resurrection.
9. Her expectations were too small. How often do we do the same?
10. We believe our problems are too big for God, situation final & our fears facts.
11. We must learn to doubt our doubts and believe our beliefs.

**F. Mary Wept Because She Thought She Was Alone**

1. And loneliness is one of the deepest pains a human can feel.
2. Mary was not alone. Jesus was standing right there. She didn’t recognize Him.
3. We are never alone in Christ. (Heb13:5; Rom. 8:38-39; Matt. 28:18-20)
4. Nothing can separate us from His love or take Him from us. He is always there.

**G. Mary Wept Because She Thought Her Life Was Over**

1. Jesus had changed everything for her, giving her, freedom, identity, & purpose.
2. She thought it was gone, doubting her future *“If Jesus is gone, what is left?”*
3. Have you ever felt that, when something central to your life is taken away?
4. But Jesus was there all along, in her confusion, sorrow, & doubt.
5. Everything changes with one word: *“Mary.”* He calls her by name.
6. Jesus knows us intimately, & calls out our name
7. And the risen Christ still speaks into issues in our lives.
8. The Living Christ wants to give you peace and a purpose for living

**H. We Ought to Come to Jesus in Spite of the Obstacles**

1. Mary came expecting to overcome powerful obstacles to get to Jesus:
2. The tomb was securely sealed, & guarded by Roman soldiers.
3. But when she arrived—the stone was already rolled away.
4. There are always obstacles in getting to Jesus, but God removes what we cannot.
5. Mary didn’t roll the stone away - God did.
6. What obstacles are keeping you from coming to Him?
7. Those who come to Jesus find the obstacles rolled away.
8. What we feared would stop us... has already been dealt with.
9. The empty tomb changes everything
10. And those who discover this truth cannot keep it to themselves.
11. *“I have seen the Lord!”*

**I. Conclusion: From Tears to Triumph**

1. Mary came to the tomb weeping, but she left rejoicing.
2. What made the difference? Not her strength. Understanding or her faithfulness.
3. The difference was this: She encountered the risen Christ.
4. And that is still the turning point for every life.
5. Are you carrying tears, living in darkness, believing the worst, without purpose.
6. Come to Jesus early, earnestly, honestly, even while it’s still dark.
7. Because when you meet the risen Christ— He turns tears into triumph.