

INTRODUCTION:

1. [Image] All of humanity is cursed. It is why there is so much unchecked evil in the world. It is why there is so much sickness. It is why some of you have chronic health issues that no doctor came seem to completely diagnose or treat. It is why we have so much division in our world. Why every news story turns into our argument or a fight. It is why humanity can be so hateful. Why racism flourishes around the globe and turns into genocide. Where hatred of another people group leads to trying to eradicate them. It is why there is so much death. No human being can ever escape death. It comes for children and the unborn. It comes for even the healthy in unexpected ways. It comes for those we love. And sometimes we have to watch them die so slowly our hearts can barely take it.
2. [Need] We are cursed. And we are cursed by sin. I don't say that to be reductive. It doesn't mean we should go to the doctor. It doesn't mean we shouldn't have laws against murder. It just means that our very best efforts cannot fix our deepest problem. They cannot do away with the curse.
3. [Subject] This Easter morning we gather to discuss the solution to our curse. The story of the resurrection of Jesus has everything to do with the curse. What we will see in John's account of the resurrection is that Jesus' work that Easter morning was all about the curse of Eden and the blessing of Easter.
4. [Text] We will be in John 19:38-20:18
5. [Preview] We will look at three actions Jesus takes towards the curse.

1. Jesus endures the curse (19:38-42).

Jesus took the entire curse of sin.

When Adam and Eve ate from that forbidden fruit and rebelled against God,

All of mankind fell under the curse of sin.

The most significant part of the curse was death.

No longer could we hang out in the Garden of Eden and live forever.

Now we were going to die.

This is the most painful part of the curse.
It is something that all of us fear.
Our society avoids thinking about death.
We delude ourselves into believing that all of our modern inventions and progress we have made as mankind makes us safe.
We live longer than ever before,
God's gift of medicine, vaccines, and healing allows us to endure things that would have been death sentences not that long ago.
So, we try not to think about the reality that all of us will die.
That part of the curse is too terrifying to speak about openly
And this is part of the curse that Jesus endures himself.

The wages of sin are death, and Jesus takes it all.
He who could escape the curse, chooses to endure it.
This whole section about the burial of Jesus is meant to remind us that Jesus is really dead.

Verse 38, **"After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for the fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body."**

Joseph is a follower of Jesus.
You noticed twice in this passage it refers to the body of Jesus.
Because Jesus's soul is no longer there anymore.
He really is dead and He is really gone.
And Joseph wants to care for His body out of love for Jesus.
He's too scared to do so openly
So he secretly asked for permission to bury Him.

Verse 39, **"Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes about seventy-five pounds in weight. 40 So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices as is the burial custom of the Jews."**

The Curse of Eden and the Blessing of Easter

Another follower of Jesus comes to see him.

The man who asked Jesus how he could be born again now cares for the body that will bring about his rebirth on that Easter morning.

They prepare his body for burial.

They wrap it with tender care.

It's important for us to recognize that Jesus is truly dead.

He is not pretending to be dead.

He is not close to death but if he can just take a long nap

Then he'll be better in the morning.

His spirit is gone.

The disciples who touched his body would have seen how cold it was.

What they would have seen as his body began to stiffen and decay.

They would have had to close his eyes because there was nothing behind them.

Our God himself has tasted death.

He is experienced it in his own body.

He has seen what happens the moments after your eyes closed and your breath leaves your mouth for the last time.

He was not technically dead for a few minutes.

He was truly dead and buried for days.

Verse 41, **"Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. 42 So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there."**

They didn't have a lot of options to care for his body.

There weren't a lot of places they could go.

So they did the best that they could and placed him by the closest tomb.

The tomb that just so happens to be in a garden.

John is the only one to mention that Jesus is buried in a garden.

Why would he do so?

He isn't just adding extra words to make his gospel a little longer.
In school sometimes you have the temptation to add filler words just to increase your word count to meet the requirements.
That is not what John does.

Every detail included in Scripture is significant and it matters.
Especially when only one gospel mentions it.

It is because this entire story is about the curse of Eden.
The curse descended upon mankind in the Garden of Eden.
The curse descends upon Jesus in his body in the garden tomb.
Part of the reason that John mentioned this is because he wants us to see that Jesus is enduring all of the curse of sin.
All of the curses that Adam and Eve heard that they would feel and endured Jesus has felt and Jesus takes up on himself.
And Jesus dies because of the curse.
Easter is only good news if we start with the death of Jesus.
Our condemnation began in a garden.
So too does our salvation.

[transition] In that Garden Adam and Eve were cast out because death had come in.
In this Garden, death is about to be cast out because Jesus had come in.

2. Jesus defeats the curse (20:1-10).

The glory of Easter is not just that Jesus died for us.
It is not only that Jesus endured the curse on our behalf.
It is not just that Jesus died in his experienced everything that we will.
The Wonder of Easter is that Jesus defeated death.
The grave swallowed Jesus and Jesus spat death out.
His defeat of death is the most significant event in human history.
It is Universe altering.

Chapter 20 verse 1, **"Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved and said to them they have taken the Lord out of the Tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him."**

When Mary Magdalene sees the stone rolled away,

She does not assume that Jesus has risen

She assumes he has been stolen.

She runs to Simon and to John to ask for help.

She tells him that somebody must have taken His body away.

And the only reason to steal someone's body would be to desecrate it.

They don't quite believe even though Jesus has told them several times
He was going to die and come back.

Even though Jesus had tried to give them hints.

Even though Jesus had even outright told them,

When the moment comes they are not quite sure.

But something incredible happens when Mary tells Simon Peter and John,
They have a foot race to the tomb.

Verse 3, **"So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first."**

You have to love that.

They race to get there first.

And a somewhat humorous detail John told us that he wins.

He was faster than Peter that day.

Verse 5, **"And stopping to look in, he saw the linen clothes line there, but he did not go in."**

He finally gets there and has to stop.

John sees that the clothes are left with Jesus's body is gone.

And he can't bring himself to take another step quite yet

Verse 6, **"Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen clothes lying there, and the facecloth, which had been on Jesus's head, not lying with the linen clothes but folded up in a place by itself."**

Peter doesn't hesitate, because Peter never does.

He goes right into the tomb.

And he looks and he sees the same thing that John saw.

Jesus is not wearing his burial clothes.

He also sees that the cloth which should have been covering his face has been taken and not thrown in a corner but is folded up and set down.

Almost as if someone was done with it and wanted to put it away.

Verse 8, **"Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed;"**

John goes in.

John sees the empty tomb.

And John believes.

John believes that Jesus defeated death.

He didn't believe it before this moment.

He might have remembered,

He might have hoped,

He might have desperately prayed.

But he does not believe until he sees.

Verse 9, **"For as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples went back to their homes."**

Jesus had taught them He would rise from the dead.

Jesus said prophesied that He would rise from the dead.

But the disciples still didn't understand the scriptures.

They didn't get that everything was pointing towards this moment.

They did not understand that everything Jesus had done was to lead to

His death and resurrection.

The most important phrase is in verse 9 **"he must rise from the dead."**

Jesus had to defeat death.

1 Corinthians 15 tells us that if Christ is not raised Christians are a people to be most pitied.

Our faith is worthless without the empty tomb.

Jesus is a charlatan if He did not really die and if He did not rise again.

But He defeated death.

He took the best shot that death had to offer and then He shrugged it off.

Jesus takes His own burial clothes and He folds them up and puts them away because He doesn't need them anymore.

The glory of Easter is that resurrection has come.

Death is not the end of our story.

Death was not the end of Jesus's story.

It was the beginning of the best part.

[transition] But why was Jesus's defeat of death such good news? What does Jesus coming back to life have to do with me 2,000 years later? I would love to tell you. It's the entire reason we are gathered here this morning.

3. Jesus reverses the curse (20:11-18).

The resurrection of Jesus is good news because he reverses the curse.

Jesus does not just defeat death for himself he defeats death for us.

The resurrection brings back to life all that sin has killed.

All of the effects of the curse and everything that began to unravel in the garden.

It is all beginning to be restored by Jesus.

Jesus turns back the clock and restores all that we have lost.

We see Simon and John go back to their homes, but Mary stays behind.

Verse 11, **"But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look in the Tomb."**

She stays behind crying.

And when she stoops to look in the Tomb, she doesn't see what John saw,
She doesn't see what Peter saw,
She sees something even better.

Verse 12, **"And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet."**

Mary sees angels.

They don't appear to two of the most well-known disciples.

They don't appear to the author of The Gospel of John.

But they do appear to Mary.

And they appear at the head and at the foot of Jesus on purpose.

She is entered into a sacred place where the atoning sacrifice for our sins lay and there were angels on each end.

What does that sound like?

Inside the holy of holies in the Tabernacle there is a box called the Ark of the Covenant.

It is the place where God sets His feet in judgment.

The top of it is called The Mercy Seat.

The Mercy Seat is where the atoning sacrifice is made.

Once a year in the day of the atonement the priest would put blood on the seat.

And on both sides there were two angels, or cherubim.

Because that was the place where God would dwell and speak.

And everything that Exodus 25 taught us about the Ark of the Covenant pointed towards this moment now.

Verse 13, **"They said to her, why are you weeping?" She said to them, they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."**

I love the gentleness in their question.

They don't judge,
they don't ask her to stop,
they ask her why she's crying.
And she's unflinchingly honest with them.
I don't think she realizes that they're angels right away.

Because she leaves and tries to get out of the conversation.
Maybe because she's embarrassed by her tears
Verse 14, **"Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know it was Jesus."**

This is my favorite account of the Resurrection.
Because this is also how Jesus appears to us as we read it.
Mary bumps into Jesus on her way somewhere else.

Jesus's resurrection is not announced by the Angels who say behold.
It's Resurrection isn't announced by Himself.
Mary stumbles upon Him.

If you were reading this for the very first time and had never heard of Jesus before you would have to back up and read that sentence again.
What do you mean Mary bumped into Jesus?
I thought Jesus was dead?
Or at least I was expecting Him to come back in a much grander way than a case of mistaken identity.

Verse 15, **"Jesus said to her, "Woman why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?"**

Jesus asks her the same question as the angels.
We don't know, but I imagine Jesus had a big smile on His face.
He is just waiting for Mary to realize who she was talking to.
To recognize that there was no reason for her tears.
To recognize that the one she had been seeking she had found.
But Mary doesn't recognize Him yet.

"Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, sir if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away."

She doesn't just not recognize Jesus.

She thinks Jesus is the gardener tending to the garden.

There's a lot of humor in John's account of the Resurrection.

And there should be because this is the most joyous event ever.

It should make us laugh.

Now we shouldn't give Mary a hard time.

She is in distress.

How many of you when you have been weeping and sobbing are thinking coherently?

How many of you when someone that you love has died have all of your mental faculties intact and aren't forgetting things?

Mary asked Jesus this because she thinks well maybe He moved His body? Maybe the gardener moved the body to another tomb.

And look at how Jesus responds to her.

In His never-ending gracious kindness,

Verse 16, **"Jesus said to her, "Mary."**

He just says her name.

He says it trying to get her to recognize that Jesus is not lost He is here.

That the gardener did move the body of Jesus because she brought it back to life.

Verse 15, **"she turned him and said to him in Aramaic Rabboni which means teacher."**

Finally, the light bulb goes on and she recognizes Him.

No one has ever been happier to mistake someone for the gardener than Mary.

But I don't think Mary was mistaken.

The Curse of Eden and the Blessing of Easter

Remember what I said about John being the only one who mentions that this took place in a garden.

John is the only one who mentions that Mary thinks Jesus is a gardener.

He is not just trying to be cute.

He is making a theological connection.

Because Jesus is reversing the curse and restoring the blessings that were lost in the Garden of Eden

And Jesus does so in another Garden.

In case you don't see it I want to show you all of the parallels in the connection points that I see between this passage and Eden.

In Genesis 3 the woman Eve is the first human to receive the curse.

The curse and the effect of sin fall upon her and she hears it before it comes to Adam.

Here the woman is the first to receive the blessing and the restoration of what was lost in Eden.

In the Garden of Eden after the fall God is the first to speak and he asks a question. God asks **"where are you?"**

in the New Garden, Jesus asks **"Woman, why are you weeping and whom are you seeking?"**

In Eden God is searching for Eve, in the Easter Garden Mary is searching for Jesus.

In Eden, because of man's sin, God fashions them clothes.

It is meant to cover their nakedness and their shame.

In the Easter Garden, Jesus leaves His clothes behind.

He is no longer clothed with the skin of animals but in the glorious robes of Resurrection and heaven.

Genesis 2 in Eden, God breathes on Dust and gives us life.

In John 20:22 Jesus breathes on his disciples to give them the Holy Spirit.

The Curse of Eden and the Blessing of Easter

And so here in the garden again there is a gardener.
But the second Adam is not failing in His mission.
He succeeds in His obedience,
He endures the curse of sin and defeats death to restore what we lost the first time around.

All of these connections are meant to help us see that Jesus is undoing what we lost.

That the resurrection restores what sin has destroyed.

You don't have to believe me that Jesus is the second Adam,
Believe God's word.

One of the themes of chapter 5 of Romans is that Jesus is the new Adam.
Romans 5:14 **"Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come."**

The curse of sin has rained over all mankind.

It was first tells us that Adam was just foreshadowing another Adam who was to come.

A second Adam who would be even better.

Just as we were all cursed because of Adam's sin soon we will all be blessed because of another Adam's obedience.

Romans 5:15, **"But the free gift is not like the trespass. For as many died through one's man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many."**

Jesus' righteous victory in the garden brings Resurrection.

Not just for Himself but for all who put their faith in him.

All of these connections are meant to show you that the resurrection is undoing Adam's sin.

The resurrection means that our Salvation has been purchased by the new Adam.

The Curse of Eden and the Blessing of Easter

The resurrection of Jesus means that all of us can have eternal life. Eternal life that is not just available after we die but is just here and it is now and we can have it.

Any who come to Jesus can experience Resurrection.

None of us got to choose if we were born sinners.

The curse and the brokenness of life found all of us.

We cannot escape it.

But Jesus offers us a way out.

The resurrection offers us a choice.

If you want to escape death you can through Jesus.

This salvation is available for all of humanity.

The sin of Adam affected everyone who has ever been born.

The righteousness of Jesus offer salvation for everyone who lives.

Any who put their faith in the crucified and risen Christ.

The resurrection of Jesus also bring Salvation for all of creation.

Because of sin are very world itself is cursed.

Because of sin we have sickness and disease.

Because of sin we have death and decay.

Colossians 1:20 reminds us that the resurrection of Jesus is meant to fix all of creation.

"and through him to reconcile to himself all things whether on Earth or in heaven Making Peace by the blood of his cross."

Jesus is in the process of restoring all of creation.

This is why Jesus said the very stones would cry out to worship Him

Because they too are groaning and longing for Resurrection.

Verse 17, **"Jesus said to her, "Do not yet cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am a Sunday to my father and your father, to my God and your God.'"**

The Curse of Eden and the Blessing of Easter

Why does Jesus say this?

Why is it in this moment when Mary is in despair and then joy and seeing Jesus and He is alive and the wonder that the resurrection brings, why does Jesus say don't cling to me let me go?

Partially this is to reverse the curse.

Mankind was banished from the garden as a part of the curse.

Now mankind is commissioned from the garden to proclaim the blessing.

It's because Jesus is not yet done.

Jesus still has work to do.

Jesus is going to ascend up under the heavens and he will continue his resurrection work.

The work of restoring everything that was lost at Eden is only beginning now it's not done yet.

There is more Resurrection to come.

And the greatest Resurrection will come when Jesus returns.

When all the dead to have put their faith in the Risen and crucified Jesus, Will arise again from their graves with glorified bodies.

On the whole world will be restored and the new heavens and the new Earth will come again.

Sickness will be no pain.

Suffering and tears will be a thing of the past.

Death will be swallowed up in victory.

No longer will we have to say goodbye to those we love.

No longer will our bodies ache and decay.

No longer will our minds be haunted by mental illness.

No longer will our hearts long for the things we wish they didn't.

No longer will children die.

No longer will our hearts be broken.

No longer will there be any memory of lies, deceit, and wickedness.

When Jesus comes again everything sad will be untrue.

The Curse of Eden and the Blessing of Easter

"no more let sin and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to take His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found."

Because the curse of Eden is reversed.
Everything that sin has touched,
To the farthest reaches of the universe will be reversed by Jesus.

But for now we wait.

As Mary waits, God has an assignment for her.

Verse 18, **"Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples - I have seen the Lord" - and that he had said these things to her."**

Mary goes to tell people about Jesus.

This is what we should do as well.

If you are a Christian,

if you have experienced the resurrection of your soul and the gift of eternal life,

if you have seen Jesus you need to go and tell people I have seen the Lord.

This is not just a job for the apostles, or the super holy, this is the job of everyone who knows Jesus.

If you were a follower of Jesus one of your regular habits should be telling people about him.

You don't have to start knocking on doors of strangers there are many people in all of our Lives who do not know Jesus.

Why don't you start there?

And if you were here this morning and you do not know Jesus.

I don't know why you're here this morning, and maybe you don't either.

I'm so glad that you came.

The Curse of Eden and the Blessing of Easter

I want to tell you the same thing that Mary the woman who is possessed by demons said.

I have seen Jesus and he is alive.

His resurrection is here and it's here for you.

All of the promises and the wonders that I have been speaking about are available to anyone who puts their faith in Christ.

Come and take hold of him.

Ask Him to save you.

There's not a mystical prayer that you must pray exactly the right words you must simply ask your faith.

And if you want to know more or have questions I would be more than happy to talk to you or any of our elders would be happy to do so as well.

The curse over you can be lifted.

Resurrection life is here for you.

Come and put your faith in Jesus.

CONCLUSION:

As you go through the rest of your day, you will see the effects of the curse. Do not despair. Remember that Jesus has already endured it, defeated it, and reversed it. His resurrection is our salvation. The curse will die because Jesus lives.