

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide
SB 04.09.2023

FREE INDEED – JOHN 20:1-18

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week’s message? Discuss with your group.

Pastor Daniel tells us “Today, we join billions of Christians around the globe in celebration of the fact that 2,000 years ago, Jesus conquered the grave! One preacher said it like this, ‘When Christ rose, death died!’ The resurrection of Jesus means that death doesn’t get the final word, life does! It also means that you can be set free! Freedom is something American’s place an extremely high value on. Culturally, it may be the thing we value most. We pride ourselves on being, “The land of the free and home of the brave.” But political and social freedom are only two forms of freedom. Lots of people who enjoy political freedom are bound spiritually, emotionally, and mentally. Why did Jesus come? To free the prisoners and free the oppressed. If you are imprisoned by sin, fear, grief, regret, or shame today, I have good news for you. Jesus wants to set you free! How does He do it? Through His resurrection power.” Let’s get into our lesson...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you most from this week’s sermon?

Digging Deeper in God’s Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 20:1, 11-12

Mary Magdalene went to the tomb of Jesus early on the Sunday morning following His crucifixion. She found the stone over the tomb removed and sought out the disciples. Peter and John ran to the tomb to investigate. After entering the tomb, the two disciples left.

1. How would you characterize Mary at this point in her life? What experiences might we face that could cause us to respond with the same intense emotion?
2. How did the presence of angels change the experience? How does God’s presence or involvement being realized change a person’s perspective?

Heartbroken over the death of Jesus, the empty tomb only added to Mary’s deep grief. However, the presence of angels gave her a reason to reflect on what was actually happening. God’s activity in our lives should push us to reflect on His purposes even when we face deep hurts in life.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 20:13-15

1. What is the significance of the questions asked of Mary by the angels and Jesus?
2. Why was it important for Mary to tend to the body of Jesus?
3. What does Mary’s response to the questions reveal about her? How might a person’s response to a question reveal their true emotions and desires?

“PROMISES” in 2023

When questioned by the angels and Jesus, Mary expressed her desire to care for Jesus’ body and provide a proper burial. Failing to provide the proper burial would only add to her despair and leave this chapter in her life unfinished. Unmet expectations can lead to greater despair and regrets.

HAVE AVOLUNTEER READ JOHN 20:16-18

1. How does someone calling your name impact a conversation?

Jesus directed Mary to stop holding to His feet, pointing to His ascension to the Father. He was reminding her that the old relationship was being replaced by a new spiritual relationship.

2. How did the relationship between Jesus and those who knew Him prior to His death, burial, and resurrection change afterwards? How is hope found in this new way of relating to Jesus?

3. How was Mary’s new purpose tied to the reality of Jesus’ resurrection? How do the directions given to Mary compare to the directions given by Jesus to the disciples in Matthew 28:18-20?

Mary was given a new purpose by Jesus that focused on telling others about Him. Her encounter with Jesus and the assignment given to her renewed her hope and gave her a new purpose. Jesus offers hope to those who seek Him, offering them a life of purpose through following Him.

Applying God’s Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

The believer doesn’t have to fear death because Jesus already defeated it. In Corinthians, Paul says that He ‘removed the sting of death.’ Once a bee stings you, it can’t sting you anymore. That bee will soon die. Well, according to Paul, when Jesus went to the cross, He took the sting of death for you and me so that now we can pass from death to life. We may still pass through the valley of the shadow of death, but it’s just a shadow and shadows can’t hurt you. For the believer in Jesus, your last breath on earth will be followed by your first breath in heaven. This provides tremendous comfort.

1. What life experiences cause you the greatest despair? Ask God to help you find His purposes in those experiences, committing to willingly follow Him as He reveals to you, His truth.
2. How would you describe your life’s purpose? What gives you true hope? What do you need to do to align your answers to these questions with God’s purposes for you?
3. Identify the names of three people who are distraught or lack hope. How can you use insights from today’s passage to help them find hope and purpose? Set an appointment with at least one of these people this week and share with them about Jesus.

PRAYER – Thank the Lord for the assurance of the resurrection and the hope we have as a result of that resurrection. Ask Him to help us depend on Him as we face life’s challenges, never forgetting the purpose we find in sharing Him with others.

“Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might break the power of Him who holds the power of death—that is the devil – and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.” {Hebrews 2:14-15}