

THE APRIL FOOL

John 20:1-18

Early in the morning of the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. She ran to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said,

"They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they've put him." Peter and the other disciple left to go to the tomb. They were running together, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and was the first to arrive at the tomb. Bending down to take a look, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he didn't go in.

Following him, Simon Peter entered the tomb and saw the linen cloths lying there. He also saw the face cloth that had been on Jesus' head. It wasn't with the other clothes but was folded up in its own place. Then the other disciple, the one who arrived at the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed.

They didn't yet understand the scripture that Jesus must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to the place where they were staying.

Grab Gather Grow

Week of Sunday, April 1, 2018

Grab this study, gather a few people, and grow in faith

SCRIPTURE

(read over the scripture together)
(see side panels)

OPENING PRAYER

As Easter people, we believe God is Lord of both life and death. We believe that in an astounding act of grace, Jesus suffered and died on the cross to save us from our sins. We believe, three days later, Jesus was raised from the dead, promising us salvation, not because we deserve it, but out of love, through grace. We believe we are called to respond to that gift of grace, not out of duty, but in gratitude, to seek peace, care for the ill, clothe the naked, feed the hungry, empower the oppressed and welcome the outcast; to carry on Christ's work until he comes again. Because, as Easter people, we are confident Christ will come again.

Alleluia! Amen.

DISCUSSION (one or two or ...)

Pastor Rich Easter morning asked "Who, after all, is the April fool?" Pontius Pilate? The Disciples? *Annas*, the high priest? The soldiers guarding the tomb? Peter? Thomas?

Discuss the following quote ...

But perhaps there's another sense in which we're the Easter fools. We're fools when we claim to believe, but behave as though we don't. We affirm a belief in the resurrection of Christ. We declare that "He is risen!" But we live as though Jesus were still in the tomb, cold and decaying. We affirm our belief with our lips but do not confess Jesus as Lord with our lives.

-Pastor Rich

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Mary stood outside near the tomb, crying. As she cried, she bent down to look into the tomb. She saw two angels dressed in white, seated where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head and one at the foot. The angels asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

She replied, "They have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they've put him." As soon as she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she didn't know it was Jesus.

Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she replied, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabbouni" (which means *Teacher*).

Jesus said to her, "Don't hold on to me, for I haven't yet gone up to my Father. Go to my brothers and sisters and tell them, 'I'm going up to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene left and announced to the disciples, "I've seen the Lord." Then she told them what he said to her.

The greatest April fool is Jesus Christ himself.

He is the Fool of Easter. He is the Trickster as it were. He is the one who called the devil's bluff in the greatest jest of all time. What do you think? Is Jesus the biggest April Fool?

SERVICE

Can you plan an Easter Fools Prank? Talk together about something you all could do to surprise people with the love of God.

As a group sign up at BUMC to be part of a service time on Service Sunday, April 29th. That afternoon we are going out into the community and serve. Join a team today or create your own team and service project for that day.

AT HOME THIS WEEK

Share your High and Low of the day; read the daily scripture; talk about it; pray about each others highs and lows, and at the end of the day, bless each other with the blessing below or one of your own.

SUNDAY: John 20

MONDAY: John 20

TUESDAY: John 20

WEDNESDAY: 1 Corinthians 1:20

THURSDAY: 1 Corinthians 1:23

FRIDAY: 2 Corinthians 5:18

SATURDAY: Jeremiah 32:26-27

BLESSING: "May you be an Easter Fool!"