October 15, 2017

Series: What is Truth?

Growth Track Step 3 today …

Generosity

Prayer

**Moving Beyond Uncertainty**

John 20:1-18

**Intro:** Life is full of uncertainty.

We don’t know what is going to happen this week -

* tomorrow
* this afternoon

Any one of us could get a call with bad news … or good news …

People live with job uncertainty, family uncertainty, relationship uncertainty, financial uncertainty - many are uncertain of their most personal beliefs.

I believe knowing the Bible and trusting in the Bible helps us move beyond uncertainty.

What is truth? It’s a question of the ages.

Last week in the story of Jesus’ death by crucifixion, we saw 5 simple truths:

* Jesus is Lord
* The Bible is true
* Jesus cares
* Jesus died for you
* You have a choice

Today, in the story of Jesus’ resurrection, we are going to see how His closest followers moved beyond uncertainty.

**> Uncertainty**

John 20:1-10 - Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, “They have taken the Lord’s body out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!”

Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn’t go in. Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, while the cloth that had covered Jesus’ head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed—for until then they still hadn’t understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead. Then they went home.

* Mary’s biography -

Luke 8:1-2 - Soon afterward Jesus began a tour of the nearby towns and villages, preaching and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom of God. He took his twelve disciples with him, along with some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases. Among them were Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons.

Some say Mary was a prostitute - The Scriptures don’t explicitly state that.

Some think she was the adulterous woman in John 8 …

Whether she was or not, she had to have one messed up past, and one big messed up life to be possessed by 7 demons …

Demons are fallen angels …

A person without Christ is susceptible to being possessed … not trying to scare anyone …

The world is consumed with this. There are so many horror films - they are so popular - they are a clinic in demon strategy, activity, and even watching them will open yourself to their influence. It’s like playing with fire.

Somewhere along the way, Mary had gotten into some big trouble - she was messed up …

But, she met Christ. She became a follower of Christ … with Him through much of His ministry … saw the miracles … heard the teachings … totally devoted - She was at the tomb when even the twelve disciples had run away in fear, except for John - and the first chance she got to get out after Passover, she went to the tomb - found it empty.

* Now, she is uncertain what is happening - why is His body gone? She’s not thinking of resurrection at this point.
* It doesn’t say that Peter knows what is going on either …
* John believed … but until that moment, they had not understood - they couldn’t comprehend - they couldn’t fathom that Jesus would rise from the dead.

Two witnesses was legal proof under Jewish law - here is legal corroborated witness to Jesus’ resurrection - and the fact that they didn’t understand - didn’t know what was going on - indicates that they didn’t just make this story up to try to invent a new religion! It really happened!

Jesus had raised others from the dead - I guess they thought that if Jesus wasn’t around it couldn’t be done.

This is how Jesus resurrection is different than the others - He rises by His own power - not anyone else’s -

* He rises to never die again.
* He is the first one to rise and receive the body that will never die again.

He is the first example of the coming resurrection that we speak of …

1st Corinthians 15 - But tell me this—since we preach that Christ rose from the dead, why are some of you saying there will be no resurrection of the dead? For if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless. And we apostles would all be lying about God—for we have said that God raised Christ from the grave. But that can’t be true if there is no resurrection of the dead. And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.

But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died.

So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man. Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back.

After that the end will come, when he will turn the Kingdom over to God the Father, having destroyed every ruler and authority and power. For Christ must reign until he humbles all his enemies beneath his feet. And the last enemy to be destroyed is death. For the Scriptures say, “God has put all things under his authority.” …

But someone may ask, “How will the dead be raised? What kind of bodies will they have?” … Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, there are also spiritual bodies…

But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.

This happened to Jesus first - on this day - this will happen for all those who believe in Jesus - And Paul was so excited for it to happen he was about to bust!

Philippians 3:10-11 - I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!

That should be our desire - but back to our story - Mary, Peter & John - they are still uncertain -

They went home - not to the Upper Room - their gathering place - but they went home -

Who had John taken into his home after the crucifixion?

What do you suppose he told Mary the mother of Jesus?

But this particular morning with Mary Magdalene - there was uncertainty about what was going on.

Have you had uncertainty in your life?

Is there uncertainty in your life now?

What is going on? Why is this happening? Why doesn’t anything seem to be going the way I thought it should … the way I expected? the way I prayed for?

What do you do in the uncertainty?

Don’t give up - keep searching - keep looking -

Look what happened to Mary -

**> Understanding**

John 20:11-16 - Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in. She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. “Dear woman, why are you crying?” the angels asked her.

“Because they have taken away my Lord,” she replied, “and I don’t know where they have put him.”

She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn’t recognize him. “Dear woman, why are you crying?” Jesus asked her. “Who are you looking for?”

She thought he was the gardener. “Sir,” she said, “if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him.”

“Mary!” Jesus said.

She turned to him and cried out, “Rabboni!” (which is Hebrew for “Teacher”).

Larry Norman:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AlB5oXBfcY>

* 14 minutes - would need to be cut up - start about 3:58 - stop about 11:42 -

*Once there was a tune and everyone knew how it went*

*But as time went by, people began to forget*

*Until at last no one could remember.*

*And there was hatred, and wars, and death.*

*Then one day somebody said, "How does the tune go?"*

*"There is no tune, there never was; it's only a myth."*

*These were the philosophers.*

*"You mean there's no tune at all?"*

*"Well, it doesn't really matter what tune you play*

*As long as you play something."*

*These were the religious leaders.*

*And so the world played on.*

*And there was hatred, and wars, and death.*

*Then one day the people became weary of this song*

*And they all sat down on the side of a hill*

*And suddenly they heard a very strange voice*

*And somebody said, "That sounds like the tune."*

*"There is no tune, there never was, there never will be."*

*"Well, it doesn't really matter what tune you play*

*As long as you play something*

*And you don't hurt anybody - especially me."*

*But the people listened*

*And a man appeared before them*

*With a smile on his face*

*And a sad look, too,*

*And he was singing the tune.*

*And some of the people began to sing along.*

*And the people who loved Him*

*Decided to follow him,*

*But the people who hated him*

*Decided to kill him.*

*And they did.*

*And when it was finished,*

*They went back to their houses of philosophy and religion*

*And they sat down to their tables to eat and drink.*

*Suddenly, they were interrupted by a familiar voice*

*And they ran to their windows and looked outside*

*To see who it was. It was him.*

*And they became confused and afraid*

*And they wondered how they could be rid of him*

*Once and for all.*

*And while they were watching him,*

*Something very strange happened.*

*"How did he do that?"*

*"I don't really know, but he's gone...*

*And when trouble goes, you don't ask where.*

*He'll never return again. I hope.*

*" Yet again they were interrupted.*

*This time they ran out into the streets to lay hold of him*

*But they couldn't find him.*

*Just a lot of people smiling,*

*And they all know the tune.*

*And when the people made a mistake*

*They stopped and they listened.*

*That's how they knew the tune,*

*Because they listened.*

*And if you listen, you'll hear it.*

*It's all around you.*

*Just listen to your radio,*

*Watch television,*

*Listen to your leaders, to the authorities,*

*To the governments, to the experts.*

*But if you really listen,*

*You can hear another tune,*

*But you have to listen quietly,*

*And you have to listen every day.*

When Mary heard His voice call her name - the understanding came - No more uncertainty - now there was understanding.

She knew Jesus was alive. She knew He was God - She knew she had to tell others - She knew she had to make a difference -

**> Making a Difference**

John 20:17-18 - “Don’t cling to me,” Jesus said, “for I haven’t yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, “I have seen the Lord!” Then she gave them his message.

Jesus said - don’t hang on to me - don’t keep me from doing what I’ve got to do - You’ve got something to do as well -

Go find my brothers - go find my disciples - tell them that I’m going to ascend - He’s my God - He’s your God - everything you’ve been taught is real.

Mary went and told them - no more confusion - John had believed - now there has been an eyewitness -

She gave them His message.

We are called to give His message -

**Concl:** When we first hear about Jesus, there may be some uncertainty. That’s ok. This is a big story - it’s ok to ask big questions.

Our prayer is that the uncertainty will give way to understanding - that you will come to know Jesus personally -

He’s real - He’s alive - He died for you - He rose again -

We believe we can KNOW GOD by knowing Jesus Christ.

In Knowing Him - we Find Freedom - this happens in relationships -

Look at the relationships - Peter & John - John & Jesus’ mother - Mary Magdalene and the other disciples - they were in this together - doing life together - struggling with loss together - struggling to try to understand together - Telling each other the story … Encouraging each other to believe - together!

Then - we don’t have to know it all - but when we know that Jesus is real - and alive - and has a great plan for each one of us - we tell the story - We find out what our gifts are - we get to work!

God’s got gifts for you - a purpose for you - a mission for you!

Mary’s uncertainty gave way to understanding and she began to influence others - she made a difference!

This is what God wants to do for you - through you!