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Who Are You Looking For?

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“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?””

John 20:11-15 NLT

Who Are You Looking For?

When you look back and reflect on the scenes of Christ’s life surrounding His death and resurrection, who do you most identify with? Is it Peter? Zealous for the cause of Christ yet still possessing so much room to grow. How about Pilate or the centurion at the cross? One of the other disciples perhaps? For me, it’s Mary Magdalene.

I love this scene in John 20 - Mary has gone to the tomb and is overcome with grief over the fact that her beloved Savior is dead. Upon discovering His body is no longer in the tomb, her grief becomes hysteria - where has His body been taken? I love the tenderness of the angels as they talk with her. And I love, that all the while, Jesus is standing there.

But He’s unrecognizable to Mary. Why? Mary knew Jesus intimately. He had forgiven her sins publicly and set her free from the enslavement of guilt and shame. She had crashed a private dinner party of the Pharisee’s in order to anoint Jesus in one of the most beautiful acts, for which Jesus said she would be remembered throughout history. So why didn’t she recognize Jesus here?

Did He look differently than He had before? Did the trauma and grief of His death cloud her vision? Did pain and disappointment cause her to become short-sighted?

But then, Jesus speaks. “Dear woman,” he says so tenderly its almost a whisper, I imagine. This adjective conveys the deep affection Jesus has for Mary. “Who are you looking for?” His comedy surprises and amuses me. Why does Jesus ask this? Doesn’t He know who Mary is looking for?

How about you? Has something happened in your past that has become some sort of obstruction keeping you from being able to see Jesus? Or perhaps it’s more recent and Easter draws near you become more earnest and desperate to see Him clearly again? Perhaps He’s standing next to you right now, invisible to your eyes, but tenderly whispering to your heart: “Who are you looking for?”

No significant other or spouse can fill this longing you have to see Jesus.

No perfect grade on your RDS paper can fill this longing you have to see Jesus.

No desire for approval or recognition can fill this longing you have to see Jesus.

Nothing temporary and of this world can truly fill this longing you have to see Jesus.

It's something we all carry deeply in our hearts as human beings intended to be in intimate relationship with God, soon to be reunited when Jesus comes again in the clouds of glory. But even as we wait, He's standing right beside you today calling you by name just as He calls to Mary here by the tomb. When He calls you today, what will be your response?

As you make the Main Thing, the main thing today may you be filled to overflowing with the knowledge of how much God loves you!

-Pastor Anna Bennett