

Encountering Jesus

I have never met the president of the United States. That isn't too surprising, since I spend most of my time in Valdosta, Georgia, and the president spends most of his time in Washington D.C. I don't anticipate running into the president at the local gas station or grocery store, because he probably isn't there. If I want to encounter the president, I'd better go to Washington.

This Easter lesson is from **John 20**. Jesus was arrested, crucified, and died. There wasn't time to finish anointing His body with spices for burial, so it was quickly placed in a borrowed tomb. After the Sabbath was over, the women came to complete the burial anointing. In this lesson you will learn where two people were when they encountered Jesus Christ.

John 20:1 The Sabbath ended at sundown Saturday night. Early Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb. What did she find?

John 20:2 Who did she run to?

“They have _____ away the _____ out of the _____, and we know not _____ they have _____ Him.”

Peter and the other disciple ran to the tomb.

John 20:5-8 What did they find in the tomb?

John 20:9 What did they **NOT** yet know?

John 20:10 Where did the two disciples go?

John 20:11 What did Mary do?

John 20:12-14 Mary saw and spoke to two angels. Who did she see when she turned around?

Did she know who it was?

John 20:15 What did Jesus ask her?

Mary didn't recognize Jesus. What did she ask Him?

John 20:16 How did Jesus identify Himself to Mary?

John 20:17-18 What did Jesus tell her to do?

Mary Magdalene encountered Jesus when she **returned to the place where she had left Him**. The disciples quickly left and went home, but Mary stayed at the spot where she had last seen Jesus. He met her there and talked with her.

- John 20:19** Where were the disciples?
 What happened?
- John 20:20** What did Jesus show them to prove who He was?
- John 20:21-23** What did Jesus tell them?
- John 20:24** Who was **not** present when all this happened?
- John 20:25** The other disciples told Thomas about Jesus' appearance to them. What was his reaction?
- John 20:26** What happened eight days later?
- John 20:27** What did Jesus say to Thomas?
- John 20:28** What did Thomas say when he saw Jesus?
- John 20:29** Who did Jesus say are blessed?
- John 20:30-31** Jesus did many other things that were not recorded in the Gospel of John. Why did John write his Gospel?

Thomas missed Jesus' first appearance to the disciples because he was absent from the gathering. When Thomas **returned to the gathering of believers**, he had a very special and life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ. Jesus didn't choose to meet with Thomas when he was at work or at home; Jesus met with Thomas while he was in the assembly of believers (the church).

Concluding Thoughts: We must remember that the Lord Jesus Christ is omnipresent – He can be anywhere and everywhere at once (**Ps. 139:7-12**). He can encounter us anywhere He chooses, but the experiences of Mary and Thomas illustrate two important truths for us.

Mary left Jesus' body in the tomb and walked away. **She didn't encounter Jesus again until she went back to where she had left Him**. If you have walked away from God – if you're not as faithful, committed, or obedient as you used to be – you need to go back where you left Him. Sincerely turn back to the Lord and He will turn back to you. You can have a fresh start with the Lord.

Jesus met with the church (the assembly of believers), but Thomas missed Him because he wasn't there. **He didn't encounter Jesus until he went back to church**. Similarly, if you're

not attending church regularly, then you are missing out on special encounters with the Lord. Get back in church so you can encounter Jesus.

Project: Return to Jesus and return to church. Give up anything that stands in your way. Read the Bible, pray, and attend Sunday School. Next week's lesson returns to the book of Nehemiah.