

Bewildered, Uncertain, Believing

John 20:1–10

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Sometimes I am bewildered by my circumstances. What I mean is that my circumstances dictate my emotions. I'm bewildered by the attitudes and actions of people. My bewilderment is also directed at God for letting bad things happen to good people.

Sometimes I am uncertain. My uncertainty is a result of overthinking, believing my own thoughts, which results in forgetting the promises made by Jesus. I start worrying about what will happen next. My worry becomes an obsession. Not long afterward I'm on the verge of a panic attack.

Sometimes I believe. My belief in Jesus is unquestioned. Jesus will do what Jesus has promised. Whatever Jesus wants to happen will happen. Whatever Jesus wants me to do I will do. One out of three is batting 300. In baseball that's a good average. But, this ain't baseball.

John 20:1-2 (NIV) *Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him."* **When face to face with Jesus' resurrection all of us are at a different place.** Mary is bewildered. Her bewilderment is the result of several factors. The person she came to love more than anything is dead. Of all the people Mary had encountered in her life, she loved Jesus the most. He had delivered her from the power of a demon. He had cast out of her the spirit of the devil. She was free. Her love for Jesus cannot be described in human terms, for her love was deeply spiritual, emotionally powerful.

Mary had followed Jesus throughout His ministry. She was one of His female disciples, hearing and seeing Him impact an untold number of lives. She was present when Jesus was nailed to the cross. She watched Him take His last breathe. She was a witness to the quick burial, as they placed His body in the tomb and sealed it with a stone. She was bewildered by all of it. Then, seeking to anoint His body for burial Mary along with several others traveled to the tomb. They anticipated in some unknown way to open the tomb and then honor Jesus by preserving His body.

But His body was gone. In her emotional and spiritual bewilderment she assumed that someone had removed His body. The only thing she could do was run. So she ran to tell the other disciples. Bewilderment is all she knows. Her pain is unbearable and her sorrow is uncontrollable. The only thoughts and actions she has are grief and tears. At this point nothing can bring her peace. Her agony is doubled. Her emptiness is incomprehensible. She is bewildered.

Sinners and saints alike are bewildered when we look at the situation from our perspective. Some might say that our perspective is the only perspective we can have. From our perspective bad things keep happening. We want to see something different, we struggle to see good. Everywhere we look stuff is bad. Bad things happen to bad people. Bad things happen to good people. Being realistic and honest with ourselves we are waiting for something bad to happen. We don't know when, but we're bewildered by what might happen.

John 20:3-7 NIV *So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came,*

following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. **Doubt, confusion, insecurity cause us to forget the promises of Jesus.** Peter is insecure. The boldest and bravest man in Jesus' band of brothers is feeling vulnerable. Insecure and vulnerable are not words associated with the mighty fishermen. During the past three years Peter has been outspoken. We have seen and heard His bold comments and actions.

When the boat was caught in a storm, each of the disciple was terrified, thinking they would die. As Jesus came walking across the water Peter called out to Jesus, climbed out of the boat and walked across the stormy sea. When Jesus asked who they thought he was, Peter called Him the Messiah. When Jesus washed the feet of the disciples, Peter nearly refused. When Judas and the soldiers came to arrest Jesus, Peter took out a sword and cut off a man's ear. When Peter watched and listened at the trial of Jesus, he lied three times that he did not know Him.

Now we see Peter running and then standing in the empty tomb while His thoughts are racing in different directions. Is it possible that Mary is mistaken? In her hysteria, grief, and bewilderment could she be wrong? What could have possibly made her think that His body had been taken? Who rolled the stone away? What is this talk about men at the grave wearing clothes that were all white? When he finds the people who took the body of Jesus, could He control himself?

Once at the empty tomb Peter struggles with the thought of Jesus being alive. Even though Jesus had raised others from the dead, could He raise Himself back to life? Is it even possible that Jesus was the Messiah since He allowed the soldiers to crucify Him? Peter is no longer secure in what to think or what to do.

Peter might be wondering, if Jesus is alive will He forgive him for the denials? How will Jesus respond when He sees Peter face to face? Should Peter go back home, should he hide? Where could he go to get away from Jesus? What kind of God is Jesus who heals the sick, turns water into wine, feeds the thousands, and casts out demons? What kind of God is Jesus who welcomes women and children, forgives adulterers, and eats with tax collectors?

What if the religious leaders the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the scribes, the teachers, the leaders of God's people did take the body? Where would they put Him? Where could he hide from such treacherous people.

To be an emotional wreck is to be human. We have emotions. When bad things happen we get emotional. We feel mad when injustice happens. We are sad when we see suffering. We feel bad when we are guilty. We also feel glad when things go our way.

These are just basic human emotions. All of us feel mad, sad, bad, and glad throughout our day. Too often we allow how we feel to guide our actions. Too often our feelings dictate our thinking. Our emotions cause us to forget the promises of Jesus.

John 20:8 NIV *Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed.* **When we turn to scripture belief and trust overcome every obstacle.** John believed – he remembered the promises of Jesus. More than once Jesus said He would die and rise again.

If you remember our scripture passage from last week, Jesus said He would tear down the temple and rebuild it in three days. He said those words at the beginning of His ministry. He was on a mission to die and rise again. He made that promise about Himself. That was a prediction about the future.

It came true as a result of Jesus being God, knowing what He would do, and what would happen. To prepare His disciples for death, Jesus shared with them about His death and resurrection. It's true that they didn't understand until He died and came back to life. It's true that He needed to explain His death and resurrection to them after He rose from dead.

John had an intuitive, non-verbal connection with Jesus. Throughout this gospel out of respect for the other disciples and to explain to the readers John refers to that relationship. Jesus loved each of the disciples. He loved the ones who understood things. He loved them when they were bold. He loved them when they were fearful. He loved them as they ran away.

John recognized that Jesus loved Him. He had within his heart and spirit, down to his soul, an awareness that he was loved by Jesus. Nothing could explain or take away this relationship. That truth existed for each of the disciples, but John's writing makes us aware that he knew this.

For John belief was not convenient or rational. So, when he heard Mary say the stone was rolled away, and the tomb was empty he believed. As he ran to the tomb he believed the impossible. As he stood outside looking in he believed what could not be explained. Jesus was alive, just as He promised.

Jesus has given us more than one promise. *Mark 10:45 (NIV) For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.* Stand on the promise that gave His life for you. Instead of you dying and being separated from God for eternity, Jesus paid the price.

We know that the price was His own life. He willingly was beaten for our sins. He allowed Himself to be false accused and mocked. He gave Himself up to be hung on a cross to die. Believe His promise and you will be saved.

Jesus has given us more than one promise. *John 10:10 (NIV) The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.* Life more abundant. Whatever life you are living now, Jesus provides a new life. His life is the forgiveness of sins past, present, and future. His life is power to overcome temptations, to have the victory over sin, to defeat everything the devil brings against you. His life is forever, in heaven with Him, blessed beyond your present understanding and knowledge.

Jesus has given us more than one promise. *John 14:3 (NIV) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.* Whatever we face today or tomorrow, Jesus is coming back. When He returns all those who believe in Him will be taken to heaven. We who believe will spend eternity without fear, shame, depression, or anger. We will overflow with joy, be content, and be capable of using all our skills and abilities. There will be all that we need for every moment for all time.

We will be healthy and fit, every sickness will disappear never to be seen or heard of again. All the disabilities will be unknown for every cell in our bodies, to every hair on our heads, to every chromosome, to every beat of our heart that will be perfect.

John 20: 9(NIV) They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.

We are called to guide sinners to Jesus by opening the scriptures and revealing the truth.

People are seeking promises they can stand upon. No one wants to admit it but we all know everything is temporary. Believers know what we have in this life won't last. We know that we can't take anything with us when we die. All around us are people who are seeking answers to our throw away culture. They are filling their lives with more and more temporary stuff. For so many folks the

constant flow of temporary has become their permanent solution. Whether it's stuff or it's experiences they have a desire for something to stand upon.

We have what will save our community, our neighbors, and our family members. His name is Jesus. We have the abundant life that people are seeking. His name is Jesus. We know the destination is eternal. Jesus is the only way to get there.

People need Jesus. Family and friends can only be saved by Jesus. Life is only found in Jesus. Being with Jesus forever is the only destination anyone ever needs. The answers are the words of Jesus, His promises. Jesus is the only one who can heal sinful hearts. He reveals Himself to them.

The bewildered and insecure need Jesus. Mary's bewilderment was removed when Jesus revealed Himself to her. When Jesus set her free from sin she had a new life. When Mary believed Jesus was alive she was no longer confused. Peter was made confident again when He believed Jesus was alive. When Jesus gave Him a mission, Peter fulfilled his calling. He never questioned or worried, he followed Jesus.

What's bewildering to you? How is the world confusing you? What are you looking at that's controlling your feelings? How are your emotions driving your decisions and your actions?

Jesus is revealing Himself to you. He is alive. He has the power over your situation. His compassion can fill your heart and your mind. You can be at peace. You can have hope. You can rejoice.

How are you being held captive by uncertainty? What is giving you a sense of insecurity? How are you being moved away from your purpose? What's blinding you to your mission?

Jesus has prepared a magnificent feast for you. He has invited you to join Him for a dinner of assurance and encouragement. He has arranged the only way for you to live your life. His wisdom, His knowledge, His discernment can fill your life. His power can transform your actions and your attitudes. His mercy can keep you safe. His grace can cover your path through life. More anything in life you need to call upon Jesus. Those who call upon Jesus are saved. They receive a new life. They live day to day knowing their future is secure. Now is the moment when you can stop being bewildered. Call upon Jesus. Now is the moment you can find your security. Call upon Jesus.