

Connect360: Death Was Arrested

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- *Lesson 9 in the Connect360 unit “The Beauty of Restoration: The Final Days of Jesus” focuses on John 20:1-18.*

Most of us have experienced some level of human loss. With death comes the pain of separation. Yet, we cannot fully know someone’s loss because we are not that person. Both of my in-laws have passed in the last few years. I loved them deeply, but I could not know the pain of their loss to the same depth as my wife.

Jesus’ disciples knew a sorrow that we can only read about. Despite all Jesus told them, there was nothing in their minds about what would bring him back. The one who raised the dead before their very eyes was now dead.

None of the Gospel writers tell the resurrection story exactly the same. John, like all biblical writers, was guided by the Holy Spirit. He begins his account through the eyes of Mary Magdalene.

Though only Mary Magdalene is named, we know other women were with her. In verse 2, she refers to them as “we.” The women went to put aromatic spices on what they thought would be Jesus’ decaying body. (Acts 13:35-37 refers to the decay normally expected with a dead body of that time period, and how Jesus did not experience such decay.)

Were the women unaware Nicodemus supplied more than 75 pounds of spice already? Did they think the body needed more fragrance? Or was this their way of paying respect to someone who had changed their eternal

lives? I am not sure we can know for certain this side of heaven. What we do know is Mary absolutely expected Jesus to be inside of that tomb.

Mark and Luke say Mary and the other women make a preliminary examination of the tomb. John leaves out this inspection. He highlights that instead of Jesus' body, Mary finds a dislodged stone. The other Gospels tell us she encountered an angelic presence. This explains why she and the other women are speechless in their sprint to tell the disciples. Upon arrival, her statement, "we don't know where they laid him," conveys more than a misplaced body. Mary declares, "We have absolutely no clue what they have done with Jesus' body!"

The grave clothes were not enough for Mary to recall Jesus' pre-resurrection words that He would rise again. Two angels were not enough for her to consider something remarkable had happened. Finally, the light comes on for her when she hears Jesus call her name. Reminiscent of John 10:4, the Shepherd called, and Mary's ears instantly perked up.

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