



Portrait of Christ

Sketches in the Gospel of John

Inductive Discovery Lesson 21

John 20:1-31

Jesus: Risen Lord!

She came at first light with spices to anoint the Lord's body. Mary Magdalene, along with the other women, hoped someone would roll back the stone so they could honor Jesus with one final act of devotion. But they arrived to find the massive stone shoved aside and the grave was empty. Mary was so distraught she left the others and ran to tell Peter and John the Lord's body was gone...stolen!

By piecing together the gospel accounts, we get an idea of how the amazing events of that morning may have unfolded. The bewildered women at the tomb saw two angels who told them that Jesus had risen; they hurried away, astonished and afraid to say anything at first. Meanwhile Peter and John came to see for themselves what had happened. At first, John looked but didn't go in. When Peter got there he rushed inside to have a closer look and John followed. They saw the linen wrappings—and yet there was no body! At this point John inserts a personal memory: that is when he began to believe what they still could not understand.

Peter and John were probably gone by the time Mary got back to the tomb. Her world was shattered. She watched in horror while her Lord suffered and died, and there was nothing she could do. Now even His broken body was gone and *there was nothing she could do*. Standing there in the morning mist, alone with her grief and an empty grave, Mary began to sob. Uncontrollably. Wave upon breaking wave overwhelmed her soul and it seemed nothing would console her. Not the words of an angel. Not the help of a stranger. Nothing could penetrate her sorrow but *His* voice, tenderly calling her by name.

Working Text for John 20:1-31
New International Version (NIV)

1 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. **2** So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put Him!" **3** So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. **4** Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. **5** He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. **6** Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, **7** as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. **8** Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. **9** (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) **10** Then the disciples went back to their homes.

11 But Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb **12** and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. **13** They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put Him." **14** At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. **15** "Woman," He said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking He was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have put Him, and I will get Him." **16** Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward Him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). **17** Jesus said, "Do not hold on to Me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to My brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.'" **18** Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that He had said these things to her.

19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" **20** After He said this, He showed them His hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. **21** Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you." **22** And with that He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. **23** If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

24 Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. **25** So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in His hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe it."

26 A week later His disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" **27** Then He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see My hands. Reach out your hand and put it into My side. Stop doubting and believe." **28** Thomas said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" **29** Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen Me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

30 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not recorded in this book. **31** But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.



INTERPRETATION — *What does it mean?*

Look for a spiritual lesson. Be careful not to read into the Bible an idea that is not there. Examine each verse in light of the verses around it. To help you find a spiritual lesson, ask questions such as: “Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a condition to that promise? Is there a warning to heed? Is there an example to follow or avoid?” **State the lesson in one simple sentence.**

APPLICATION — *How does it apply to me?*

We don’t study the Bible just to gather information—we want to spiritually grow. Our heart needs to be open to change. The only way to move truth off the pages of your Bible and into your life is to **put it into action.**

To apply a spiritual lesson, we must examine ourselves and take deliberate steps to do something with what we have learned. Ask yourself: Is this a new insight for me, or does it reinforce what I already know? What does it challenge me to do? Does it point out error in my attitude or actions? What changes does it require? Think of how the lesson relates to you and what specific course of action you will take. **Write your application in the form of a question to make it personal.**

John 20:1-10

Lesson: _____

Application: _____
_____ ?

John 20:11-18

Lesson: _____

Application: _____
_____ ?

John 20:19-31

Lesson: _____

Application: _____
_____ ?

Summary

Write a simple sentence that summarizes what the chapter is about. _____

Give a simple title to the chapter to help you remember what it says. _____



Take A Closer Look

**These are written that you may believe that
Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God;
and that believing you may have life in His name.
John 20:31**

Memorize God's Word

Choose the translation you prefer to memorize from and re-write the verse here.

Meditate on God's Word

While you memorize this verse, let it work into your heart and mind. Scripture meditation is like a good cup of tea—the longer it steeps, the richer the flavor. So give yourself permission to slowly savor God's Word! Use the questions below (like a tea bag) to keep dipping into this verse.

(Challenge alert: You won't always see an obvious answer directly from the verse.)

Look up. What does this verse show you about God? (For example, look for signs of His character, His attributes, His works, or His promises.)

Look around. What does this teach you about life or people in general?

Look within. What does this teach you about yourself?

Look ahead. Does this verse give you reason to hope? Briefly share your thoughts.

Look alive! Given the opportunity, how would you express the truth found in this verse to someone who needs to hear it?

Make God's Word Your Prayer

As you memorize and meditate on this verse, pray it back to the Lord. Let the Holy Spirit examine your heart, increase your understanding, and help you to pray. Ask Him for faith and strength to *act* on the truth of God's Word.



God's Word Bearing Fruit

For you personally, what has been the most important lesson from this chapter?
How will you put what you have learned into practice?

Something to Think About . . .

“That is all God asks you to do.
Believe the record He has given concerning Jesus; put your heart's trust in Him.”

H.A. Ironside

Message Notes:

A large rectangular area with horizontal lines, resembling a notepad or message template. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the area. The edges of the rectangle are irregular and jagged, giving it the appearance of a piece of torn paper. The background of the area is a light gray color.

