

# LOSS AND LIFE Sunday School- April 4, 2010

## Unifying Topic: THE COMMUNITY FACES PAIN AND JOY

### Lesson Text

I. From Grief To Joy (John 16:16-24)

II. Jesus and Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-14)

III. Mary Recognizes Jesus (John 20:15-16)

**The Main Thought:** A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. (John 16:16, KJV).

**Unifying Principle:** Communities experience not only great pain and sorrow but also great relief and joy. Why should communities have hope? Jesus foretold His betrayal, death, and resurrection, and He taught that pain and sorrow will be replaced by relief and joy.

**Lesson Aim:** To help students appreciate how Jesus helped His disciples have joy.

**Life aim:** To teach how Jesus gives us the power to deal triumphantly with our pain and grief, blessing us with the ability to experience joy and fulfillment as we trust in Him by His Holy Spirit.

---

16:16 A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.

16:17 Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father?

16:18 They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.

16:19 Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me?

16:20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

16:21 A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

16:22 And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

16:23 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

16:24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

---

20:11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,

20:12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

20:13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

20:14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

20:15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

20:16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

### **HISTORY:**

#### **16:1-3 Jesus Warns of persecution**

In chapter 16, where Jesus continues preparing the disciples for His departure. The chapter is divided into three parts. First, in verses 1-4, there is a reminder of PERSECUTION. In verses 5-15, there is a reminder of PROVISION for that persecution. In verses 16-23, we have a readjustment of PERSPECTIVE. Jesus tells the disciples that as they were loving one another and bearing fruit, the world would hate them. When you are bearing witness of Jesus Christ, one of two reactions will occur: people will accept it, or people will reject it. There is no middle ground. Jesus said, *Matt. 12:30* "He who is not with Me is against Me..." Persecution involves such things as:

- Having one's faith, position, and ministry questioned.
- Being accused, abused, talked about, and plotted against.
- Being denied rights.
- Being silenced, not allowed to worship or serve.
- Being removed from service.
- Being tried and imprisoned, tortured and killed.

What was ahead was persecution.

## POINT:

*Unbelieving Jewish people would think they were doing God a favor by kicking them out of the synagogues and even killing them. The whole reason Jesus told them in advance is so that they would be kept from stumbling. On this earth, God's house is full of people who have not really committed their lives to God. They do not know Him personally—not in a real intimate way. Therefore, the believer who truly takes a stand for God and His righteousness is sometimes opposed and persecuted by those within the church. It is a terrible tragedy when persecution takes place in the walls of God's house.*

---

The Jews, zealous for the law of God, would vehemently oppose and oppress Christians. Remember the apostle Paul testified of his life as a Pharisee (Acts 26:9-11). They were killing Christians, honestly believing that they were doing God's work. But they were deceived because they didn't truly know God.

## POINT:

*Religionists are deceived in their concept of God and in their understanding of Christ. They reject Christ; rejecting His claim to be the Son of God, the One who has existed by the side of God throughout all eternity. They look upon Christ only as a man, a good man, yes, but only a man. The problem is that they want no God; they want no Lord that demands total self-denial and allegiance—no God other than themselves and their own imaginations. They want the right and freedom to seek their own desires instead of the demands of the supreme Lord.*

---

### **16:4-6 Remember I Told You of Them**

It must have been confusing and discouraging for Jesus to keep telling His disciples that He was going away, especially since He had just told them to remain in Him. Even when they couldn't sort it all out that night, they would remember what He said when the events happened. So He repeated that He was going back to the Father, who had sent Him. **Remembering keeps the believer from being caught off guard and stumbling.** You know persecution is coming; you're forewarned, therefore, prepare yourself! Jesus says, "But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart" v6. Knowing of His departure certainly caused the disciples grief. The believer is not to wallow around in self-piety and sorrow, moaning over being persecuted. His mind and thoughts are to be on God and heaven.

### **16:4-7 Leaving The Holy Spirit**

Jesus was leaving, but He was sending them the Holy Spirit. How many times did your parents tell you they were doing something for your own good when it hurt you? This was the same kind of situation for the disciples. When Jesus went away, He would send the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, which would be better for them. The Holy Spirit can be everywhere at once, while Jesus was limited to wherever His body was. Jesus tells them the truth and much about the ministry of the Spirit.

#### **<sup>1</sup>Helper**

**First of all, the Spirit is sent as a Helper. How does He help us? Rom. 8:26-27 tells us...The Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for {us}with groanings too deep for words and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. The Spirit helps by interceding in prayer for us, because we don't always know the will of God. As we saw in John 14, the Spirit also helps by teaching us and bringing the Word of God to our remembrance.**

### **16:8-11 Three-Fold Conviction**

Jesus explains the three-fold conviction of the Spirit: **of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.** The Spirit is the prosecuting attorney in God's courtroom, charged with showing unsaved human beings their lost condition. To "*convict*" means to show, to expose, and to unmask. Each convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit is focused on Jesus Christ and He should also be our focus as we cooperate with Him.

#### **Convictor Of Sin**

The Spirit convicts the world concerning sin. In *Hebrews 3:7-8* therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, *TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS...* The Holy Spirit's main job in the world is to convict people in the world of sin. (Sins like drinking, smoking, cussing, etc.)? No, while the Holy Spirit does **convict believers of sins** from the inside out, the Holy Spirit's **conviction of the world's sin** is one sin:

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.rondaniel.com/library/43-John/John1601.html>  
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

● *John 16:9* concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; The Holy Spirit convicts people of this one sin—their unbelief in Jesus Christ. We get so caught up trying to show the drunkard his sin in drinking, the adulteress her sin in adultery. We try to legislate morality so that people will somehow realize that, "Hey, what I'm doing is sin! I shouldn't do this anymore." But that is completely backwards! The Spirit convicts the unbelievers in the world of a single sin: the rejection of Jesus Christ.

● *Mark 3:28-29* "Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin." All sins except one will be forgiven. John the Baptist said,

● *John 1:29* ... "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! God judged the sin of the world on the cross of Christ. There's really only one sin that the unbelieving world has to contend with: the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit when He convicts the world of their unbelief in Jesus.

● *Matt. 12:32* "And whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him... God didn't say, "Okay, that's it. I've had enough of a person, burn him!" No, He continued to have His Spirit work on that person, convicting them of the sin of rejecting Jesus Christ. This is why blasphemy of the Spirit is the only unforgivable sin - because when you ultimately reject His constant conviction of sin, you are rejecting your need for a Savior from the penalty of sin. And when you die without ever having repented from your sin and receiving Jesus Christ, you're doomed to eternal separation from God in outer darkness.

### **Convictor Of Righteousness**

Not only does the Spirit convict the world of the sin of rejecting Jesus Christ, but He is also the **convictor of righteousness**. Jesus says,

● *John 16:10* and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me; Jesus was the living example of righteousness in the world while He was in the world. But now it is the Holy Spirit's job. Paul said to the Thessalonians that the Spirit was restraining evil in the world. He continues to convict the world of righteousness. How does He do it? He does it as He works through the church - we live righteously, shining the light of godliness, holiness, and righteousness.

● *Matt. 5:14-16* "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do {men} light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." The Holy Spirit, working through us, convicts the world of righteousness. They no longer see Jesus walking the earth, but they see us, walking in the Spirit, living righteously.

### **Convictor Of judgment**

Thirdly, the Spirit is the **convictor of judgment**. As He is convicting the world of the sin of unbelief in Jesus and convicting the world of righteousness by demonstrating it through us, He is also convicting the world that the leader (devil) they're following has a sure eternal place in the lake of fire. He is speaking to the hearts of people in the world. If you're a child of the devil, you're going to spend eternity in the same place that he is going." Have you ever wondered why so many people are looking forward to hell? "Oh yeah, you're saying, hell's gonna be a big party with all my buddies. We're gonna surf the waves on the lake of fire. It's not like they haven't thought about hell - it's that they've completely hardened their hearts against the Spirit convicting them of the judgment that's coming, if they continue on this path. Zechariah wrote,

● *Zech. 7:11-12* "But they refused to pay attention, and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears from hearing. And they made their hearts {like} flint so that they could not hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets; therefore great wrath came from the LORD of hosts. The Spirit convicts, and people either choose to receive Jesus Christ, or they harden their hearts into flint.

### **16: 12-14 Teller Of The Truth**

Jesus had just an hour or two left before He would be arrested. He's dropping all this stuff into their laps, hoping that they'll receive it and not be overwhelmed by it. But there's so much to say, so little time, and such weak faith in these disciples. So He says, "I can't tell you everything now - you'd just freak out. So I'll let the Holy Spirit teach you and guide you into all this truth."

Interesting title of the Holy Spirit: **the Spirit of Truth**. When people think of the Holy Spirit working in believer's lives, they usually think of the paranormal: people speaking in tongues, prophesying, miraculous happenings. But He is first and foremost the Spirit of Truth. John tells us,

● *1John 5:7 And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is the truth.* The Spirit is not weird and wacky. He's not out of control like some radioactive cloud falling on people and making them quake and shake. He's the Spirit of Truth. He guides us into all truth. Now maybe you've been to churches where the Spirit is the main focus, the main attraction, the main thing. But Jesus says,

● *John 16:14 "He shall glorify Me..."*

● *John 14:26 "(He will) bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."*

● *John 15:26 "...He will bear witness of Me"*

Too many congregations build their foundation on the Spirit. *But no one...*

● *1Cor. 3:11 ...can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* When Jesus asked Peter, "Who do you say I am?" Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!" Jesus said, "Alright Peter! *Matt. 16:18 "...upon this rock I will build My church..."* The church must be built on this proclamation: the rock-solid foundation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The true test of a Spirit-filled church is this: Is Jesus the main focus? Is Jesus the main attraction? Is Jesus the main event? When the Spirit is truly moving and working, He is not the focus, Jesus is! **The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ and only Christ.** He receives of Christ and shows (declares) it to believers. This means He receives and declares only what Christ is; only what Christ did; and only what Christ said. The Holy Spirit was sent in Jesus' Name to proclaim Jesus alone. A Spirit-filled church is a **Jesus-focused** church.

### **16:15 Discloser Of What Is To Come**

The Spirit also discloses to us what is to come. We have the sure Word of Prophecy in the Scriptures.

● *2Pet. 1:21 ...men, moved by the Holy Spirit, spoke from God.* We also have seen the Spirit speak through prophecy to disclose future events, such as happened in the book of Acts:

● *Acts 11:27-28 ...some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabus stood up and {began} to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world...* The Spirit has also warned us what will happen in these last days:

● *1Tim. 4:1 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.* So the Spirit's ministry includes disclosing things to come.

## **LESSON:**

### **John 16:16-24: From Grief To Joy**

#### **16:16-19 Disappearing And Reappearing**

Jesus predicted His death—"A little while, and ye shall not see me" and He predicted His resurrection\*—"And again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father." Well the prediction certainly puzzled the disciples, and they began to ask among themselves what did Jesus mean? And Jesus knew of their perplexity. Jesus knows exactly what we need before we say a word.

#### **NOTE:**

\*Resurrection does puzzle and perplex people. It always has and always will.

A Puzzle

- Some outrightly deny.
- Some say maybe and maybe not.
- Some say it can be and Jesus probably did arise, but it has no meaning.
- The Resurrection brings joy—irrepressible joy.

A Fact

- The Resurrection gives open access into God's presence.
- The Resurrection reveals all about the Father

In their sorrow Jesus pledged that He would return after His temporary departure.

#### **16:20-22 Sorrow To Turn into Joy**

Jesus here is telling them of the sorrow and joy that they will experience over the next three days. Jesus told the disciples that He understood their sorrow. The greatest word that could ever be said to a person in sorrow would be the promise that his sorrow will be temporary. That is a very important lesson to learn. If you've been saying to the Lord, "How long do I have to go through this?" Sorrow comes into our lives mainly for two reasons:

- **The testing of our faith.** If you endure the test and become stronger as a result of it, that's a cause for joy.
- **God chastising us.** When God punishes us so that we won't disobey Him again, that's a cause for joy.

However, the Lord's emphasis is strictly upon what is coming at the end—the joy that is certain. Jesus lets them know that the world would rejoice at His death. Why? Because death would prove that He was not the Son of

God. It would prove that He was only a self-proclaimed savior who was now dead. Death would prove Him false. And being dead, His demands would not be binding; they would be meaningless. Men would not have to do what He said— by denying themselves and giving all they had to Him.

Jesus tells the disciples, "When I die and am no longer with you, you'll be lonely and experience sorrow. But trust *"Me"* that out of your sorrow will come the greatest possible joy. He alleviates the disciples sorrow with promises, wonderful hopes, and the assurance of His presence through the Holy Spirit. Jesus comforts His sorrowful disciples on the night before His death. He equates it to a woman giving birth. While she is delivering the baby, she is in excruciating pain. But when the baby is born, the pain is forgotten and the joy and love because of her newborn child overwhelms her. In other words, the same thing that caused the sorrow would later be the cause of the joy. This is a great revelation of one of the ways by which our Lord works in our life. He takes the very thing that causes us heartache and sorrow and turns it into a cause of joy. What was it that was about to give the disciples great sorrow?—The cross. But after Christ's death and resurrection, the cross became the source of their joy. The disciples had to wait until after the purpose of the cross for their sorrow to turn into joy. This joy would remain in them in spite of the persecution that Jesus had predicted they would encounter. No one would take their joy from them.

### **16:23-28 Ask In My Name**

No doubt they had asked Him many, many questions. But the Lord Jesus says, *"In that day you're not going to be asking me questions."* *"In that day!"* The word *"day"* can be used to refer to an era. So in that day, after the resurrection and ascension or age of the Spirit, beginning at Pentecost, the disciples would no longer ask Jesus questions because He would be bodily absent from them. Previously, the disciples had relied on Jesus' physical presence. They will have no need to ask Him anything any more, also because the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, will be residing in them permanently, and **"He"** will give the disciples full understanding. With the permanent indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, they will be so intimately acquainted with the Father Himself, that they will be able to ask Him directly and expect an answer. Christ was saying that up to that time, the disciples' hadn't prayed in His Name. They were about to enter into a new age when they could do that. *"Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."*

#### **POINT:**

*So how can we know full joy? By asking God for things and receiving them. We can know full joy through answered prayer. Jesus also instructs to ask the Father in Jesus' name (pray to the Father, having the right and authority to enter into His throne room).*

---

### **John 20:11-14: Jesus and Mary Magdalene**

This section is about our Lord's first appearance after His resurrection. It was the appearance of Mary Magdalene\*, one who loved Jesus with the deepest of loves because of what He had done for her. Not knowing what else to do, Peter and John had returned home. Mary probably returned to the tomb after they left. She stood alone crying loudly with grief, looking into the sepulcher, wondering where the body of Jesus was, for the stone had been rolled away. She saw two angels\*\* in white, one at the head, one at the feet, where the body had been.

#### **NOTE:**

\*Mary Magdalene was an early follower of Jesus and certainly deserves to be called a disciple. Her life was miraculous freed by Jesus. He cast seven demons out of her. After Jesus' death, her intention was to give His body every respect. She was more eager to believe and obey than to understand everything. Jesus honored her childlike faith by granting her to see His first resurrection appearance and by entrusting her with the first message of His resurrection.

\*\*Angels are messengers of God. They are the ministering spirits of God, servants sent from heaven to carry out His will. On this particular occasion, they were sent for the purpose to comfort Mary in her grief and to declare the good news of the resurrection.

How did Mary know where the feet and head of Jesus was lain? There were two possible ways.

1. She was probably one of the women who had followed Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus when they buried Jesus.
2. She could see the linen clothes lying, *"in their fold,"* just as they had been when they were wrapped around Jesus.

## POINT:

*Mary was seeking a dead Savior, a Savior who was as all other men are, frail and powerless to do anything about life and death, eternity and heaven, so she thought. Her whole being was focused upon a grave where her dead Savior was lying.*

---

The angels then said, "*Woman why weepst thou?*" Thinking that someone had taken the body of Jesus, she was very disturbed. In the face of this grief the angels do not bombard her with good news but rather ask the question that can lead to the healing word: "*Woman why weepst thou?*" <sup>2</sup>Mary's answer shows that she is totally focused on the fact that Jesus' body is missing. He is still her Lord even though He is dead; her loyalty is still fixed on Him. There is a message here for everyone. We need to fix our eyes upon Jesus in confronting death. Too often, we see the dead and become so wrapped up in grief that we forget the risen Lord and the great hope he gives us. Weep and grieve, yes, but there is a limit.

They are interrupted by the appearance of the Lord Himself. Mary doesn't recognize Jesus' appearance. Is it because her eyes are so flooded with tears that she is seeing through a blur? Mary turns to see Jesus (v. 14). Perhaps she heard Him or simply sensed a presence behind her. She saw Him, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. Now she sees the very object of her concern, but she is unable to recognize Him. Such can be the blinding effect of profound emotions. Jesus is well aware of her condition, and He comes to her with great love and gentleness. The good news is not just that Jesus arose, but that the character of God is revealed in Jesus. For if Christ had not risen from the tomb, then we would still be in our sins. For, if Christ had not risen from the tomb, it would have meant that He was not successful in paying for our sins. The equivalent of an eternity in Hell, was something that the devil had hoped for, when he entered Judas Iscariot to betray the Lord Jesus to the leaders of the Jews.

## John 20:15-16: Mary Recognizes Jesus

He asks the same question asked by the angels, "*Woman, . . . why are you crying?*" But immediately He focuses it further: "*Who is it you are looking for?*" Mary does not answer the question but assumes that Jesus is Joseph's gardener and that He knows who she is looking for. His appearance has given her hope; hope that she can now find Jesus' dead body. But when Jesus calls her name, she knows His voice, for she is a true sheep (Jh.10:3-4).

- Mary recognized Jesus not by sight, but by His voice speaking her name.
- Jesus called Mary by name; she was one of His sheep. He knows His sheep by name and His sheep know the sound of His voice (His Word).
- Mary called Jesus Rabboni, "*My Master*", not Rabbi (Master or Teacher)

These two words expressed, meant everything: Mary and Rabboni. "Rabboni" could mean "my dear teacher," and such endearment would be in keeping with Mary's attachment to Jesus. It was a title of more respect and honor than just Rabbi. Jesus was one who was due all her honor and respect, loyalty and allegiance.

## SUMMARY:

The disciples' attention is directed to what they are about to experience as a result of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. On the morrow he would die, be buried, and for "a little while" they would not see Him; then He would rise, and for another "little while," a space of forty days before "He went to His Father," they would see Him while He remained on the earth. When he ascended to His Father, they, in a spiritual sense, would "see Him coming in the kingdom of God."

In responding to the disciples' sorrow, Jesus didn't tell them they would understand everything later on. He told them they were going to have joy; not only joy as a result of the cross, but full joy from constant communion with the Father. He said that the separation between them would be brief, and that their sorrow would turn to joy after the cross. He also said the joy they would receive would be permanent--no one could ever take it away from them. Finally, He said they could make their joy more full by staying in constant communion with God, asking and receiving things in His Name.

Thus the first change of relationship that will be a source of joy is reflected in their no longer needing to ask Jesus questions (v. 23). This does not mean the disciples will have no questions in the future. We as believers have plenty

---

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/John/Mary-Magdalene-Two-Disciples>  
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

of them even now. But the things the disciples have been asking about will become clearly once they see the Lord's death and resurrection, and receive the help of the Paraclete to sort it all out (1Jh 2:20). That is, the disciples will have an understanding of Jesus that gives them the heart of the truth.

The second change of relationship will be their sharing in Jesus' work as His friends (vv. 23-24). This is the reality behind Jesus' reference to asking the Father in His Name. They had not asked in His name up to this point. Previously, people approached God through the priests. This will soon change. Before, when they prayed, He told them to say, "*Our Father*," etc. Now they must pray in the Name of the ascended Lord. After Jesus' resurrection, any believer could approach God directly. The disciples will be able to hear from God with understanding, and they will be able to pray to God in accord with His own purposes. The Holy Spirit would be their Comforter, and neither men nor devils, neither sufferings in life nor in death, would ever deprive them of their joy. Believers have joy or sorrow, according to their view of Christ.

The Lord's death had been sorrow enough, but to be deprived of the poor privilege of embalming the body, Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping. So, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb. Seeing the two angels in white sitting, her grief at the loss of our Lord is so great that she forgets to be frightened of the angels; just as a mother in her anxiety for the sick child forgets to fear its fever, no matter how inflamed. Their sitting to face one another, one at His bed's head, the other at His bed's feet, denotes their care of the entire body of Christ, His mystical as well as His natural body, from head to foot; it may also remind us of the two cherubim, placed one at either end of the mercy-seat, looking one at another, Ex. 25:18. They said unto her, "*why weepest thou?*", signifying, that she had no reason to weep, but to rejoice and be glad; the body of her Lord was not there, but had risen from the dead, and was alive.

She saw a person, but did not know who he was, by reason of the form of his appearance, the difference in his clothes, and not expecting to see Jesus alive. Her eyes were filled with tears, and swollen with weeping; so that she could not see clearly. So sometimes, in a spiritual sense, Christ is with, and near His people, and they know it not. She was not only weeping for the loss of Him, but was inquiring after Him. Yet, while inquiring with the angels, Christ appears, the very person she was looking for, and, she addressed Him, though she took Him to be but the gardener, in a very civil and courteous manner by calling him "*Sir*".

Christ, in manifesting Himself to those that seek Him, He often outdoes their expectations. He asked her a common question: "*Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?*" Christ's first question expressed kind sympathy; the second suggested that He knew the cause of her grief, and might be able to help her find what she sought. She replies, "*tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take him away?*" Jesus saith unto her, "*Mary*." It is the voice of my beloved. She turned herself, and said, Rabboni, My Master. Her eyes and ears were no longer held; she knew Him. Seasons of greatest joy are marked by little speech. Jesus and Mary each expressed themselves in a single word.

#### **APPLICATION:**

In times of difficulty, do we focus on how long our trial will last? How can our very sorrow produce joy?