



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: Encounters with the Risen Jesus: Do Not Touch Me

Speaker: Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor

Scripture: John 20:11-17

¹¹ Now 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 He asked her, "Woman, 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 ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" (NIV)

Sermon Outline:

God loves you too much to keep you where you are.

The Gospel is about finding rest for our souls in Christ and trusting in Jesus when we are being pulled into the future that God has for us. It can be very difficult for us to say yes to God because we are creatures of habit, and it is easier for us to stay with what is familiar and comfortable rather than step into what God has for us.

Faith is staying close to Jesus even when it seems as though nothing is going right, and all hope seems to be gone.

In today's scripture we see Mary agonizing after arriving at the tomb and finding that Jesus's body was not in the tomb. She believes that his body was stolen and not sure where to look. Mary does not know where Jesus is, but Jesus knows where Mary is.

You may not know where Jesus is in your life right now, but Jesus sees you and is with you. Even though you may not feel God's presence, he always knows where you are and is always with you.

Mary believes that Jesus is the gardener and when she does realize that it is Jesus, she touches him and calls him rabbi. Jesus tells Mary not to touch him and in doing so, he is letting Mary know that she needs to let go of her limited view of who he is.

Jesus was no longer just a rabbi, he was now the Resurrected King, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Mary needed a fresh revelation of who Jesus was. Just as we often need a fresh revelation of God and need to meet Jesus again for the first time. Jesus Christ is now the fullness of God.

The question for us today is are we going to allow the testimony of scripture to show us who Jesus is, or will we instead be led by the values of our cultural?

Mary had to let go of what she was familiar with. She needed to open herself up to the future that God had for her. It is very easy for us to live our lives in the land of the familiar, never living in the land of faith. To follow Jesus means we need to live in the land of faith, risking and trusting God in different areas of our lives. God wants to open your eyes to what he has for you. He wants you to step out in faith, letting go of what you are comfortable and familiar with in your life.

God's word to Mary is the word to us today. We are to enter into a new space, a new resurrection. As we learn to put our trust in God, we will find ourselves with a deep awareness of his presence.

God doesn't want us to cling to him, because there is more that he has for us and our lives.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday, Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor, continues our new series for Eastertide titled "Encounters with the Risen Jesus". Today Pastor Rich will explore one of the most curious and confusing words Jesus speaks to his disciples, and the implications these words have for our lives.

Sermon Questions:

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. In your family of origin, did you feel as though there was a good deal of trust between yourself and other family members, what about with your parents? Did you feel as though you were seen by family members and were they around when you needed them? How did your experience growing up inform the way you are able to trust others today? Journal your answers to these questions, offering them up to God.
3. Jesus asks Mary "Why are you crying?" and "What are you looking for?" Are you able to sit with these questions and honestly answer them? Write down your responses and find a trusted brother or sister in Christ to share this with, asking for prayer where you might need it.
4. Do you feel as though you Jesus is distant in your life right now, not knowing here he is in your life? Maybe you are going through a difficult time with your health, at your job, or with your friends or family? Are you able to hear and know that Jesus sees you and is with you and even though you may not feel God's presence? God always knows where you are and is always with you. Offer this up to God in your time of silence, asking for his forgiveness, and peace to help you know and feel the love of the Father in your life every day.
5. What do you need to let go of today and where do you need to stop trying to control things in your life? God want to open your eyes to see the future he has for you, but this requires you letting go of what you are comfortable with. Were in your life do you need to begin risking and trusting God – maybe it is being more generous with your money or time or becoming more vulnerable with God and others, or maybe it is sharing your faith with those around you? Share your answers with your small group or a trusted brother or sister in Christ.