



A PROMISE KEPT

LESSON 31 → John 20:1-18

Jesus rose victorious after three days.

There was still a sleepy hush in the early morning as Mary Magdalene walked to the garden where Jesus' body had been placed in a tomb. Her heart was so heavy that it ached. It seemed to push a huge lump into her throat, and it brought tears to her eyes. Mary was troubled by all that had happened the past few days. She just couldn't make any sense out of it.

Mary remembered that Jesus had always been so loving, gentle, and kind. She had been surprised that a man could live only for others as Jesus had done. He did not spend any time working to make a name for Himself or to make Himself comfortable on this earth. He had a special place in His heart for people who were sick, lonely, poor, or who had been rejected by society as hopeless. Mary

had seen Jesus perform miracles that changed people's lives. She had heard Him teach people how to live godly lives, and about a beautiful place He would prepare for all those who lived by His commandments.

Mary had been sure that Jesus had all the answers. He had been sent by God to be King of the Jews. But now . . . it was all over. Her mind replayed



I KNOW JESUS LIVES!

He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. — Matthew 28:6

the agonizing events of the past three days. Faces of an angry mob, the sound of their voices shouting, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” The marks on His back showing where they had beaten Him. The pain and sorrow on His face as He bore the heavy cross they placed on Him. Then to see Him hanging on that cross, crucified between two thieves like a common criminal. Oh, how could she stand the pain of remembering?

Now it seemed that all of their dreams were shattered. He was dead! What had gone wrong? Where could she go for an answer? Who could she turn to? What did the future hold for those who had followed Him?

As Mary came close to the tomb she saw that the stone which had covered the entrance to the tomb, and had been sealed with Pilate’s seal, was rolled back. Fear gripped her. Jesus’ body had been stolen! She turned and ran, her first thought being to tell the disciples. Finding them, her news tumbled out. Immediately two of the disciples rushed to the tomb to see for themselves. Mary was right! The tomb was empty. Peering anxiously in at the entrance, they saw the linen clothes that Jesus had been wrapped in. The cloth that had been around His

head was folded and placed by itself. The disciples’ hearts had been filled with sorrow these past three days. But now, maybe, just maybe, there was hope. Could it be that Jesus had risen and was alive again? With hope returning, they ran to tell the others.

Mary stayed behind and wept beside the tomb. So much had already gone wrong, and now they didn’t even know where Jesus’ body was! As Mary sobbed with grief, she glanced into the tomb. There, to her surprise, she saw two angels! They asked her why she was crying, and she poured out her story to them. Tearfully she turned away from the tomb and saw a man behind her. A tender voice inquired, “Woman, why weepest thou?” Thinking that He was the gardener, she poured out her story to Him too. Then He spoke her name: “Mary.”

Suddenly she realized that she was talking to Jesus! All she could say in her astonishment was, “Master!” What joy filled her soul! Jesus then told Mary to go and tell His disciples that He was alive, and that He had talked with her. What joyous news to tell!

Mary had loved Jesus dearly, but like a lot of people today, she had not been fully aware of the power that He possessed.

She had limited the Lord without even knowing it. It was true that Jesus had been a good Man, and had done no wrong. But He was so much more than that! Now He was alive again, having come forth from the grave.

From the moment of Jesus’ Resurrection, God’s plan of salvation was fulfilled. A new era had begun. Direct communication between man and God had been established. There was no more need for the formality of a priest taking people’s sins and prayers before God. Now, we can talk to God ourselves, and have a personal relationship with Him.

