

Easter Sunrise Meditation

In the Name JESUS. [Amen]

St John writes how Mary Magdalene remained at the tomb; then she saw the Lord, but she thought He was the gardener, until the Lord let His voice be heard and called dear Mary by name. At that point she recognized Him, fell down before Him, and wanted to touch His feet as was her custom. But the Lord says: ***Do not cling to Me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father.*** Now, what is going on here ... and what does this mean for us?

We should note that the Resurrection of Christ is made known through the Word alone. The angels proclaimed it to the women, who in turn proclaimed it to the Apostles. And yet, without faith this Word is preached in vain ... and remains as an “idle tale” – as it were. This is so even today – the Gospel is preached ... but people do not believe ... and even our own sinful flesh has difficulty with such a mysterious miracle like the Resurrection of our Lord. And should you embrace and believe all other doctrines, when this article of the Resurrection does not entirely penetrate your heart, the Gospel will not stick – for the Gospel entails both Jesus’ death on the Cross for your sins (as we remembered in great detail on Friday) ... **and** His Resurrection from the tomb that blessed Sunday morning for your life!

Mary Magdalene has the Word – as do the other women and also the Apostles of the Lord; and yet they all struggle with doubt about the Savior’s Resurrection from the dead ... and His rising from the tomb. This truth must be grasped by faith – our human reason and intellect cannot comprehend. Simply believe the Word of Christ – the Word that He speaks ... the Word that He inspired to be recorded for our benefit. Do not “teach” the Word by your knowledge ... but let it teach you.

Let us listen to the true Preacher (Christ), Who says: ***Do not cling to Me!*** By which He is saying: *I am no longer to be touched as friends tend to do it. I no longer need your ointment. I have departed from the trappings of this life. I am no longer among you as I once was – in the humility and weakness of this created Body. I will be with you ... always – but now in a different manner ... and with all believers ... everywhere ... all at the same time.* As the Scriptures say, ***He is cut***

off from the land of the living. Thus, a distinction is made between Christ and this world; they are separate. **Therefore**, He says: ***Do not cling to Me!***

For all who are still in this world are still under Law and sin – but the risen Christ, though forever clothed in flesh, is no longer of this world (even according to His flesh) ... His flesh has been glorified. He once placed Himself under the Law – for our sake – but is so no longer. He has fulfilled the Law once-for-all. Once His flesh was subject to the weaknesses of our mortal frame – hunger and thirst, suffering and death – but now no more. There is a great distinction between the risen Christ and a worldly person. If we are to have contact with Christ, He must make us “other-worldly” – spiritual beings ... that live by faith, not by sight (or touch).

Do not cling to Me, because I have not yet ascended for you, Jesus is saying. For Mary Magdalene had not yet renounced earthly things completely and thrown herself entirely on Christ. But Christ will now distribute His Resurrection to us. Christ is of a higher life and world and order, to which He now invites her – **and you** – to join Him: ***Go to My brethren,*** He says, ***and say to them, “I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.”*** This is the purest Gospel for all of us who would be disciples of the Lord! For at the Savior’s Passion, all the disciples had all fled from Him ... and scarcely thought they were worthy to be His slaves because of their denial. So also we, whenever we fall into sin – and thus deny our Lord in thoughts, words, or deeds – may think ourselves no longer worthy to be His disciples. But, Oh, how happy they are now! And we with them! They did not dare to expect so much from Him. But now He lifts up Mary and says: ***Go to MY BRETHREN and say to them.***

Christ the Firstborn from the dead ... the Firstfruits of all who fall asleep in the faith, calls us His *brethren* ... making **Him** our **Brother**. He would have us in His household – even as He said before His crucifixion: ***In My Father’s house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you.*** He would have us in His household ... not as lowly servants – though that would be enough ... as the Psalmist says: ***I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness*** – but as brothers and sisters!

And what does that mean for you? It means this: That because Christ has called and made you His brother or sister, you possess the same inheritance, the same kingdom, and the same rights that He has – only with the exception that you have these by His grace, and not in your own nature. You are not Christ; and yet, you sit with Him in the midst of the same possessions and rights as He Himself. All of this because He has set you free from all your sins ... and given you His life ... by

His death and resurrection. This is what Christ's Word, *My brethren*, now bestows upon you this Easter Day.

So consider rightly what Christ says here. By His Words: ***Do not cling to Me, because I have not yet ascended***, He would say: *You want to touch Me with your own good works. But I need none of that, for I am ascending to My Father and your Father. Rather, you receive from Me. You do not make Me your Brother; but I make you My brothers and sisters ... and give you forgiveness, life, and everlasting salvation!*

