



# Easter Sunrise Reflection

## Introduction & Invitation

We may not be able to worship together this Easter morning, but we can still experience the wonder of the risen Christ. Today I invite you to place yourself inside of the story. Fix a cup of coffee, grab your Bible, head outside and find a quiet place alone to read and reflect on the scriptures.

Listen to the sounds of nature all around you. Imagine what it might have sounded like in the garden on that first Easter morning. As you read each scripture, enter into the scene in your mind. Carefully watch the people. Listen to how they interact. What do you hear and experience as you watch and listen? Allow yourself to be transported.

Allow the words of scripture to resonate and settle in your heart. Watch for a word or phrase that catches your attention or “lights up” for you. After each reading allow time for silent reflection. Sit with your word or phrase. Listen for what God might be speaking to you.

## Scripture Readings

### John 20:1-2

*Early in the morning of the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. She ran to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they've put him."*

### John 20:3-10

*Peter and the other disciple left to go to the tomb. They were running together, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and was the first to arrive at the tomb. Bending down to take a look, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he didn't go in.*

*Following him, Simon Peter entered the tomb and saw the linen cloths lying there. He also saw the face cloth that had been on Jesus' head. It wasn't with the other clothes but was folded up in its own place. Then the other disciple, the one who arrived at the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. They didn't yet understand the scripture that Jesus must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to the place where they were staying.*

### John 20:11-18

*Mary stood outside near the tomb, crying. As she cried, she bent down to look into the tomb. She saw two angels dressed in white, seated where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head and one at the foot. The angels asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"*

*She replied, "They have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they've put him." As soon as she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she didn't know it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?"*

*Thinking he was the gardener, she replied, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabbouni" (which means Teacher).*

*Jesus said to her, "Don't hold on to me, for I haven't yet gone up to my Father. Go to my brothers and sisters and tell them, 'I'm going up to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene left and announced to the disciples, "I've seen the Lord." Then she told them what he said to her.*



## Reflection

2000 years ago, the very first Easter. The disciples, hidden away behind locked doors; scared and confused. Their whole world had been turned upside down. Wasn't it just last week they were celebrating? Weren't there crowds of people worshiping and praising Jesus' arrival into the city? Everything they thought they knew had changed. Now there they were "sheltering in place" to remain safe.

And then there's Mary, confused, scared and heartbroken I'm sure. Early in the morning she leaves the safety of her home to go about essential business. The business of caring for the lifeless body of her teacher and friend, Jesus. Can you imagine what she must have felt as she arrived at the tomb and found it empty?

Mary runs to tell Peter and John. Scripture tells us Peter and John came, they saw and they believed. But what did they believe? Did they simply believe that what Mary had told them was true, that Jesus' body was gone? Scripture says they didn't yet understand that Jesus must rise from the dead.

Peter and John return to where they were staying, leaving Mary at the tomb. Alone with her fear, her confusion, her grief, her broken heart. A man, the Gardner she believes, comes and ask her why she's crying, who she's looking for. I find it interesting that she doesn't realize this man is Jesus. I wonder why. Is it because she isn't expecting it to be him? It couldn't be him. She had watched him die a few days earlier. Then it happens. He speaks her name! And in that moment she knows it's him! Once again her world is turned upside down! This time it's turned "right side up!"

None of us ever dreamed we would spend Easter "sheltering in place" away from our houses of worship, but here we are. We're not experiencing Easter in beautifully decorative sanctuaries, surrounded by friends and family. There are no choirs, praise bands, worship leaders or pastors leading us. No we are in much smaller groups, maybe even alone, much like the disciples and Mary. I pray that today as we experience Easter in a new way that we might each enter into the story ourselves. I pray we might all hear Jesus speaking our names and may his voice turn your world right side up.