

# JESUS ENCOUNTERS

## JOURNEY WAYPOINTS

April 20-26, 2025

A stop along the journey to study, share, and support one another while we learn the way of Jesus.

### This Week's Big Idea:

Mary Magdalene, the first person to encounter the risen Christ, had been held in bondage by powers beyond her control. She was freed by Jesus' mercy, but then transformed by His death-destroying, life-giving grace. Encounter with Jesus launches us into His Kingdom of restoration.

### Scripture and Study:

**KEY TEXT:** John 19:31-35; John 20:1-22 [Click here to access this week's scripture](#)

He is alive! He has risen! In His death and His resurrection, Jesus didn't leave anything undone - He didn't forget to deal with something. He defeated the powers of darkness completely and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, He was raised to life in complete and total victory. His sacrifice on the cross broke the power of death and all it entails—sin, uncleanness, brokenness, hopelessness, and more. His resurrection released the power of life into our world. When we encounter the Risen Lord, we are transformed into those who are able to live with His very life being made manifest through us, into the world around us.

Mary Magdalene had been tormented and held captive by evil spirits - oppressive forces outside of her control that tormented her and bound her. She encountered the mercy of Jesus and was set completely free. The powers of the evil one are not to be coped with, tolerated, accepted as normal - they are to be named and cast out by the power of Jesus. Mary encountered freedom in Jesus and began to follow and serve Him along with the disciples.

On Easter morning, we find Mary in darkness. She had been freed, but she was now in a place where what she "knew", what she had experienced, clouded all her perceptions. Jesus had spoken, His word had said, that He would die and then rise from the dead. Yet the "realities" of what she had seen and witnessed in His death were so powerful, that she could not see that the empty tomb was screaming - "He's alive!"

And then, she encountered Jesus once again! He called her by name - His voice broke off the haze of life's experiences. She turned and saw Him and He spoke to her with Resurrection Power. This encounter with Jesus' power released grace upon her and she was commissioned to be the first person to declare the Good News. She ran as an apostle to the Apostles and proclaimed for the first time the words that have echoed through the ages, just as fresh and real as they were 2,000 years ago - "He's Alive!"

### Discussion Questions:

- What are some "realities" or experiences that cloud our ability to see or trust God's promises, and how can we invite Jesus to break through those barriers?
- Mary was commissioned to share the Good News after her encounter with Jesus. How can we share the message of Christ's resurrection in our daily lives?
- How does the idea of being transformed by Jesus' resurrection power challenge or encourage you in areas where you feel bound or hopeless?

### Apply It:

- This week, set aside time to reflect on a moment in your life where you felt bound by circumstances, hopelessness, or spiritual darkness. Pray and ask Jesus to reveal His resurrection power in that situation, calling you by name as He did with Mary.
- Look for one opportunity to share the hope of Jesus' resurrection with someone else, whether through a conversation, act of kindness, or testimony.