



# Near and Now

*For Good – Mary Magdalene*  
By Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller

## Warm-up Question

*What is a fact or piece of information you learned that changed the way you live your life?  
Did you feel compelled to share this with others?*



Photo by Clem Onojehuo on [Unsplash](#)

## Discussion Questions

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?

## Go...and Say

Read [John 20:1-18](#)

### Bible Story Reflection

Each of the gospels has their own account of the “resurrection narrative,” in which Jesus is found to be alive on the third day after his crucifixion, but the gospel of John is the only one that depicts Mary Magdalene arriving at the empty tomb by herself. Following Jesus’ crucifixion on Friday, she must have spent the whole sabbath trying to come to terms with the horror she had witnessed and the new reality she was living in, in which her teacher and friend had been taken from her. And yet, as she goes to the tomb to see to the proper burial preparations and give Jesus some dignity in his death, she discovers that his final resting place has been disturbed, and immediately assumes the worst. After fetching some of her companions, who are just as perplexed by the empty tomb as Mary was, she began to weep, grieving a whole new kind of loss.

Then, suddenly, everything changes. Jesus approaches Mary, calls her by name, and reveals himself to her as the resurrected, though not yet ascended, son of God. In the midst of her grief, Mary is the first to receive the Good News of Jesus Christ; that death has been defeated, and victory over the grave has been won. Mary has been given an impossible, life-altering, world-changing truth, and has been tasked by Jesus Christ himself to be the one to go and deliver this news to the world.

Mary must have been filled with a swirl of emotions as she ran to tell the other disciples what she had seen and heard. Not only was she the bearer of life-changing news, but she was also a woman tasked with stating an impossible truth she had witnessed by herself – in a time when the word of a woman was often not taken as seriously as that of a man. She must have known there was risk in proclaiming this truth – but none of this stopped her from boldly declaring, “I have seen the Lord!”

Mary models for us the way in which we are called to be truth-speakers in this world; to say difficult, challenging, liberating truths about ourselves and the world around us for the good of us all. These truths are often not easy to accept, and can often lead to further conflict or division before they lead to change – but if we have the courage to say “yes!” to God’s call, these truths will lead us closer to the life God longs for us to experience.

### Discussion Questions

1. In what ways do you connect with Mary in this story?
2. How difficult is it for us to transition from grief to good news?
3. How does the resurrection change your outlook on life?
4. Have you ever experienced a time when it felt like God was calling you by name? What response did this stir in you?
5. How do you think Mary would have told her own story, describing her thoughts, feelings, and emotions in response to what she witnessed?
6. What barriers stand in our way and prevent us from speaking our truth?
7. Have you ever spoken a risky truth to someone? How did you feel before and after doing so?
8. How do you see the God of Resurrection calling us to New Life in this world?

### **Activity Suggestions**

Think of something you learned that led to you making a change in your life. How would you go about sharing this information with others? Write out the important steps.

Create a visual representation of good news emerging in the midst of grief.

Partner up with someone and share the ways in which Christ's resurrection frees you to live a new kind of life. Find one key word or phrase from each person's experience, and come back together as a group to compile all of those words together in some sort of list (get as creative with this as you would like!).

### **Prayer Concerns**

For those who speak truth to power.

For those who are willing to listen to and believe the truth of others.

For those who boldly choose to live out their full and authentic truth.

### **Closing Prayer**

Give me the words to bear witness to you, O God, that your good news might be known through me. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

