**Easter Sunday Sermon: “The Story Is Not Over”**

*John 20:1-18*

Easter is the day when a story that seemed to end in tragedy turns into one of **joy, life, and resurrection**. The cross was not the final word. Jesus’ resurrection opened a new chapter—not just in His story, but in ours.

In many situations, we pray, **“Lord, please save us!”** It’s the cry of those who have come to the end of their strength, wisdom, or plans.  There are things we can’t fix—not even with effort or **grit.** (\*grit: perseverance and passion toward long-term goals.) **Death**, the greatest enemy, is something no one can overcome on their own. **But Jesus did.**

**The Story Begins in the Dark**

The Easter story begins in the dark. Mary Magdalene came to the tomb expecting only to mourn. But when Jesus called her by name—**“Mary”**—her eyes were opened, and her sorrow turned to joy. Jesus still calls each of us by name—personally, lovingly, intimately.

**We need this personal experience and relationship with Jesus. When God calls your name who knows you well, and you will recognize God who comes to you very intimately.** We all need: **Experience.** A personal relationship with God. It’s not just about knowing things in our heads—It’s about meeting God in our hearts. It’s not always easy to explain. Because it is different for each person. But it’s real. It is personal. And it changes everything. That’s what gives us strength to keep going and holding hope, even in the face of death.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, had one such moment. Though he was religious and educated, he only felt truly transformed when his **“heart was strangely warmed.”** That personal experience gave birth to a movement of Methodism.

When Jesus call by name, **“Mary.”** And her whole world changes. It’s not a theological argument that convinces her. It’s not a dramatic miracle. It’s the fact that **the risen Lord knows her by name**. Her sorrow turned to joy. Her silence turned to witness.She runs to the disciples and says: “I have seen the Lord!” Mary becomes the first preacher of Easter.

Her story mirrors our story. We all stand at some kind of tomb—mourning loss, facing fears, wondering what’s next. From today’s gospel, like Jesus, Mary, other disciples, the death, despair, fear was not their ending story. Their stories are not over there.

**The Shape of the Gospel: U-shape**

* Starts high: Jesus comes in glory
* Falls low: suffering, death, burial
* Then rises: resurrection, joy, mission

This is also our story. No matter how low we feel today—grief, fear, doubt—it is not the end. **your** story turns upward. In Christ, **your story is not over**. You may be in the dark, but the light is coming. Jesus is alive. He calls you by name. And the final word over your life is not fear, death, or failure—

It is: **Life. Joy. Resurrection.**

**He is risen!** **He is risen indeed!**