



Welcome!

SERIES: Everything in Between
Today's Message: *It Was Still Dark*
Dr. Lance D. Watson, Senior Pastor

PRAYER: Gracious and Living God, we come before You today acknowledging that many of our journeys begin "while it was still dark." We thank You for the faithfulness of Mary Magdalene, who moved toward You even when the world felt cold, silent, and heavy with grief. Thank You for meeting us in our own early mornings and seasons of uncertainty. Today, we lift our voices in praise for the "removed stone." We thank You that no barrier—neither the weight of sin, the finality of death, nor the seals of this world—could hold back Your glory. We thank You for the surprises that disrupt our despair and the empty tombs that prove Your promises are true. In the name of the Risen Lord, Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

ICEBREAKER: Think of a time you were the first person to discover a huge piece of news—was your first instinct to process it alone or run and tell someone else immediately?

INTRODUCTION: Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene traveled to the tomb of Jesus only to find the massive stone already rolled away. Startled by the sight of the empty entrance, she immediately ran to tell Simon Peter and the "other disciple," sparking a sense of urgency and alarm among them. Peter and the other disciple then raced toward the garden; the other disciple arrived first, and though he stopped at the entrance, he leaned in to see the linen burial cloths lying there, confirming that the body was indeed gone. God moves while it's still dark.

SCRIPTURE: Read **St. John 20:1-2 (NRSV)**: Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ² So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him."

DISCUSSION:

1. **What stood out in the message?** What's one thing you learned? What questions came to mind as you listened to the message?
2. What is a "dark" or uncertain area of your life right now where you feel called to take a step of faith, even if you don't have all the answers?
3. Mary started her journey "while it was still dark," likely overwhelmed by grief and confusion. When you are going through a "dark" season in life (loss, doubt, or waiting), is your first instinct to move toward God or to wait until things feel "sunny" again before you re-engage with your faith?
4. Mary didn't have the answers yet—she actually expected to find a body, not a resurrection—but she showed up anyway. Can you think of a time when you felt called to take a step of



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obedience or service even though you didn't have a clear "map" or a guaranteed positive outcome?

5. Upon seeing the stone moved, Mary immediately ran to involve others. When you encounter something unsettling or "empty" in your spiritual life, do you tend to isolate yourself in that darkness, or do you have a community (like Peter and John) that you trust enough to run to?

CHALLENGE: Take one step toward a difficult situation or a 'dark' area of your life before you have all the answers, trusting—like Mary—that God is already at work even when you can't yet see the light.

SERVE: TODAY is EASTER SUNDAY. Did you invite anybody? If not, BE LIKE MARY in the text, invite somebody to celebrate with you next week!

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Take this time to share group announcements. Church wide and campus specific announcements can be found at www.myspbc.org. You can also “find, follow and like” our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/myspbc. Turn on your notifications.

CELEBRATIONS: Take this time to share praise reports (e.g. answered prayers, birthdays, anniversaries, promotions).

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAYER: Take this time to share prayer requests. Close with prayer.

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We Care!

NOTICE: PLEASE BE PATIENT AS WE GRADUALLY REOPEN OUR CAMPUSES IN THE SAFEST MANNER POSSIBLE. As a small group leader, we depend on you to show members that we care. Here's a list of resources to help you.

FOR PRAYER:

CALL: 804.463.2472

EMAIL: prayer@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST A HOSPITAL VISIT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (For Emergencies)

EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO FIND A SUPPORT GROUP:

CALL: 804.643.6177

EMAIL: Barnabas@myspbc.org.

TO CONTACT MY LIFE STAGE PASTOR:

CALL: 804.643.4000 and Press 1 for the Dial By Name Directory

EMAIL:

Imagination (0-10): Vernita Williams: Vernita.Williams@myspbc.org

SMB (11-19): Martina Jones-Smith: Martina.Jones-Smith@myspbc.org

Dreamchasers (20-29): Juan Shackelford: juan.shackelford@myspbc.org

Aspire (30-39): Lance Watson, Jr.: lance.watsonjr@myspbc.org

Fusion (40-49): Michelle Townsend: michelle.townsend@myspbc.org

Encore (50-59): Lisa Johnson: Lisa.Johnson@myspbc.org

Prime Time (60-69): Maceo Freeman: maceo.freeman@myspbc.org

Refiners (70+): Roscoe Jones: roscoe.jones@myspbc.org

FOR COUNSELING:

CALL: 804.643.6177

EMAIL: Barnabas@myspbc.org

TO REQUEST FUNERAL SUPPORT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (Pastor On Call)

EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE:

CALL: 804.643.4000

EMAIL: emergencyassistance@myspbc.org.

GPS is a study guide based on the weekend message. The purpose of this guide is to assist small groups in study.
Previous GPS Guides are available online at www.myspbc.org.