

Worship Material
Do you see what I see?
Material from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 20th April

Begin with an opening prayer

Creator God,
you who scattered the stars
and filled the deep oceans,
come, God, be with us here.
Saviour God,
you who suffered for us
and danced from death to new life,
come, God, be with us here.
Spirit God,
you who are as wild as the wind
and fill our hearts with fire,
come, God, be with us here.
Amen.

Read John 20:1-18 or Luke 24:1-12

Bible notes

Mary Magdalene is named in the first three Gospels as among the women who discover the empty tomb. In John's Gospel, she alone rises early to find that 'they have taken the Lord out of the tomb' (v.2). In the other Gospels the men are not involved until later. In Matthew (28:9-10), Mary Magdalene and 'the other Mary' meet the risen Jesus, who commissions them to tell his brothers to meet him in Galilee. In Mark (16:7-8), they and Salome are similarly commissioned, 'but they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid'. And in Luke 24:1-12 (the alternative Gospel reading for today), the larger group of women do tell the male apostles that Jesus is risen, but they are not believed. It is not surprising, given the traumatic loss of the Lord they loved and the shocking discovery that his body was not there for them to anoint, that there are different versions and visions of the extraordinary events of that first Easter.

In John's version, there is a more complex interweaving of male and female characters. Mary Magdalene immediately runs to share her news that the body is missing with Peter and the beloved disciple. They run to the tomb and move things on by going inside to find the discarded linen wrappings. The beloved disciple begins to believe, perhaps at this stage beginning to see that God has acted in some way. It is not yet belief in the resurrection, since we are explicitly told, 'for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead' (v.9). And indeed they return to their homes without a word either to Mary or to each other.

But Mary stays by the tomb, explaining her weeping to the strangers sitting there. In that moment of sharing her grief she turns to encounter the risen Jesus, who by recognising her for who she is, 'Mary', enables her to respond, 'Rabbouni' (v.16). The process of interaction between the women and men in the story, 'Do you see what I see?', continues as Mary announces to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord' (v.18).

Prayer

Do you see what I see?

The tomb is empty, the stone rolled away.

Jesus is alive!

We give thanks and praise you, Lord.

We see you in nature, we see you in people.

Do you see what I see?

Jesus is living!

We give thanks and praise you, Lord.

Evidence abounds.

We see you in changed lives and hearts.

Share the good news – Jesus is alive!

We give thanks and praise you, risen Lord.

Amen.

A prayer to conclude

We've seen the good news –

the tomb is empty, Christ is risen!

Hallelujah!

We've heard the good news –

death is disrupted, God is on the loose!

Hallelujah!

We'll take the good news
and share it far and wide.

Hallelujah! Christ is risen!

Amen.