

“I ran into this guy recently that I knew in college and he started telling stories about this person and that person and ‘Remember when we went here?’ and ‘Remember that?’ and ‘Remember when that happened?’ And he’s getting more and more excited, and partway through our conversation I had this thought: That was years ago. It seemed in some way as if he’s still back there, like he never left, as if those were the best years of his life.”

When you think of your life, what was the best time?

Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying.

As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?”

“They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.”

At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?”

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.”

Jesus said to her, “Mary.”

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”).

Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father.

Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

[John 20:11-17 \(TNIV\)](#)

“All of a sudden she [Mary Magdalene] realizes it’s Jesus and he’s alive and he’s back.

And so, she goes to embrace him, and he says, ‘Mary, don’t hold on to me.’

Wait, this is Jesus, the divine embodiment of love and compassion and Mary goes, it looks like to hug him, and he says, ‘Don’t.’ Are we missing something?

Mary assumes that he’s back, right?

That he’s back and he’s alive and so things are going to go back to how they always were, back in the good ol’ days when they would all eat these big meals as a group, and they would travel and tell stories and laugh.”

Have you ever tried to make anything in your life how it used to be, only to find out that you really couldn’t?

“Life isn’t static, is it?

It ebbs and it flows and people grow up and move away and graduate and lose their jobs.

And people that you love die, and some people get married and others don’t and some get divorced and some get cancer and things aren’t how they were.”

Does your life today look anything like you would’ve imagined it five, ten, or twenty years ago?

If not, what are some things that you would never have imagined?

Are there things in your life now that make you long for certain times in your past when things were different?

Afterwards, Jesus appeared to his eleven disciples as they were eating. He scolded them because they were too stubborn to believe the one who had seen him after he had been raised to life.

[Mark 16:14-15 \(CEV\)](#)

“He [Jesus] tells them it’s a whole new day, everything’s changed, and God’s going to give them everything they need. He essentially tells them they are going to receive a new spirit, one for today, and he promises them that they’re going to have everything that they need for their new life.”

Do you believe God has provided us with everything we need in our lives today? If so, why do you think so many of us still tend to look to the past for how we would like things to be?

“If you need to celebrate how good it was, then celebrate.
If you need to remember how great it was when they were alive, then remember that.
If you need to grieve, grieve.
If you need to apologize or make amends or you need to do something to make peace with how it was, then do it, but then, move on.”

Are there things in your past you haven’t thoroughly dealt with in order to move on?

“There’s a certain kind of despair that sets in when we believe that things were better back then. When we’re stuck back there. When we’re not fully present. When we’re still holding on to how things were, our arms aren’t free to embrace today.”

Do you think we can live our lives today to the fullest if we’re in some way still stuck in the past? What kind of consequences do you think it could have?

You don’t even know what tomorrow will bring – what your life will be!

[James 4:14 \(HCSB\)](#)

“If you live in the fantasy that you’ll get around to it tomorrow, that you’ll get around to them tomorrow, you will wake up and it will not be tomorrow, it will be yesterday and you will have missed it – you will have missed them.”

If you’re in any way stuck in the past, are there people around you who might suffer from you not being fully present? How?

Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”). Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your father, to my God and your God.’”

Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!”
And she told them that he had said these things to her.

[John 20:16-18 \(TNIV\)](#)

“Jesus, when he’s talking with Mary Magdalene, after the ‘Do not hold on to me’ part, you know what he tells her to do? He says, ‘Now go, and tell everybody else what’s happening.’ He gives her a part to play. There’s something for her to do now. Is Jesus saying to you, right now, about anything, about anybody, about anytime, ‘Let go and receive a new spirit?’”

What part do you think you’re supposed to play today?
Is your life in a place where you can fully embrace today and play your part?
If not, what steps do you need to take?

“May you accept the past for what it is.
May you celebrate what needs to be celebrated and grieve what needs to be grieved and then, may you receive from God a new spirit, one for here, now, today.”

While filming at one of the beach locations, a seventeen-ton crane – used to capture specific camera angles – got stuck in the ocean.

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