

In His Own Words:
“When the Risen Savior Calls Your Name”
John 20: 1-18

Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:

“Arise, arise;
 And with His burial-linen dry thine eyes:
 Christ left His grave-clothes, that we might, when grief
 Draws tears, or blood, not want an handkerchief.”
 –George Herbert, from “The Dawning” in *Herbert: Poems*, 131.

“I find that Holy Week is draining; no matter how many times I have lived through his crucifixion, my anxiety about his resurrection is undiminished – I am terrified that, this year, it won’t happen; that, that year, it didn’t. Anyone can be sentimental about the Nativity; any fool can feel like a Christian at Christmas. But Easter is the main event; if you don’t believe in the resurrection, you’re not a believer.” – John Irving, *A Prayer for Owen Meany*

“In his triumph Jesus could have paraded through the streets of Jerusalem. He could have knocked on Pilate’s door. He could have confronted the high priest. But the first person our Resurrected Lord appears to is a woman without hope. And the first words he speaks are, “Why are you crying?” What a Savior we serve, or rather, who serves us. For in his hour of greatest triumph, he doesn’t shout his victory from the rooftops. He comes quietly to a woman who grieves, who desperately needs to hear his voice, sees his face, feel his embrace.” – Ken Gire

“I have come to feel that the primary reality of which we have to take account in seeking for a Christian impact on public life is the Christian congregation. How is it possible that the gospel should be credible, that people should come to believe that the power which has the last word in human affairs is represented by a man hanging on a cross? I am suggesting that the only answer, the only hermeneutic of the gospel, is a congregation of men and women who believe it and live by it. I am, of course, not denying the importance of the many activities by which we seek to challenge public life with the gospel– evangelistic campaigns, distribution of Bibles and Christian literature, conferences, and even books such as this one. But I am saying that these are all secondary, and that they have power to accomplish their purpose only as they are rooted in and lead back to a believing community.” –Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 227.

Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:

- After reading through the passage together, ask your group what makes an impression upon them from the passages and why it strikes them.
- How does these words from Jesus and this scene/interaction with Mary Magdalene intersect with you today? Is there anything fresh? Does it resonate with or confuse you at all?
- What do you make of Ken Gire’s summation of this passage? Why didn’t Jesus parade his triumph more publicly?
- Why is the primary application of the Resurrection the interruption of our lament? What current lament/weeping do you need Jesus to break into?
- How does the Resurrection empower a new life for us? How does the Newbigin assertion about the believing community inform that new life? What does this “believing community” living out the new creation look and feel like?