

Lessons for the weeks after Easter Sunday

Jesus lived on earth for 40 days between Easter Sunday and His ascension.

Here are some of the stories of His appearance and miracles:

- Jesus appeared to Mary as she wept outside the tomb. John 20:11-18
- Jesus joined two men on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus and revealed Himself in a meal with them Luke 24:23-27
- Eight days later Jesus appeared to the disciples and Thomas John 20:24-29
- Jesus appeared to 7 disciples and provided fish for them John 21:1-14
- Jesus' ascension to His Father Luke 24:50-53

Notes on the first lesson:

This week the beautiful story is Jesus' appearance to Mary at the tomb.

Here are sermon notes that Dr. Tim Keller preached at Redeemer NYC, April 2008:

Look at Mary Magdalene. She was the first eyewitness. If this were a myth, it wouldn't be written this way. No woman would be the first. And that is nuts. But she was. And that is true. No one would write a false account with Mary being the first eyewitness.

How can you be sure that in spite of your own failures that God loves you? That the world would be right one day? That death is not the end?

The only way to be sure is if you know that Mary really saw Him.

Ask: Is Christianity is true?

Why is Mary such a good case study? She is looking for Jesus. She's weeping. She's ready to take on the gardener. But unless He breaks in there is no hope.

We are looking for the wrong Jesus.

She is completely blind.

She believes she's in the middle of disaster. There are angels in front of her, the Lord is before her and she thinks she's alone.

She is about to become one of the most famous people in the world and she feels abandoned.

She is blind. She has no idea that God is working.

She doesn't know the real Jesus. He has to break in.

He does not wait for her to figure it out. He isn't waiting for her to find Him. He comes and finds us.

He's so gentle. Tender.

But then He says: Who are you looking for?

She must have thought of the double meaning for the rest of her life. He's asking but He's really letting her know that her understanding is way too small.

He breaks in. Mary!

She responds: Teacher!

He opens her eyes.

Salvation is by His works. We rest in His unmerited grace.

Mary is His chosen first missionary.

Jesus only appears when Mary is alone.

He chooses a woman not a man. He chooses a former mental patient not a pillar of the community.

Luke 8: He casts 7 demons out of Mary. 7 means "mega," a legend of demons.

How much clearer could He be saying: salvation is by grace.

It's for anyone, no matter your gender, class, whatever. It is by grace.

Mary, you are My first ambassador.

She is an outsider, not an insider.

Go and tell My brothers. (He could have said: Go, tell those miserable deserters.)

We are in the same family. My Father is your Father.

Mary was humble.

Mary is a lover.

He says: Don't hold Me so tightly.

The verb means stop clinging so tightly. He's saying: Ouch!

She must have grabbed Him. I'm ascending.

What does that mean?

When I ascend, I will send the Holy Spirit. He will make Me real to you.

You might think it would have been so neat to have been there. But Jesus says:

No, when the Holy Spirit comes into your life it's greater than holding on to Me.

The mark of a Christian who grasps the Gospel is that you realize the impact of His love. You feel loved and you want to love. That's what makes Mary great.

She's the only one who goes there. She's not leaving until she finds Him.

She understands grace.

She knew her need for grace.

Jesus calls her by name. Mary.

I know who you are.

You find your way when you know Me.

1st Story of Jesus Between His Resurrection and Before His Ascension

Jesus shows Mary His love at the tomb from John 20

With coloring sheets for preschool and grade school

What is the happiest day of the year for you? It's probably your birthday! People celebrate you, you get presents, a cake with candles and your favorite dinner. Your birthday, the day you came into the world, is a happy day for your parents too. After months of waiting there you were in their arms!

For Christians **Easter** is the happiest day of the year. But on that first Easter day the people who should have been the happiest were not. In fact, they really didn't seem to believe what Jesus had told them. He had told them over and over that He must die, that after 3 days He would rise again. Remember the disciples had dinner with Jesus on Thursday night. It's called the Last Supper. Then on Friday Jesus was crucified on the cross. He was innocent, He had never done anything wrong. We can say that Jesus had never sinned in His whole life.

Now it was Sunday morning. We know this was the first Easter. But no one else did. Jesus had told His disciples that He would rise from death. The tomb could not hold Jesus. Jesus overcame sin, Jesus conquered sin. And now He was alive. Jesus was not in the tomb.

Who went to the tomb to see if He had risen? None of the disciples! And the 3 women who went took spices – to wrap around the dead body of Jesus, to anoint His body. The women got to the tomb and it was empty.

And then Mary was alone. She stood outside the tomb and she cried. She looked in the tomb and the two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" Mary said, "They have taken my Lord away and I don't know where they have put Him."

She turned around and saw a man standing there, but she did not realize it was Jesus. Maybe her eyes were clouded with so many tears. Maybe it was still sort of dark. He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Mary replied to the man thinking He was the gardener, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have put Him, and I will get Him."

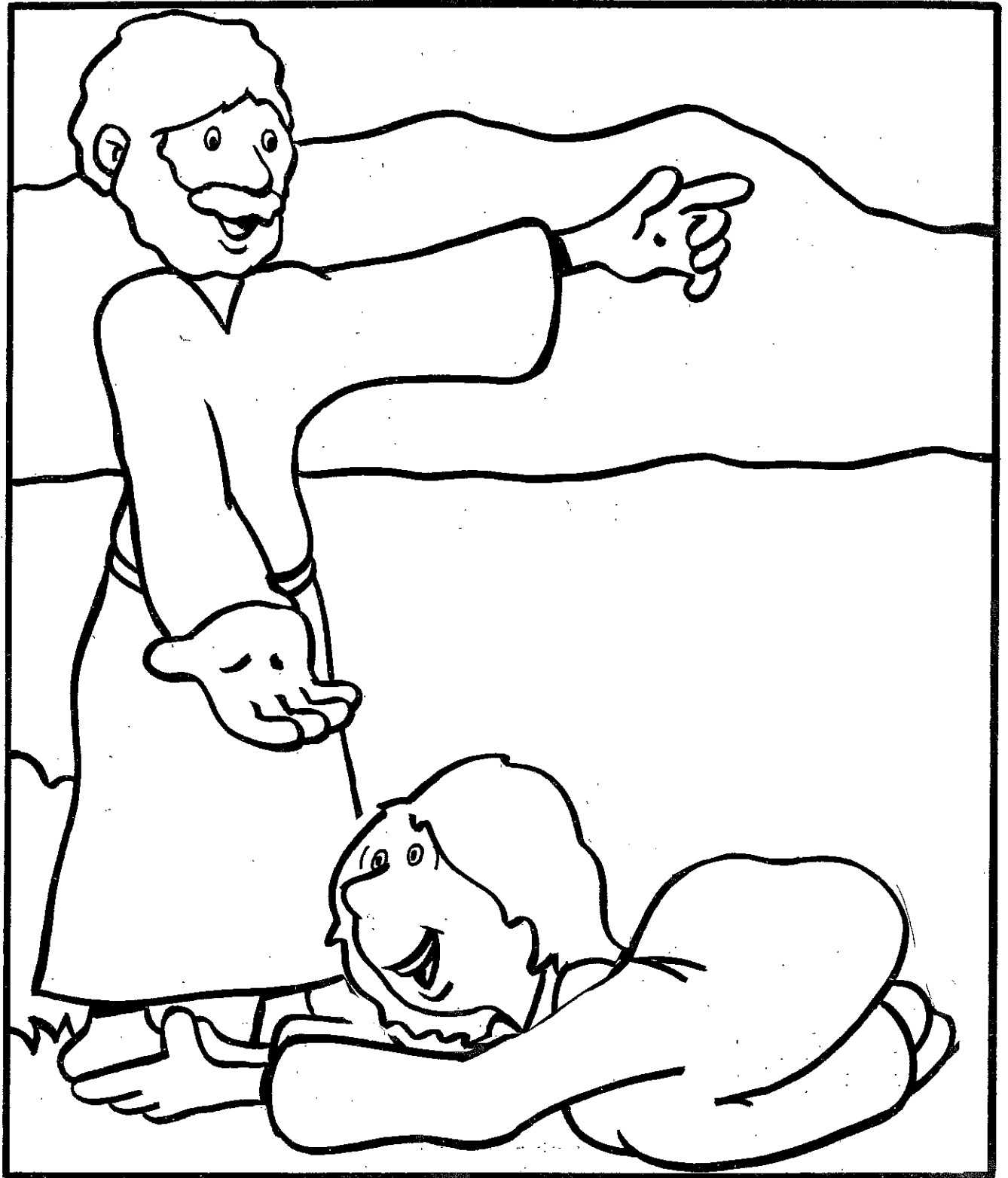
And then one word changed her heart from breaking with sorrow into a heart overflowing with joy. She heard His answer, just one word, one life changing word. He said, "Mary." She turned toward Him and cried out, "Rabboni! Teacher!"

She knew! The man was not the gardener. In fact He was Jesus, the only man who could turn her sorrow into joy.

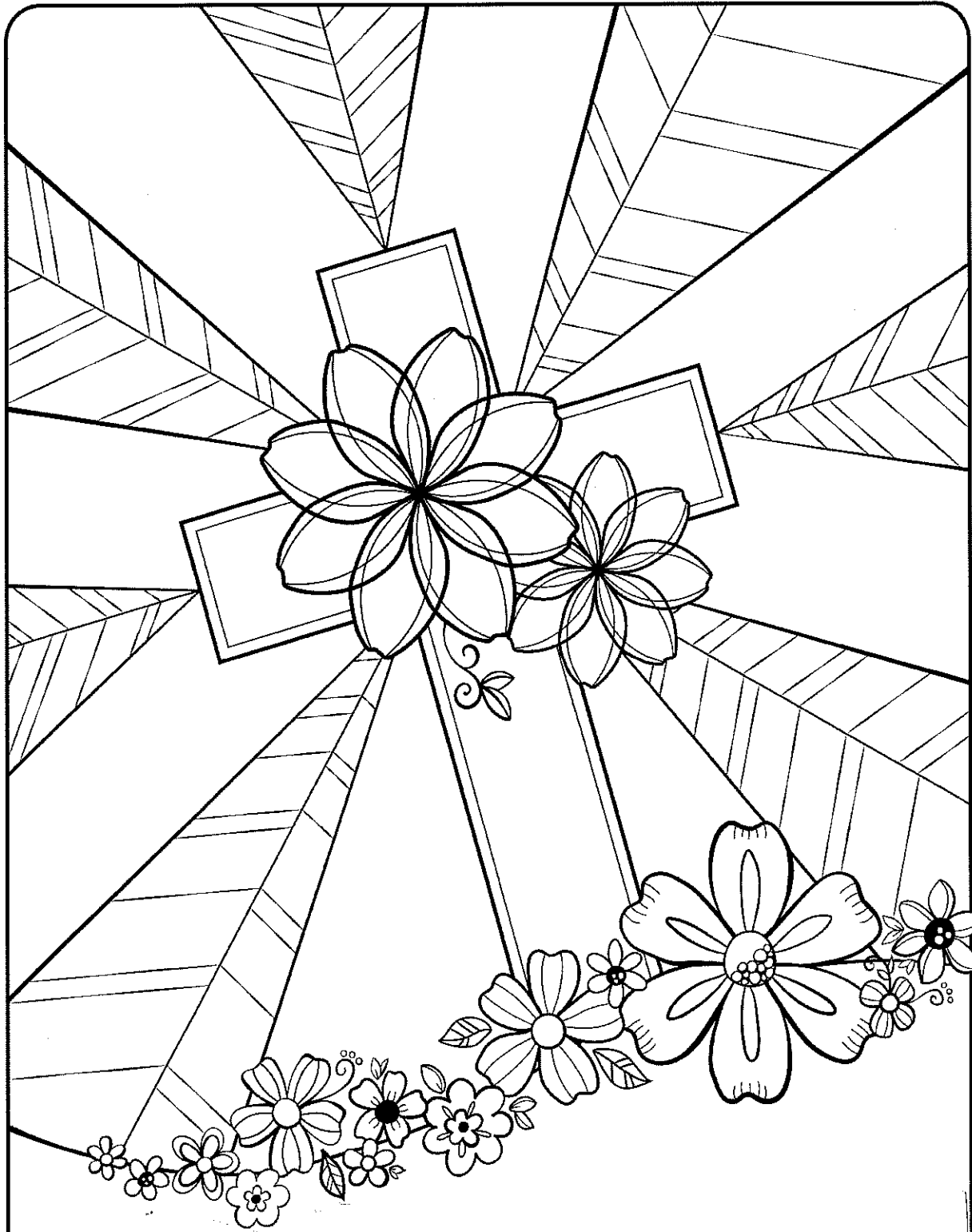
Jesus said, "Do not hold onto Me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go to My brothers and tell them that I am returning to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God."

The Bible tells us that Mary ran to the disciples with the news, "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them all that He had said to her.

In John 10 the Bible says that Jesus calls His sheep by name, and they know His voice. Mary's broken heart was changed. The tomb was empty but her heart was full. Mary heard Jesus say her name on that first Easter morning and she followed Him.

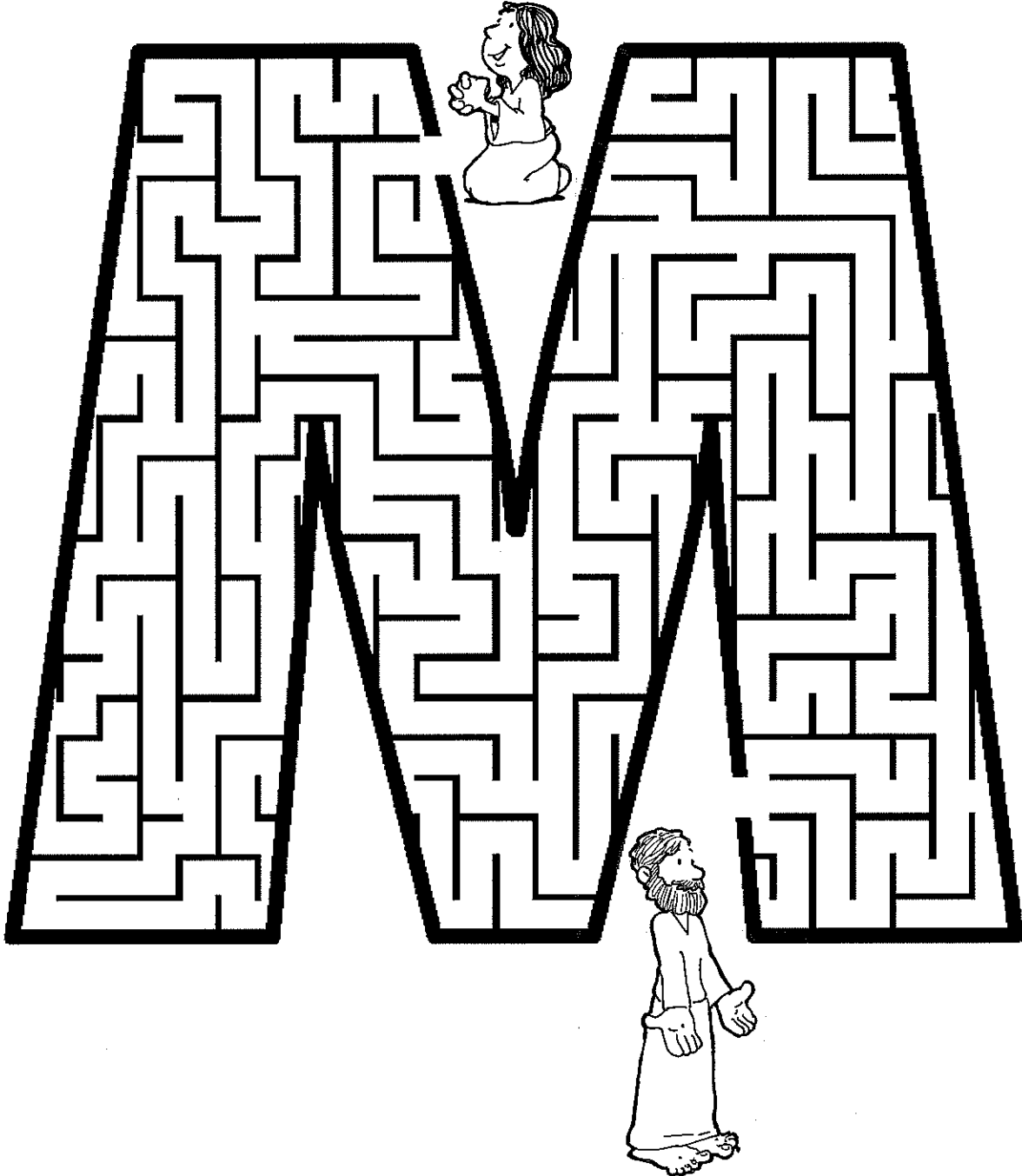


Jesus said to her, "Mary." Jesus said, "Go to My brothers and tell them that I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God." Mary went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord!" John 21



Mary said,
"I have seen the Lord!"

Jesus meets Mary by the tomb after Jesus' resurrection
John 20



Mary stood outside the tomb and cried. She didn't know that Jesus had risen. Jesus said her name, "Mary." She heard her name and knew that it was Jesus! Joy filled her heart.

