

ULC Sermon Study Resource
Teach Us to Pray: Prayer as Power
Pastor Gabe Kasper
April 12, 2020 (Easter Sunday)

Prayer: Pause for a few moments to go to the Lord in prayer. Ask that He would draw near to you in this time, and open your heart and mind to hear His Word.

Icebreaker: How did you celebrate Easter this year?

Reading: John 20:1-18

Outline:

- I. Frailty (v1-4)
 - a. In the face of our own frailty, we have a tendency to reach up to God for help.
 - b. When everything that usually distracts or gives us security is stripped away, we're left to face the evil in our hearts and death.
Q: What was the initial assumption of Mary when she saw Jesus' body was gone?
- II. Investigation (v5-15)
 - a. Some of us respond to Jesus with the simple faith of John, or the curiosity of Peter.
 - b. In Jesus, we can view our present reality outside the lens of common experience.
Q: Why did John wait outside for Peter to arrive and enter the tomb?
- III. Transformation (v16-17)
 - a. When we press in, the resurrected Jesus calls our name and transforms us.
 - b. Easter transforms our past, struggles, sins, doubts, fears, and ultimately death.
Q: Why didn't Mary recognize Jesus until he spoke to her?

Reflection/Application Questions:

- 1) What has been most difficult in this time of isolation? What have you been forced to confront?
- 2) Who do you identify most with in this story: John, Peter or Mary?
- 3) What does it mean to "look through the lens of common experience"? Do you do it?
- 4) Have you heard the resurrected Jesus call your name?
- 5) What can you celebrate knowing Easter has ruined?

Suggestions for further study:

- Luke 24:1-12 **Q: Do we ever seek the living among the dead?**
- Acts 3:1-16 **Q: See what power the name of the resurrected Jesus has! What are you praying for in his name this Easter season?**
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-28 **Q: What does it mean that Jesus is "the firstfruits" (v23)?**

Closing Prayer: "Lord Jesus, we thank you that you are our resurrected Lord. That when the darkness, brokenness, pain, and suffering of this world did its worst to you it did not get the final say, but you won. You rose victorious. God, you call each of us by name. We pray for those who respond like Peter, with questions and concerns. We pray that they would hear you call their name, that they would respond to you in faith, and that you would transform their lives. We thank you for the hope of Easter. Jesus, we thank you that because you didn't stay dead it means we won't either. It means that one day you will heal, restore and renew all things. Oh Lord, point our eyes towards that. Keep our eyes focused on you and the hope we have in you now and always. In your holy name we pray, Amen."