



# Sermon Growth Guide

**April 20, 2025**

**“The Second Turning”**

**John 20:11-18**

**Key Verse:** John 20:17

“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’”

**Big Idea:** He Is Risen!

---

## Foundations

In this passage, we celebrate the good news of Jesus’ glorious resurrection. And yet, it also contains one of Jesus’ strangest commands to one of his followers: “Do not hold on to me.” Jesus’ resurrection body must be different from his earthly one. He is clearly recognizable, yet Mary does not immediately recognize him. In one of the most beautiful and personal moments in Scripture, Mary knows Jesus as soon as he says her name. Her joy knows no bounds as she rushes to him. But Jesus tells her, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father.”

In our humanity, we connect most to the earthly Jesus. But the resurrection is not the final completion of the good news. Jesus must ascend to the Father, where his reign over all things begins. And so Mary can’t hold on to him. He came personally for her—but not only for her. He came for the whole world. And so she has to let him go. Jesus knew that this part of the good news would make his disciples sad. That’s why he tells them in advance: “Very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I go away” (John 16:7). The earthly Jesus could only appear to a few people. But the ascended Jesus sends the Spirit so that his power and presence can be with each of his followers at all times.

Jesus’ reign begins now, through each and every one of us who follow him through faith. And that is very good news. Therefore, instead of holding on to the earthly Jesus, we have to let him go to the Father. For he has risen indeed!

## Understanding God’s Word

Read John 20:11-18 together.

Which parts of this passage stand out to each one of you? Why do you think Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene first? What part do the resurrection and ascension play in the good news about Jesus? Ephesians 1:15-23 might be helpful.

## Applying God’s Word

Because of the resurrection we have new life in Christ. What does that look like in your life?

Because of the ascension, Jesus is above every power and authority on earth. How does that affect the way we live right now?

How does the hope of eternal life affect how we live life now?

## Witnessing God’s Word

Jesus called Mary to be the first witness to his resurrection and ascension. She told the other disciples that she had “seen the Lord,” and repeated his message. How have you “seen the Lord?” in a way that you could share with others?

How would you explain the Gospel message to anyone who is curious about the “hope you have?” (1 Peter 3:15)