

Each month we have a special memory verse and Life App. All of our stories revolve around those.

This month's Memory Verse is:

"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."
John 16:33b, NIV

This month's life app is

HOPE

"Believing that something good can come out of something bad"

Weekly, we have a different bottom line that goes with our story and Life App

So far this month our bottom lines have been:

1) **Whatever happens, remember God is always at work** (The Crucifixion)

Our story for this week is about 'The Resurrection'. (John 20:1-18)

The **Bottom Line** this week: **Whatever happens, remember God loves you.**

Last week, our story left things pretty dark and sad. We talked about how Jesus had been arrested and beaten. They put a thorn of crowns on His head. He was hung on a cross and then ... He died.

Things were also looking really dark for Jesus' friends. They were scared and they didn't know what to do, Jesus was dead. What now?

Mary Magdalene, who loved Jesus too, was full of sadness. She had seen Him die on a cross Friday afternoon. Later that evening, two of Jesus' friends, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, had taken Jesus' body, wrapped it in linen cloths, and laid it in a cave—a tomb—cut into the rock. Mary had followed and watched them do it.

We pick up our story in John chapter 20;

Now, early on Sunday morning, Mary arrived at the garden where the tomb was. But something was different. The huge stone! Where was the stone that had been placed over the entrance to the tomb?!

Her heart was probably pounding out of her chest as she stooped down to look inside. Even though it was dark, she could see what she needed to know. It was empty!

Without stopping to think, she rushed out of the garden and ran to the home where Jesus' friends were staying.

Pounding on the door, she called out to the disciples inside. 'Open the door. Quick!'

One of the disciples flung the door open to a frantic Mary. What in the world was she talking about?

'They've taken the Lord out of the tomb!', she cried out. 'We don't know where they've put Him!'
(John 20:2 NIV)

Peter and John were among the group of Jesus' disciples inside, they probably stood in shock for a moment. Can you imagine hearing this news for the first time? Then the two men took off for the garden. John arrived first and stopped in amazement when he saw the open tomb. He stood outside the tomb and peered in. There was no body! Only the linen strips that they had wrapped Jesus in were still there.

Peter shoved past John, straight into the tomb. There he found only the cloth that was wrapped around Jesus. What could this mean? The two disciples were confused. They had seen Jesus die. Did someone steal His body? But why? Why would anyone do that?

Peter & John knew they needed to tell the other disciples what had happened and form a plan, so they left the garden. However, Mary Magdalene stayed behind, she was exhausted from running and crying. It seemed impossible. How could everything Jesus had done, teaching and healing and gathering followers, end like this.

As she stood outside the tomb crying, Mary bent down to look inside the tomb again. What she discovered nearly made her heart stop. Two shining angels sat inside, robed in white. They were sitting where Jesus' body had been.

They asked Mary why she was crying.

'They have taken my Lord away,' she said. 'I don't know where they have put him.'
(John 20:13, NIV)

Mary turned and saw a Man standing behind her. The Man also asked her why she was crying.

'Who are you looking for?' He asked.
(John 20:15a, NIV)

Mary shook her head, sadly. She thought he was the gardener.

'Sir, did you carry him away?' she asked. 'Tell me where you put him. Then I will go and get him.'
(John 20:15 NIV)

The Man gently spoke her name. 'Mary,' He said.

Slowly, Mary looked through her tears up at the Man's face. It was Jesus. It was Jesus!

'Teacher!' she cried out. Mary found herself laughing and crying at the same time. She fell down and buried her face in His robe. Jesus was alive!

Jesus spoke kindly to Mary;

'Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me. I have not yet ascended to the Father. Instead, go to those who believe in me. Tell them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."
(John 20:17 NIV)

Just as Jesus instructed, Mary hurried back to find His friends. She had completely forgotten about her exhaustion and tears. For the second time that day, Mary pounded on the door.

*'I've seen Him! I've seen Jesus! **He is alive!***
(John 20:18)

The news didn't stop spreading there, though.

Over the next weeks, Jesus appeared to His closest friends, and then to nearly 500 people! All of those people could see with their own eyes that God keeps His promises! And then those people spread the word to more people and then even more people, and today, 2,000 years later, we are STILL talking about the miracle of Jesus' resurrection.

Jesus' death was sad, it was horrible, but it led to the greatest thing ever: His death and resurrection means that you and I can live with God forever. We can receive the gift of eternal life if we just believe that Jesus died on the cross to pay the price for our sins—for the things we've done wrong. Talk about something good coming out of something bad, right?! It's just like Jesus said when He walked this earth.

'In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world,'
(John 16:33. (NIV)

Jesus is **living** proof that whatever happens, God loves you. Because God has come through on all of His promises—including His promise to send us a Savior. We know that we can **trust God no matter what**. God has not only told us time after time, but God has shown us with His actions just how much He loves us.

Whatever happens, remember God loves you. Let's thank Him for that...

PRAY

Dear God, thank You for loving us, even though we mess up every day. We didn't deserve something good to come out of the bad, but You kept Your promise and sent us a Savior so we could be with You forever. Thank You for sending Jesus and for raising Him back to life after He died to pay for our sin. We believe Jesus is alive, and that's what we are celebrating together today. We love You and we pray these things in Jesus' name, amen.

A little extra

** Imagine for a second that you are a disciple. And your friend, Jesus, was just killed. And you're worried that the people who killed Him are going to be trying to find you next. You're scared. You're hiding. You're in the dark.

And then there's a knock on the door and everything changes. The stone that blocked the entrance to Jesus' tomb has been rolled away and Jesus isn't in there anymore. God brought Jesus back to life!

Can you imagine? God is stronger than anything. He's stronger than anything you might be afraid of—snakes, spiders, the dark, whatever. He's even stronger than death itself.

But it's even better than that, because when Jesus died on the cross, He died for a reason. He died to pay for your sins and my sins. So not only is God stronger than your fears, not only is God stronger than death—He's strong enough to take away the sins of the world.

He did this because He loves you so much. God loves you even when you break the rules or do things that are bad. He's not out to punish you, because Jesus already took the punishment for you. God loves you no matter what other people think about you. He loves you no matter what YOU think about you.

God loves you no matter what.