

# Read

Luke 8:1-3

Luke 24:1-12

# Consider

Have you heard of Susanna? Or maybe Joanna, the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household? Perhaps you're familiar with Mary Magdalene, who was delivered from seven demons? In the gospel of Luke, these were women who had experienced the healing and restoration of Jesus in their lives and whose lives were changed by the gospel. Their encounter with Christ shifted the trajectory of their lives as they began to sacrificially minister to and with Jesus and the other disciples, supporting them in Kingdom work. Forgiveness and reconciliation have the power to transform a recipient of God's love and grace in Jesus to become an ambassador and minister of the gospel.

Texts like these ones show the empowerment of the Spirit and the redefining of a person's identity and worth. In the first-century culture, where women were either seen as property or relegated to an invisible role, Jesus elevated and restored them as leaders called to participate with Him on His mission. In the early church, women also played an influential part in shaping the faith communities.

In the second passage for this devotional, they reappear in the story as the first witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus after his death. One of the proofs of the resurrection story holds credibility is the realization that a religious movement in that age would have never claimed the first main witnesses of a spiritual event were women. Culturally, that would have been suspected and scrutinized. Yet, Jesus chose them as the first to know and tell others. His gospel comes to us in unexpected ways. The reality of Jesus raised to life again replaced their grief with joy and reinvigorated their participation on His mission. Though they were met with doubt, that did not change how the resurrection became their ultimate hope and evidence of God's promises coming into fruition.

As we dive into our sermon this Sunday, would the resurrection be your source of life, hope, and peace amidst seasons of challenges and confusion. When we inhabit the spaces that we live, work, and enjoy life, would His resurrected presence be embodied and experienced by everyone as a foretaste of God's Kingdom breaking through.

Pastor Jon

# Pray

Gracious God,

We praise you for being Lord over heaven and earth. You have rescued and ransomed us in Jesus through His death and resurrection. We ask that the power of the gospel would convict and transform us to be your ministers in the world through word and deed, as you did these women in the gospels. When we are distraught, rejected, confused, or discouraged, would your Holy Spirit's presence comfort and draw us back into life with you, resting in what you have accomplished for us and the whole world, and making a way and spaces for us to compassionately and faithfully re-engage and run the race you have set before us. In doing so, would the peace that goes beyond understanding fill our hearts.

Amen

# Diving Deeper

As we reflect on how Jesus' ministry and resurrection affected the women in these passages, how can we recognize the ways in which He is at work changing, healing, and empowering us?

Are we willing to receive God's ministry in our lives from unlikely and different sources than our own traditions and cultures?

In engaging a society that did not accept them, how can the example of these women encourage and challenge us in the way we engage, share, and live out the gospel in our society?

How can the resurrection comfort and strengthen us in times of need? How do we trust in the freedom, restoration, and peace that it alone can provide?

How can we live closer **WITH GOD** in our lives?

How are we being **TRANSFORMED** to be more like Christ?

How is the Holy Spirit empowering us to imitate Christ in what we **DO** this week?