

Sermon Title: “What Are You Looking For?”

John 20:1–18 – Easter Morning

- **Opening question:** What will make you happy? A reflection on longing, beginning with chocolate and moving deeper into heart’s desire.
- **The Mirror of Erised (Harry Potter illustration):**
 - Reveals the viewer’s deepest desire.
 - Desires differ person to person—e.g., Harry longs for family, Ron for significance.
 - Highlights how our deepest wants can be illusory or unfulfillable.
- **Jesus’ questions to Mary Magdalene:**
 - “*Why are you weeping?*” – a question about grief, loss, and sadness.
 - “*What are you looking for?*” – a question about hope, fulfillment, and desire.
 - Mary weeps for a personal and communal loss: the death of Jesus and the collapse of her people’s hope.
- **Modern application of Mary’s grief:**
 - Parallels with global suffering: war, displacement, personal sorrow.
 - All of us have unmet desires, disappointments, and longing for healing.
- **Story of J.D. Rockefeller:**
 - His answer, “Just a little bit more,” illustrates how some desires are never satisfied.
 - Suggests the danger of misplaced or insatiable desires.
- **Resurrection surprise:**
 - Mary is not granted what she expects (a dead body), but receives what she didn’t know she needed—the risen Christ.
 - At first, she doesn’t recognize Jesus—he is changed, yet still himself.
 - Recognition comes only when he calls her by name—revealing personal connection and identity.
- **From illusion to truth:**
 - Like the Mirror of Erised, our desires can mislead or trap us in the past.
 - Jesus calling Mary by name shatters illusion—she encounters the living truth.
- **The risen Jesus gives presence, not restoration:**
 - He does not “fix” everything or undo the past.
 - He offers his constant, eternal companionship and love.
 - We are invited to live forward, not backward—to let go and be transformed.
- **Final message:**
 - Easter shatters illusions like a hall of mirrors and lets us see clearly.
 - We see ourselves and reality truly when we see with the risen Christ.
 - Our future is different because he is with us—always.

1. “Why are you weeping?” — What are we grieving?

- Jesus asks Mary why she is weeping. What are the losses, disappointments, or longings in your life or in the world today that feel like sources of sorrow?
- How do you respond to the idea that Easter doesn't give us back what we've lost, but gives us something new?

2. “What are you looking for?” — What do we desire most deeply?

- What do you think your "mirror of Erised" would show you?
- How might our desires reflect what we *think* we need versus what God knows we need?

3. When does Jesus call your name?

- Mary recognizes Jesus only when he calls her by name. Have you ever experienced a moment when Christ seemed to call you personally or show up in an unexpected way?
- How can we become more attentive to those moments?

4. What's the difference between longing for the past and embracing resurrection?

- Mary wants Jesus back the way he was — but the risen Christ is changed. What does it mean for us to "let go of the past with its fantasies" in order to embrace God's future?
- How do we know when it's time to stop holding on to something that once gave us life?

5. What does it mean to see “not by ourselves, but with the Lord”?

- Your sermon says that Easter smashes illusions and helps us see truly. What do you think this new, resurrection-shaped vision of life looks like?
- How might our understanding of reality shift if we saw everything through the lens of Christ's resurrection?

6. How does the resurrection change our purpose or direction?

- Jesus sends Mary to tell the others—she becomes the first witness to the resurrection. What message are we called to carry as Easter people?
- How do you think belief in the risen Christ invites us to live differently?