**The Gardener Revealed John 20:1-18**

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| **slide** | **Sermon** |
| 1 | Title Slide The Gardener Revealed |
| 2 | **Intro:** Wonderful Day!   * Most Important Day of Christian Year! * Day we celebrate God’s most decisive act in all time. * Day we affirm God’s powerful demonstration of life over death! * Day we sing and praise and rejoice!   Not just because Jesus rose from the dead almost 2000 years ago, but because today—April 4, 2021—we proclaim that this Resurrection Power over death is still true! In Christ each person here can know the assurance of life now and for all eternity.  Yes—because God raised Jesus—death has been defeated and we can live in peace with God for all time!  So what does this mean for our lives today and every day that we live this earthly life? |
| 3 - 8 | Let’s look to John’s gospel, chapter 20:1-18 to find an answer (Read Now) Scripture on slides 3-8 |
| 9 | First must understand Jesus’ resurrection was not used to shock nor coerce faith.   * Didn’t pop into the Sanhedrin’s meeting or in Pontius Pilate’s palace * Didn’t suddenly appear in the Jerusalem marketplace.   No, Jesus appeared to those that knew Him and followed Him. |
| 10 | * Beloved disciple—saw emptiness of tomb and believed! * Peter saw grave clothes but did not understand, but believed!   Mary Magdalene reacted in the most logical fashion:   * Alone at tomb, crying, her Lord not only dead but now missing * Assumes body moved or stolen * Angels don’t help to allay grief * Jesus comes to her and she only saw a gardener, a gardener—logical, they take care of graveyard, watch over tombs, work early before the heat of the day—yes—the gardener will know where Jesus’ body is.   Then Jesus spoke her name—“Mary”  Way Jesus spoke it brought back a flood of memories and promises Jesus made and she KNEW the truth—Jesus is alive and is her Savior. The Gardener was revealed as the Christ! |
| 11 | Yet—some of you are a bit skeptic of all I’ve said today—   * No one can die and then come to life— * World just doesn’t work that way—   Assume you are right. Then must explain what happened. I contend the alternatives are even harder to believe.  *Wrong tomb Theory*  If Mary and others came to wrong tomb then must explain   * How they were misled * How Angels got to wrong place * How Roman guard got mixed up and guarded wrong tomb |
| 12 | *Swoon Theory*  Jesus did not die—just fainted   * Explain how He woke up in a sealed tomb, got out with having been so severely beaten * How He escaped the guards * How He made so quick a recovery so that he could appear to disciples |
| 13 | *Stolen body Theory*  Disciples stole body   * How then did they oppose Roman guard when they were so afraid before * How they bribed guard without word getting out * How did over 500 others see resurrected Lord if He was dead * Can’t believe all 12 would die martyrs’ deaths for a hoax |
| 14 | No, it takes more faith to not believe in the resurrection than to believe. And in this story about the gardener, who is really Jesus, we learn an important message for today—how to live in this physical life until that day we join God in Heaven. This message is, we who celebrate and have made the Christ of the resurrection our Lord, become the presence of Christ today. In our affirmation of Christ’s defeat of death we have the opportunity to slip on the “coat” of Christ and bear witness to the Good News! We become the Christ the world so longs for—everybody need the Good News!  One who lives next door   * One who sits beside you on the assembly line or the next teller booth * One who sits at the table you serve meals at * One who comes I and fixes your computer * One who sits near you at school * One you pass the soccer ball to each week * One you see on TV, homeless and hungry * One who tries to strike with terror * One who appeals for help with rent or food |
| 15 | In this world, we as Christ’s followers become the presence of God’s resurrection power with opportunities to speak and do Christ’s work.  We become Christ’s hands, feet, mouth and heart.  That’s the most important thing in life! |
| 16 | Yes we must work, have careers, make money to live, but these are second to being “the gardener” who brings Christ’s presence:   * Duke Power employee * Preacher * Bank Teller * School teacher or administrator * Salesperson for a company * Firefighter * Police * Rescue worker * Student * Homemaker * Retiree   These are means to make a life here in this world but they are avenues to speak for Jesus and do for Jesus—so that like Mary these folks will not see your profession, work or label but they will see the Christ in you and come to know the saving power of the Resurrected Lord. |
| 17 | The truth of today’s celebration will be in demonstrated if you reveal the risen Christ in your life.  “God does not begin by asking us about our ability, but only about our availability, and if we then prove our dependability, he will increase our capability.”  —Elder Neal A. Maxwell |
| 18 | Is your life available to the risen Lord? Will you let this world see the revealed Christ in you? Will you prove to be dependable? Will you let God increase your capability?  The gardener was revealed as Christ! Will you reveal Christ in and through your life? Amen |