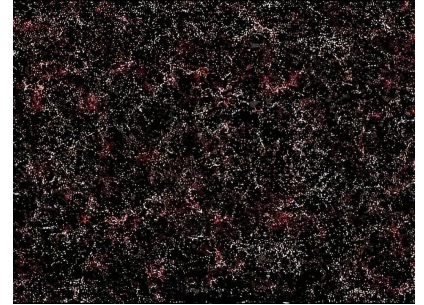


# Beyond Our Imagination!

John 20:10-18  
Rev. Tom Parrish

## This small slice of the night sky contains 48,741 Galaxies.

Each of these 48,741 dots represents a galaxy.  
Each galaxy is a collection of billions of stars.  
The stars themselves trap untold planets and asteroids.  
This is beyond our reality and imagination.



This is a reflection of the human story and Jesus' resurrection!  
No matter what we do, we're never going to beat: our personal shame and guilt, broken relationships, health problems, pain, chaos or death.

**EXCEPT.....**Here is the Miracle of today: Jesus' bodily resurrection from the dead has a way of bringing them back to life because He has faced death and beaten its grip.



*John 20:10-18* <sup>10</sup> Then the disciples went back to their homes.

<sup>11</sup> But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. <sup>12</sup> And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. <sup>13</sup> They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." <sup>14</sup> Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

## Too many of our fellow citizens are Living without HOPE!

The Gospel of John offers the greatest hope ever and gives us some details and richness to the resurrection story that the other Gospels leave out.

The first person to discover that Jesus had bodily risen from the dead was Mary Magdalene,  
Now, who is this Mary of Magdala?

What we are told is that Mary of Magdala was one of several women who became followers of Jesus and helped to support him in his ministry.

We're also told that Jesus delivered her from SEVEN demons.



But now, suddenly, tragically, it seemed, Jesus was gone!

Then she hears a voice; "Why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him."

Her teacher. Her Savior. The One who had given her life back was gone.

## What is HOPE?

For all too many hope is: Wishful thinking? Naïve optimism? "Hope it doesn't rain," we say. "Hope the economy bounces back." "Hope the sermon doesn't go too long." (That's not hope it's wishful thinking!)

The dictionary tells us that hope is "*a desire with the expectation of fulfillment.*"

But hope is more than a word. Hope is to the spirit what oxygen is to the body.

Viktor Frankl survived years in the Nazi concentration camps. He noticed that many prisoners died just after Christmas. Why? He point out that they were hoping they'd be free by then. Once they lost hope, they quickly died.



### **HOPE NEEDS A REASON TO LIVE AND CONTINUE.**

*At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. "Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."*

**Why?** Grief is real. Loss is painful. Unemployment stinks. Relationships can break your heart. If someone in your world is hurting, if you want to share the real hope of Jesus Christ with them, the best thing to do is meet them in that moment.

*Jesus said to her, "Mary."*

*She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher.)*

*Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, "I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."*

What was the key word that turned everything around? He called her by name: "Mary,"

Often times the Lord affirms his reality by timing, the moment, the situation, through someone or something. Most of us miss these affirmations for one simple reason: "We don't know what we are looking for." We want lightening, thunder a legion of angels but the major of time it is in these very circumstances when somebody, with no knowledge, writes or calls and says, "Oh Happy Day!"

And that's what the Lord offered Mary, there, at the tomb.

*Mary of Magdala went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her."*

Hope in Jesus is Beyond Our Imagination! Biblical Hope is a "WHO."

If you should find yourself in a tough place right now, have the courage and honesty to stay in that place and invite Jesus Christ to meet you there. If you should know someone in such a place right now, someone who's dealing with pain, disappointment, or loss—share the hope of Jesus with them.

**Listen to them. Be with them. Pray for them. And when the time is right, point them toward Jesus.**

*Jesus, I desperately need to experience your presence.*

*Lord, in whatever way you know is best come to me,  
reveal yourself to me, help me.*

*I declare lord Jesus that you are the one and only hope for my life and for eternity.*