

Who in the Bible do you think was happiest that Jesus had risen? Or maybe to ask it another way: Who do you think was most sad before he did? I mean, you have lots of options. Think of all the people who lost their joy between just the Thursday before Jesus died, the day before Jesus died and Easter morning. You can think of Peter, who went out and wept bitterly over his, over his sins. You can think of Mary Magdalene, soaking Jesus' tomb with her tears, so blinded by grief that she couldn't even recognize Jesus when Jesus was standing right there next to her in the garden. You might even think of Jesus himself. Stumbling under the weight of his cross as those women in Jerusalem were weeping over him. And there are so many more. So many more examples of people who had lost, who had lost their joy as we're leading up to Easter. And, as you consider all of these, and there are many, do you ever wonder why God includes all of these stories of personal pain? I think I can think of at least one reason. I think one of the reasons that God includes all these stories of personal pain is because he wants you to be able to find yourself in his word. No matter what day it is, no matter what you're feeling, he wants you to find someone that you can relate to. Someone whose pain you are also feeling. And I want you to think about what it might mean, if you can, if you can look in the Bible and find somebody who can relate to what you're feeling. Do you know what that means? It means that God knew what you would be going through. He knew what you would be going through. It means that he knew that some days you would feel like Peter, feeling really guilty about something. He knew that you would have days in which you would feel like Mary, filled with so much grief that you're blinded to the reality that's right in front of you. He even knew that you would have days in which you feel like Jesus, burdened down with a heavy weight of responsibility. He knew what you would be going through. It might be a surprise to you but it's not a surprise to him. And in the middle of whatever it is you happen to be feeling, he wanted to give you a reason to believe that you're going to be OK. And the gospel of John does that really well. The gospel of John, after sharing all of these examples of the disciples being filled with grief, and then sharing with us the reality of Jesus' resurrection, John sums it all up by saying this. He reminds us why God wants us to see all these things. He says, I hope you had a very blessed Easter as we celebrated the significance of Christ's resurrection. I invite you to join me this week on the 'Time of Grace' television program as Pastor Mark Jeske gives us an in-depth look at what the resurrection means for us. Watch on TV, our website, Roku or Apple TV or listen to it on podcast on iTunes. We'll see you tomorrow.