

SEEKING THE LORD LIKE MARY MAGDALENE

John 20:10 *Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.*

John 20:11 *But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,*

The male apostles, Peter, John, James, and the others, felt there was nothing more to do other than return to their homes and businesses after they saw the body of the Lord lie in the sepulcher. But Mary Magdalene's only business was the Lord Jesus. She refused to return and continue with her life. She not only wept, she stooped to look into the sepulcher. There are some individuals who love the Lord more than life itself. Mary was one such individual. What was it with Mary that made her love the Lord more than everyone else? Why did she refuse to leave the dead body of the Lord and go home like the other apostles? There is a clue in what the Lord said. "Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little" (Luke 7:47). We cannot be sure this woman was Mary Magdalene, but there is a tradition that associates this woman with Mary. Either way, we know that the Lord cast out seven evil spirits out of Mary. "And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils" (Luke 8:2). Mary lived for one purpose after the Lord delivered her: to follow him even to the grave and beyond.

Luke records that she stooped to look into the sepulcher. So intensely and passionately did she seek the Lord that she stooped to look into the sepulcher. There were people who never stooped to consider the Lord Jesus while he lived, but Mary stooped to worship and adore her Lord whether he was alive or dead – and such devotes seeking always pays amazing dividends. She saw two angels.

John 20:12 *And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.*

John 20:13 *And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.*

Mary is the ultimate model for those who seek Jesus. Only those who have been subjugated and delivered from the diabolical power of seven demons understand the value of Jesus. The seven demons no doubt tortured her body in ways we cannot begin to imagine. Now, she cried for the Lord whose body was tortured and mangled. When everyone else forsook the demon-possessed Mary, Jesus came to deliver her. Now Mary refused to leave the body of her Lord. May we stoop ever lower in our search for Jesus, as Mary did! Mary was in for a shock.

Those who search diligently for Jesus are never disappointed – she saw not one but two angels. Rather than be awed and amazed at the sight of two angels, Mary focused on her mission – to find Jesus. “And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him” (John 20:13). Now, this is serious focus and concentration. There are some individuals who would have been happy to just see two angels – not Mary. No angels delivered her from the demons who tormented her, no angels blessed her like Jesus did. Mary teaches us that when we see angels, ask them for Jesus. Hallelujah! They were powerful angels, but they could not wipe away her tears and comfort her – only Jesus can comfort Mary, and only Jesus can comfort us.

***Revelation 21:4** And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*

May was not afraid of the angels. “And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him” (John 20:13). Mary had the perfect love that cast away fear. “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love” (I John 4:18). When one is intoxicated with love for Jesus, angels do not scare you. Note once again Mary’s total focus on seeking and finding Jesus. Having answered the question of the angels, she turned. “And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus” (John 20:14). Did she turn because the angels stood up when the Lord appeared behind her? We don’t know but we can confirm that Mary was unimpressed with the angels. May the Lord grant us the love that seeks him so diligently that even mighty angels become a boring distraction! However, there was still a problem: Mary did not seem to recognize the Lord.

***John 20:14** And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.*

***John 20:15** Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.*

Actually, Mary was in the wrong place, as the angels stated. She was looking for the living among the dead, but her determination and love for the Lord brought him back to the sepulcher. Such is the love of the Lord for those who love him deeply that he makes

exceptions. Jesus contradicted what his own angels said because Mary was so dear to him. There is a great love that makes the Lord do things he would not normally do. Because Mary came looking for him at the sepulcher, Jesus came to meet her there. Mary made the sepulcher into a church – because of her angels and the Lord appeared there. The Lord spoke to Mary: “Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away” (John 20:15). It appeared his words fell on deaf ears. Mary turned to look again into the sepulcher because the scripture says, “Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master” (John 20:16). So fixated was she on the Lord that she was unafraid of angels or what she assumed to be a gardener. Mary fulfilled the command, “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment” (Mark 12:30).

***John 20:16** Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.*

Mary did not respond to the questions of the angels or the Lord. Nothing affected her except when the Lord called her name. Mary turned because she could not mistake the sound of that voice as it called her name. No one can call our names like Jesus can. When God calls our names, we will turn and pay attention. “But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine” (Isaiah 43:1). Some of us remember the voices of our mothers or fathers calling us by name. Those voices were unique and inimitable. No voice was filled with such compelling love, care and goodness. There were also some voices who brought fear to my soul when they called my name as a child – especially some schoolteachers. Adam gave names to all the animals to forge a bond of love. But no voice is as loving, disarming, compassionate and inviting as that of Jesus. The voice that called Simon Peter to feed his sheep and the voice that called Lazarus to return from the dead is calling out your name right now to draw closer to him.

***Isaiah 62:2** And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name.*

***Revelation 2:17** He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.*