

## “JESUS SAITH UNTO HER, MARY.”

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

There was a little fishing village in ancient Galilee called Dalmanutha (Mk. 8:10), - it was on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, about three miles north of Tiberias. It is better known to us as the town of *Magdala*, from where *Mary Magdalene* came.

One day, Jesus arrived in her area. He was well-known in that vicinity. It was at a time when He was attracting great crowds to listen to Him speak and to see Him heal. Magdala, as a town, doesn't feature too largely in the Gospel stories, - we don't read of anything that Christ did there, - but He must have visited it at some time. He probably was just passing through. And one day He met a woman who had a terrible reputation! She had an awful lifestyle. She was a prostitute, - she was in the gutter. She would have thought so little of herself. She was on the scrapheap of society. Her sin had taken such a hold of her that her life was out of control ... and she was demon-possessed for from her the Lord Jesus drove out seven demons. The day she met the Saviour was the day her life changed forever, - she gained new friends, new future and new hope. ... Since that day she became a faithful follower, even to the extent where she became part of an inner circle of His closest friends.

We are in the garden which contained the tomb in which Jesus was laid, - He had been taken down from the cross and laid in the burial tomb belonging to Joseph of Arimathea. This Joseph, - while being a member of the Sanhedrin ... those who had insisted upon the death and crucifixion of the Saviour, - was a secret follower of Jesus. At great risk to his own safety, he had gone and asked permission from Pontius Pilate to take the body of Jesus from the cross (Mt. 27:57-60; Mk. 15:43) and, - along with Nicodemus (Jn. 19:39), another member of the Sanhedrin and secret follower of Jesus, - lay it in his tomb.

In Jn. 20:1, Mary had arrived at the tomb **early**, - she was there before dawn, long before six o'clock in the morning when all was in darkness. To her great surprise, she found the stone rolled away and when she made her way into the tomb, carved out of the rock, she discovered the body of Jesus was gone ... She immediately ran, - through the darkness, in panic and confusion, - to where Peter and John were ... and she told them what she had discovered. They came with her back to the tomb and saw it was

just as she had said. Then, when the two disciples had gone away again (v.10), - probably to tell the other disciples, - Mary remained in the garden and her inconsolable grief brought her to her knees and she wept, - she did not want to leave the place where the night before she had helped dress the beloved body of Jesus in the tomb. She had come **early**, and she had also come **earnestly** ... She stood outside the sepulchre once more and she looked in again ... but Jesus was indeed gone! He was no longer there.

Then from just behind her, she heard a man's voice. ... She didn't know who it was ... She wasn't thinking clearly ... she reckoned it must be the gardener. He asked her why she was crying and why she was there (**Jn. 20:15** *Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou?*) ... and in between her tears she sobbed, and with what must have been a feeble voice, she spoke with such sorrow, **v.15** *Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.* ... Her heart was breaking ... And then, in the midst of her distress, she heard her name spoken in a manner and in a tone she did not think she would ever hear again ... the Man said to her just *one* word, **Mary** ... and she knew Who it was straightaway (v.18)! **Eagerly**, she turned around ... **Rabboni** ... **Master** ... It was Jesus! ... Let us consider that one word, **Mary**.

**PERSONAL**      *Jesus saith unto her, Mary.*

She had seen what they did to Him when they brought Him to the place called Calvary, outside the city walls (19:25). She watched them make Jesus lift the wood they would nail Him to, and she watched Him stagger along the path going up the hill carrying the heavy weight upon His shoulders.

With every cell in her body she loved that Man for He had changed her life. It wasn't a lustful love, or a love like what she might have had for some of the men she had known previously, ... who had used and abused. ... Not that kind of 'so-called love'. ... Jesus was altogether different ... despite what she had been, and despite what she had done.

As He lay there on the ground, - on the hill of Calvary, - she watched helplessly as the nails were cruelly driven into His hands and His feet, the tears were flowing down her face, "This is my Jesus and my Lord". She loved Him with a pure love. Her heart was breaking. ... He freed her from the demons, but she was helpless to free Him from the soldiers.

She saw nothing else, no-one else, that day except Jesus and how He suffered. Then she saw how they lifted Him, - with the blood pouring out of His hands and His feet, - and how they dropped the cross into the socket in the ground ... and how the pain *shot* through His body, ... she shivered as she felt it too. He was crying, - a full grown man, - He was crying with the pain of it all ... so awful it was. Imagine the feelings of Mary as she watched Jesus being crucified and dying.

And now, on the first day of the week she came to the place where He was buried. She saw the stone had been rolled away ... and the body was gone! ... Jesus was no longer in the grave! His linen clothes were still there, neatly folded (v.7). Heaven knew she was crying. God knew her heart was breaking. She told the angels that came to her, <sup>13</sup> *they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.*

And just at that moment she heard *this* voice. It was the exact same question the angels had asked (v.13), only it was a different voice, <sup>15</sup> *Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?* She didn't turn around. She didn't lift her head. She didn't know Who it was that was speaking to her. ... But the voice said simply, *Mary.* ...

Can you remember when, - as it were, - Jesus came to you personally and spoke to you particularly? No matter how many other people had been in the meeting it was as if you were the only one being spoken to. ... It wasn't the preacher singling you out ... The words of a preacher can never stir the feelings that only the Holy Spirit can stir ... the feelings which work to bring you to salvation.

Or maybe the Lord Jesus met you when you were on your own ... in your room, in your car, down by the shore, or some other place. ... And just like it was with Mary, Jesus came to you and you had a personal encounter with Him. The call to receive His salvation was so clear that you trusted and believed in Him as your Saviour. When you didn't have the answers to the questions you were asking, He simply spoke your name. ... **Personal**, *Jesus saith unto her, Mary.* ... Look what happened when He said Mary's name ...

**POWERFUL** ... *She turned herself, ...*

Her head that was drooping ... she lifted it. The eyes that were full of sadness and hopelessness were now full of joy. She turned around from

looking at the empty tomb and she saw the Risen Christ! ... He's alive!  
My Jesus is alive! He's alive and He's here with me now!

Again, who was the first person to see Him alive? It was Mary. What had Mary been? ... A sinner, a prostitute, a whore, a tramp ... and a *woman*! But Jesus had released her from the bondage of sin, - *nothing* could keep her from Him. ... And when she heard Him speak her name ... *she turned herself*, ... and she looked into His face. She would have seen how His forehead had been mutilated by the cruel crown of thorns. She would have seen the disfigurement and the piercings from where the blood had flowed. And when Jesus said her name, there was all the power of Godhead as He spoke.

Just a few moments earlier her world was in tatters. Jesus was a memory, in the past. He was dead ... *stolen*. But when Jesus spoke her name, with a new life, she lived again!

Can you see it, ... what it would have been like for this woman ... when Jesus drew near and spoke her name? *She turned herself* away from the sadness and the emptiness she was facing. *She turned herself* to see the powerfulness in her Saviour. ... *Jesus saith unto her, Mary. [Personal] She turned herself, [Powerful] and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.*

**PEACE** ... *and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master*

He just said one word to her, *Mary*, ... she just said one word back to Him, *Master*. ... It didn't need a theological encyclopaedia, or a lexicon, or an exegetical commentary ... It was just one word He spoke, and yet in that one word He said all she needed to hear for she heard her Master, - the risen Lord, - speak her name. ... Imagine what it would be like if you lost your loved one, and you would never see and speak with them again ... and then, out of the mists, they speak your name. ... Mary Magdalene never thought she would speak to Jesus again, but He spoke her name in the most beautiful way she had ever heard it said.

He spoke to her by name, **personally, powerfully** and what a **peace** entered her soul! In that one word, *Master*, she owned Him as her Lord. In that one word, *Master*, He heard how she loved Him. In that one word *Master* ... *the peace of God that passeth all understanding* again took charge of her life.

Jesus, the Man Who had died on the cross and was buried in the tomb, stood in front of her. He was her Friend, her Saviour, and her Lord.

**CONCLUSION.** As we look again at this story, ... it's a beautiful story. *For the believer*, it speaks of the Gospel and the triumph of the resurrection. It's so simple and yet so profound. Jesus drew near to this woman whose heart was breaking and He lifted her up and turned her around. ... He spoke to her **personally, powerfully, and peacefully**.

*For the backslider* who has been slipping away from God. Really, if Mary had been listening to what Jesus said before all this happened, she would have heard Him say He would rise again, ... but she had forgotten, or reality had taken over, - these things just don't happen. ... You are a Christian, - there's no doubt about that. ... You're not sure what you think, ... what you believe anymore, ... that's because you are *sliding back*. Something has crept in to separate you from Him. ... Well, this same Jesus comes to you today and speaks your name ever so gently. No-one else hears Him. He speaks it in a way and in a manner you cannot avoid being attracted to Him again. ... If that is how Jesus is speaking to you this Easter Sunday, do what Mary did and turn yourself around, look into His face, and call upon Him again as your Master.

Then finally, for those in our meeting who are *not saved*. Jesus loves you. He loves all kinds of people, - from someone like Mary Magdalene ... to someone like Nicodemus. ... You're somewhere in between. He loves you, but you don't love Him yet. ... Perhaps today He is speaking to you, calling your name. ... You must exercise faith to believe in Him ... If Mary hadn't have turned to Jesus, she would never have left Magdala, - she would have been a whore and a prostitute until the day she died the death of a lost sinner, heading for Hell.

But Mary *did* turn her face towards Jesus, and her life became His, [v. 18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.](#) ... Listen to what God is saying today. Listen to Him as He speaks your name.

Believer, as we come to the Table, we're not coming to a stranger ... we are coming to the Master. This is the greatest privilege any human being can be granted, - to be in the company of the King of kings. ... Just listen to Him again as He speaks your name ... and remember ... "for all the Lord has done for me, I never will cease to praise Him". Amen.