

Bible e-Study Women of the New Testament #3
Some of the Mystery Women of the Gospels.

"I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her." Mark 14:9

NUGGET - This woman's identity is not revealed here to us, but what she did for Jesus (recorded in [Mark 14:1-9](#)) has been preached about for centuries. According to the word of Jesus we, today in 2013, remember and honor this mystery woman. We remember her not because of her family connections or her prominent place in society or because of her beauty or brains, but because of what she *did*, because of the *actions*, that she, in her obscurity, undertook on behalf of Jesus.

This woman is not alone in her anonymity in the gospel lessons. There are many women whose names or identities, though speculated on, are mysteries to us, but whom Jesus uses to teach us many things. Here's a partial list of such women in the gospel accounts; see what details of their stories you can recall and what Jesus has taught us through them:

- Simon's mother-in-law ([Mark 1:29-33](#))
- The Syrophenician woman and her sick daughter ([Mark 7:24-30](#) & [Mt 15:21-28](#))
- The Widow's mite ([Mark 12:41-44](#))
- The Woman caught in adultery ([John 8:1-11](#))

One of the things we learn from these women is that the news of Jesus Christ is more important than the identity of who tells it. Many years ago I was given a business card from someone and on the back of that card was written;

"If we meet and you forget me, you have lost nothing.

But if you meet Jesus Christ and forget Him, you have lost everything!"

That made such a powerful impression on me that I can remember it clearly to this day - but I have no idea who it was that gave it to me. That is what these women represent to us; they remind us that meeting Jesus Christ is more important than who gets the credit for it. We each can play a part in someone meeting Jesus Christ even though our part may be anonymous or even forgotten.

However, take note that Jesus does remember! He knows and remembers those who serve Him and tell others of Him. In our verse today Jesus ties the memory of this woman to Himself. Jesus knows and Jesus remembers... He ties Himself to you!

To Him, none are anonymous. And that includes you, right along with this woman with the alabaster jar of perfume. (By the way don't confuse her with the woman who poured perfume on Jesus feet after weeping on them - she's another mystery but one that we'll solve and learn her name... later! Stay tuned for those details!)

APPLICATION - Saint Paul tell us in [1Cor 3:6-8](#) that some plant seeds and others water them and they each will have their reward, much like this woman today, being anonymously remembered throughout time for her devoted action toward Christ.

1. If you could visit with one of the women mentioned either in the list above or the going deeper section, who would it be and what would you ask?
2. Imagine it's 20 years from now and someone comes and asks you about something you've anonymously done for Christ, what would they ask you about?

PRAY - Seek God for direction and guidance for ways that may be new to you to share Christ's good news with others, regardless of who gets the credit.

Going Deeper together. We meet in the Fellowship Hall during the Education Hour for discussion and prayer with all those who're able to come. If you're not able to make it Sunday, please feel free to e-mail me with your comments or questions so that we can have the benefit of sharing them together.

Peace in Christ, Pastor Tom Rhodes



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GOING DEEPER

• Simon's mother-in-law • The Syrophenian woman and her sick daughter • The Widow's mite • The Woman caught in adultery • Widow of Nain • The Crippled woman healed on the Sabbath

All of these women had encounters of some sort with Jesus that enlighten us as to what Jesus sees as important in this world. Another thing we learn from all these mystery women is that none of Jesus' followers have any justification for misogynistic practices. Jesus' care and compassion for all people, men and especially women, in that day and age, demonstrated that in God's eyes, as Saint Paul said in Galatians 3:26-28 "*You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*"

Let's look at each of these women in turn and see what we can draw for us today, from their interaction with Christ.

Simon's mother-in-law. ([Mark 1:29-33](#)) One of the most easily taken for granted things from this episode is that Jesus heals! He takes seriously the condition of all people; that we all need His healing touch. And when that healing is given we are restored to a right relationship with God.

Notice that as soon as Simon's mother-in-law was restored, she moved out in service. There is a time of reflection and a time of action. When Christ comes and restores us, that is the time for action and service on our part. Christ's healing prepares us to sit down and ponder all things – no! Christ's power, seen in healing this woman results in her turning around and serving them all. Notice she didn't start doing something unfamiliar to her; she did what she knew she could do. What can that mean for us at Zion?

The Syrophenian woman and her sick daughter. ([Mark 7:24-30](#) & [Mt 15:21-28](#)) One of the lessons here comes as we recall the geo-political boundaries of the holy lands. Jesus was moving outside the confines of strictly Jewish territory. This foreign born woman who, on hearing of Jesus, (and that in itself tells us that Jesus' notoriety wasn't confined to the Jewish population) comes to Him and seeks His aid for her possessed daughter.

Jesus questions her motives for our benefit (knowing all the while what would take place) so that we would learn that there is no-one that Jesus excludes. Jesus healing can extend to those outside our own 'geo-political' Christian boundaries. If it didn't, we gentiles, like this Greek-born woman, would be lost and left to die in our own sin. This should help us to be mindful of the limitations we tend to put on the word of God and not let that restrict with whom we share that good news.

Another lesson here is that faith has a response. When Jesus put this woman in a position to give evidence of faith she responded. She teaches us that faith is both humble and bold. We recognize, along with her, that we have no right to God's goodness, and yet that if we ask, trusting in the person of Jesus Christ, as she did, based on what she had heard of Him, that Jesus is anxious to grant His goodness.

Widow's mite ([Mark 12:41-44](#)). This woman shows us an attitude of trust that Jesus makes sure the world knows about by pointing out her actions to His disciples. She gives her life to God when she gives her 'last 2 cents' to the temple treasury. When Jesus points out that she gives out of her poverty and not her wealth, he helps us to recognize that her only hope, like ours, lies in the Lord being in charge of all of our life.

That's hard for us because we like to move things along on our own. But this woman teaches us that God is the One who is control of the circumstances of our life. Jesus says that she 'put in everything'; she held nothing back from God. Can you think of other times that Jesus teaches His disciples this lesson of not holding back? Putting those together with this woman, what affect can that have on us? What can be the benefit of not holding back from God?

Woman caught in adultery ([John 8:1-11](#)) This one is going to be brief, but perhaps the most important of all lessons. Who has the right to judge? Only Jesus because He lived the perfect life, correct? What does this woman do when she is condemned before Jesus by others? She remains silent because... she is guilty - as are we! Her fate is in His hands (much like the poor widow, everything is in God's hands) and what does He do and say? What does He do and say to us?

Widow of Nain ([Luke 7:11-17](#)). Another short one. Jesus broke up every funeral He attended. Death cannot stand in the presence of Life. But this one was special because of the woman. Her only son (think about that!), and her only source of security was taken from her by death. What were Jesus' two reactions? What happened in the surrounding country as a result of this? This woman's story teaches us that God does not leave us in our deadly state, but He comes to us and He does what is needed to restore life to us. What can we do as a result of what Jesus has done for this woman?

Crippled woman healed on the Sabbath ([Luke 13:10-17](#)). Our last anonymous woman today. Notice in verse 12 that Jesus called to the woman and took care of her infirmity on His own initiative. She is suffering and that is her condition in life. But she is made the object of His love and care with nothing done on her part to draw His attention.

That is what Jesus did in coming to earth. We simply were suffering in our sin-crippled condition and Jesus came to us on His own. Regardless of the seeming 'propriety' of what the cross meant, He did it! God's grace will not be constrained by man's sense of what is suitable.

Did Jesus honor the Sabbath by what He did? (Who's going to say No!) Yes He did honor the Sabbath, not by disregarding the Sabbath or the customs that go along with it, notice He was teaching in the synagogue as was fitting and proper. But it was what He did for this unknown woman within the Sabbath that was scandalous.

What Jesus did in coming to earth and dying on the cross is referred to as a scandal. ([1 Peter 2:8](#). That word *fall* in the Greek, is where we get 'scandal' from). The scandal of healing this woman on the Sabbath teaches us that what God does is shocking to us. What God has done in sending Jesus as a baby and then sending Him to the cross, out-shocks anything we can do. You know this from trying to tell others of it. What do people say when you tell them Who that is in the manger and on the cross? God's Peace Pastor Rhodes.