

Bible e-Study Women of the New Testament #6

Mary Magdalene.

These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

Luke 8:3b

NUGGET – When you read [Luke 8:1-3](#) you learn that these ladies helped to support Jesus and the disciples as they traveled during the time of Jesus ministry on earth. And we learn also that one of them is Mary called Magdalene. We see Mary mentioned by name in all 4 of the gospel accounts. She was well known to the disciples both as a benefactor and, perhaps more importantly, as a woman who had been healed by Jesus.

The point is made in both Mark's and Luke's accounts that Mary Magdalene had been cured of seven devils. Jesus had cast out these 7 demons from her at some time in His early ministry because today's verse takes place when Jesus is in His second year of public ministry. When and how Mary was healed we're not told.

One thing to focus on though is this 'attitude of gratitude' that Mary and these other women expressed. They didn't just 'get their miracle' from Jesus and then walk away. They didn't go home and boast of themselves. Their focus was on helping Jesus.

That's something we don't often think of ourselves as doing, helping Jesus. After all we're the ones, like these women, who need Jesus help. That is true, but it is also true that, after having received help from Jesus first, they then did what they could in support of Jesus ministry. It's important to remember the order of things here:

1. Jesus helped them THEN
2. they helped Jesus

Always keeping that order in mind is important in our own lives. The longer we live with Jesus the more tempting it is to think that what Jesus has done for us was just natural. 'Of course Jesus redeemed me from sin, look at how much I've done for Him.' It's as though we think we mean so much to Jesus by what we do that we tend to place ourselves and our 'help' toward Jesus first in the equation above.

Mary Magdalene being set free of her demons teaches us that anything we do to help the ministry of Jesus is done out of gratitude for what He has first done for us, not for what we want to see Him do for us. Practically speaking then, if we withhold an attitude of gratitude, have we received the freedom Jesus offers us? Remember that the freedom He gives us through His cross and resurrection is truly ours (!) because He has put us in possession of it in our baptism. It really does belong to us, just as Mary's freedom was given to her – by the grace of Jesus Christ alone.

APPLICATION – So what does Mary's 'attitude of gratitude' mean in our own lives?

1. Some time, if you've never done it before, sit down by yourself and write out a list of (no more than) 7 sins or troubles that have disturbed you.
 - a. Then read again verse 2 from today and ***destroy the list***. Because of what Jesus has done in destroying those things by His work on the cross, you, like Mary are set free of them!
2. Having firmly grasped that Jesus has helped you by casting these things out of your life, consider who around you needs to know what you know. When you take (or 'cast') out your trash cart, is there a neighbor you see who could benefit from having you gossip about the good news of freedom that's yours?

PRAY – Give thanks to God for His work in setting you free. Ask Him where you can follow His leading support His work as Mary Magdalene did.

*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

As was said, Mary Magdalene is mentioned in all 4 gospels by name. Other than this account today in Luke, all mention of her is made in connection with Jesus death and resurrection. We'll come back to this account once again before we close, but for now let's look at each of those other gospel accounts to see how they're the same and how they differ.

[Matthew 27:50-61, 28:1-10](#) tells us that Mary Magdalene was there at Jesus death and His resurrection. What points about Mary stand out for you in this account?

Then look at [Mark 15:37-16:11](#). What differences do you notice in this account as regards Mary Magdalene and her actions or encounters with Jesus? What things are the same and what is important about them?

Now on to [Luke 23:44-24:12](#). Here we get a slightly different accounting of what Mary and the other women did and saw. Remembering that eyewitnesses differ on what they see at an event given their location or distraction, what added elements do we get here?

And finally [John 19:25, 20:1-18](#). This now gives us a very different view of what took place for Mary Magdalene at Jesus death and resurrection. John's account gives us a very different view of events. How does what he says color your view of Mary Magdalene? What do we learn of Mary here that adds to what we learned in the synoptic gospels (what Matthew, Mark and Luke taken together are called) accounts?

Mary Magdalene is so significant for us. She is the one who first, **first**, tells others of Jesus resurrection! She is the first evangelist! She is the first one to encounter the risen Christ.

What did we learn in the nugget section about Mary that clues us into why it is that she is the first one to meet Jesus after His resurrection? Remember she didn't just 'get her miracle' and then walk away. She stayed with Him... all the way to the cross!

Mary stayed with Jesus and the disciples. She faithfully went wherever He led them all. She and the other ladies went where Jesus went, *they* didn't lead Him around. They followed His leading. That again is important for us. We too share her gratitude to Christ for what He has done for us. And like her we too follow where He leads us, not the other way around.

I've heard that when we come to ask Jesus to guide or help us, that it is best to come with 'empty hands'. That is, we don't come and ask Jesus to bless our plans, but

that we open our hearts and hands to receive *His* direction and guidance. Mary's life teaches us what that really means.

Jesus' grace to Mary changed her life... totally. So overwhelming was His mercy to her, in setting her free from her demons, that His kindness compelled her to follow Him. And not only follow, but also tell others, of His resurrection. It didn't matter to her that they scoffed. Remember her reputation now was based on what Jesus had done for her, not what she had done for Him. May it be so for you and I as well. In God's peace, Pastor Rhodes.