

Eternity Daily Bible Study - No. 334

Series: St. John's Passion - Gospel of John chapters 12-21

Verses: John 20:11-18

Topic: Mary At The Tomb

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> September 2004

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**John 20:11-18 MKJV** But Mary stood outside of the tomb, weeping. And as she wept, she stooped down into the tomb. (12) And *she* saw two angels in white sitting there, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. (13) And they said to her, Woman, why do you weep? She said to them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him. (14) And when she had said this, she turned backward and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. (15) Jesus said to her, Woman, why do you weep? Whom do you seek? Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, Sir, if you have carried Him away from here, tell me where you have laid Him and I will take Him away. (16) Jesus said to her, Mary! She turned herself and said to Him, Rabboni! (which is to say, Master!) (17) Jesus said to her, Do not touch Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father. But go to My brothers and say to them, I ascend to My Father and Your Father, and *to* My God and your God. (18) Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that He had spoken these things to her.

Peter & John miss the obvious – two angels and Jesus! Somehow they just saw the empty tomb and the grave clothes. But Mary stands outside the tomb weeping, it does not say for how long, but she is there, distraught with grief. Her tears seem to open Heaven, the angels appear, and Jesus talks to her.

The angels, and Jesus, ask exactly the same question: “Woman, why do you weep?” God seems to always be asking people why they are acting or reacting in certain ways (e.g. Genesis 4:6, Exodus 14:15, Joshua 7:10, Mark 4:40). This question (why do you..) is one way that God draws out the contents of the human heart and teaches people a lesson. It is also unpretentious and does not pretend to know why someone is reacting a certain way. We often misread a reaction thinking it is because of A or B when actually it is because of something else entirely. It does not hurt to take a few moments to genuinely ask: “Why are you crying” – and thus share the graciousness of God, Jesus and the angels.

Mary's answer was her concern for Jesus. “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.” Mary was weeping because she had lost Jesus, her Lord. The idea of “losing Jesus” may seem strange to us who just see Jesus as a heavenly figure. But Jesus was Mary's friend, Savior and Lord and He had a physical body and Mary wanted to care for it. Jesus was tangible for Mary.

Jesus needs to be much more than an idea in a book. He needs to be a real person that we know personally, through the Spirit. Jesus is not a mere doctrine, to be argued over – one nature or two, part of the Trinity or not (though these things are

important), Jesus is a living Spirit, a life-giving Spirit, (1 Corinthians 15:45) that we need to come to know and have dwell within us.

“I will take Him away” – an impossible feat for Mary alone, but devotion sees nothing as impossible. Out of love for God many ‘attempt the impossible’ – and succeed.

“Jesus said to her, Mary!” God calls us by name. The first word that Jesus spoke after the resurrection was the name of a human being – Mary. The age of the resurrection is an age of personal communion between us and God.

“She turned herself and said to Him, Rabboni! (which is to say, Master!)” Rabboni is the Aramaic/Chaldean version of Rabbi and means “honorable sir/great one” and was used of certain teachers in Jesus’ day. None of Mary Magdalene’s terms of address to Jesus imply marriage or physical intimacy, they are all formal terms of respect.

“Do not touch Me”. Jesus backs away from Mary’s embrace. His post-resurrection body was in such a form that it should not be touched. “for I have not yet ascended to My Father.”

“But go to My brothers and say to them, I ascend to My Father and Your Father, and *to* My God and your God.” Jesus refers to the disciples as His brothers (see next verse). This is in line with the following Scriptures:

Matthew 12:49-50 MKJV And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, Behold, My mother and My brothers! (50) For whoever shall do the will of My Father in Heaven, the same is My brother and sister and mother.

Hebrews 2:11-13 MKJV For both He who sanctifies and they who are sanctified *are* all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers, (12) saying, "I will declare Your name to My brothers; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You." (13) And again, "I will put My trust in Him." And again, "Behold Me and the children whom God has given Me."

Since the resurrection all born-again believers are brothers of Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself defines this relationship by saying: “to My Father and Your Father, and *to* My God and your God.” Nothing could be easier - we have the same Father as Jesus – therefore we are brothers, and that Father is God, the same God as that of Jesus Christ.

The resurrection and ascension have put New Covenant Christians on an entirely different spiritual level to Old Covenant Jews. Now, due to God’s grace (not our goodness) we are made sons of God, brothers of Jesus, and citizens of Heaven with access to the Throne of God, via the Holy Spirit who now dwells personally in us. We are literally seated in the heavenly realms with Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6,7; 1:20).

When Jesus says: “to My Father and Your Father, and to My God and your God” He is allowing the disciples into the family and household of God. (Ephesians 2;19)  
Thus the Lord’s Prayer starts with the revolutionary words “Our Father..”

“Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that He had spoken these things to her.” Mary does what Jesus told her to do. A simple enough job, but she was the first witness to the Resurrection, the one who witnessed to the apostles. Middle Eastern culture did not validate the witness of a woman – but Jesus did. The Samaritan woman at the well was the first to give witness to His Messiah-ship, and Mary Magdalene was the first to give witness to the Resurrection.

Mary simply told others what she had seen and heard and what Jesus had said to her. That is always a good starting point! Tell others what you have personally experienced of Jesus – and what He has said to you.

Blessings,

John Edmiston

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