

GOD'S CALLING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Lesson Eight

IN THE GOSPELS: Mary the Magdalene

Burden to Impart:

One of the most loving and faithful disciples of Jesus was a woman who had been possessed with seven demons, Mary the Magdalene. With great gratitude for her salvation, she ministered to the Lord and accompanied Him in all of His sufferings and trials from Galilee to the cross. The Lord Jesus appeared in resurrection to her first.

Memory Verse: "And having risen early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary the Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons" (Mark 16:9).

Facts to Teach:

1. Although the twelve Apostles were all men, the Lord also called many women to follow Him. The Lord's most notable female disciple was Mary, the Magdalene (from Magdala, John 19:25).
2. When the Lord met Mary Magdalene in Galilee she was possessed with seven demons (Luke 8:2). She probably became demon possessed by worshipping idols. After she was set free from the demons she had no other desire than to follow the Lord wherever He went. Her one desire was to be one of His disciples and helpers. One way that she and other women helped Jesus and His disciples was by supplying them with money (Luke 8:3).
3. Mary followed the Lord and His disciples in His ministry from Galilee to Jerusalem (Matt. 27:55-56). Though she was not a blood relative, the Lord considered her to be one of His sympathizing sisters because she gave up everything to do God's will (Matt. 13:48-50). She also suffered with the Lord in all of His trials and rejection (Luke 22:28).
4. Even when the Lord was crucified Mary did not forsake Him. She and other women followed Him all the way to the end (Matt. 27:55-56). They even lingered around after His death to watch His burial. They went home to prepare spices and ointments (Luke 23:55-56).
5. Having kept the Sabbath, Mary's love for the Lord brought her back to the tomb on the first day of the week even before dawn. She brought the spices and came with other women to Jesus' tomb. However, the stone was rolled away and Jesus' body was gone. When they entered the tomb they saw two angels who told them that Jesus had risen from the dead. After reporting this to the disciples they all returned to the tomb to confirm her word (Luke 24:9-12). Seeing that it was true, they were all perplexed and went back home. Mary, however, stayed at the tomb alone (John 20:10-18). The Lord Jesus came to her and spoke her name. She was the first one the Lord Jesus appeared to in resurrection. It was not to Peter, nor to John, but to Mary. Even before He ascended to the Father, He had to appear to Mary! What a disciple!

SUBJECT: GOD’S CALLING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT: In the Gospels—Mary the Magdalene

SCRIPTURE: Luke 8:1-3; Mark 15:40-41; Matthew 27:55-61; John 20:1-18; Mark 16:9-11

AIM: To inspire the children to want to be like Mary the Magdalene, who out of great love for the Lord diligently sought Him and became one of His most faithful and devoted disciples.

MEMORY VERSES: Deut. 6:5; Jer. 29:13

CONTENT: Although the twelve apostles were men, the Lord also called many women to follow Him. The Lord’s most notable female disciple was Mary, the Magdalene (from Magdala, John 19:25). When the Lord met Mary the Magdalene in Galilee, she was possessed with seven demons. She probably became demon possessed by worshipping idols. After she was set free from the demons, she had no other desire than to follow the Lord wherever He went so she could be one of His disciples and helpers. She and other women followed the Lord and His disciples in His ministry from city to city and village to village (Luke 8:1-3). One way that Mary and the other women helped the Lord Jesus and His disciples was by ministering to them and supplying them from their own money and possessions (Luke 8:3).

Even when the Lord was crucified, Mary did not leave Him nor forsake Him. She and other women followed Him all the way to the cross (Matt. 27:55-56). (At the scene of the cross only Mary and the Lord’s closest relatives—His mother and aunts—are mentioned by name.) They saw Him crucified, they watched as His body was taken down from the cross, they observed His burial. And, after a man named Joseph of Arimathea rolled the stone in front of the opening of the Lord’s tomb and went away, Mary and the Lord’s mother stayed and sat opposite the grave (Matt 27:59-61). Mary was a faithful and devoted disciple, staying with Him even to the very end.

Having kept the Sabbath, Mary’s love for the Lord brought her and other women back to the tomb. It was now the first day of the week. She got up very early and got to the tomb before dawn, while it was still dark. She discovered that the stone was rolled away and that the body of the Lord Jesus was gone. She quickly ran to tell Peter and John who, in turn, ran back to the tomb to confirm her report. After seeing that the Lord indeed was no longer in the tomb, the disciples decided to go back to their own home. Mary, however, lingered and remained at the tomb. The disciples could go home but she could not go home. She had no rest, no comfort. Her Lord was gone. Who had taken Him away? How could she leave?

What did Mary do at the tomb? She wept. The Lord she loved and served had died. And now even His body was gone. Then, she stooped down and looked in the tomb. She saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had laid. They asked her why she was weeping. Mary told them it was because someone had taken the Lord away and she didn’t know where He was. As she turned from the tomb, she saw someone whom she thought was the gardener. She said to him “...tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away”.

The “gardener” was the resurrected Lord Jesus. He was supposed to have ascended to the Father immediately after His resurrection, but instead He had to respond to His loving, seeking disciple. Because of Mary’s loving heart, the Lord appeared to her. It was if He could not help it, as if He were compelled to respond to such a heart. He called her name, “Mary!”, and she immediately recognized Him, “Rabboni!” He told her to tell His brothers that He was ascending to His Father and their Father, and to His God and their God.

So, Mary was the first to see the risen Lord. She received the first word from His mouth after His resurrection. She was commissioned to be the first announcer of His resurrection (though the disciples did not believe her, Mark 16:11). He appeared to Mary even before He ascended to the Father. What great honor was bestowed upon Mary the Magdalene! What fitting reward to such a faithful, loving disciple!

APPLICATION:

1. Mary and the other women loved and treasured the Lord to the uttermost. They followed Him wherever He went, just like a little child follows his mother. If the mother goes upstairs, he will follow her upstairs. If she goes downstairs, he will follow her downstairs. He clings to his mommy; he will not allow her to be out of his sight. He will even drop his most treasured toy to follow her. We should treasure the Lord like this, not allowing anything else to take His place, or drive away His presence.
2. Because Mary loved the Lord, she sought Him, even lingering, looking and waiting for Him. We also need to be His loving, seeking ones. First, like Mary, we should seek Him early in the morning before we do anything else in the day. We should continue to look for Him throughout our day and throughout our week. When it seems He is nowhere around and things get difficult at home or in school, we can look for Him by just calling or praying.
3. As we seek Him and find Him, we will find ourselves wanting to speak to others about Him. We, like Mary, can be the announcers of His resurrection, telling others that Jesus is alive! Perhaps they will come running to find Him, like Peter or John, or perhaps they will not believe, like some of the other disciples. But it does not matter—we will be so happy when we tell others about our dear Lord Jesus!
4. Mary and the other women's love for the Lord and His disciples was practical. They ministered to them out of their own possessions. They also ministered to their practical needs, perhaps cooking for them, or arranging a place for them to stay overnight. Likewise, our love for the Lord should be practical. We should remember to bring an offering to the Lord every week, preferably out of our own possessions, e.g., our allowance or from a monetary gift that we have received. We can also minister to the needs of others, perhaps by sharing our snack with somebody who doesn't have one, or helping a new one feel comfortable in children's meeting. When we help others and take care of others, we are ministering to the Lord.

References:

The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Set One, Volume 18, Notes on Scriptural Messages (2), Issue No. 28, Mary. Pages 241-248.
All the Women of the Bible. By Herbert Lockyer. Pages 99-103.

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