

Jesus Loves

Be a woman who is devoted to Him

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May 2005

Jesus loves you. Has anyone ever told you this? Have you ever said this to a child? Or have you sung the song, “Jesus loves you this I know, for the Bible tells me so?” It is easy to sing these words, but I suspect their real meaning is not grasped by many of us. How can we understand the depth of Jesus’ love? How should we live our lives in response to His love?

We can begin to have a better understanding of all these things by examining how Jesus’ love for Mary Magdalene generated a life of grateful devotion.

Jesus’ love for Mary Magdalene delivers her from seven demons [Luke 8:2]. This is the only thing we know about Mary Magdalene before she met Jesus and it tells us so much. We can only imagine the misery and torment she suffered from the demons that possessed her. But then she met the Deliverer Who set her free. The deliverance that Jesus offers is total and complete. It holds no condemnation and is freely given to anyone who calls on His name.

When she was set free Mary Magdalene was so grateful and devoted to Him that she joined several other women in traveling with Jesus and His disciples to care for them out of their own means [Luke 8:3]. Because Mary was set free from the things that had bound her, she could go in peace, serving the Lord and others.

Jesus’ love leads Him willingly to the cross where He suffers and dies so that we might have life. [The crucifixion is described in Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, and John 19] The fact that Jesus took the sin of the world upon Himself results in an awesome promise: If you believe that Jesus is the Son of God you will have eternal life.

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes in Him have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. John 3:14-18

This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life. I John 2:25

Mary Magdalene’s devotion compels her to witness the crucifixion, not willing to leave her Lord although so many others have run away [John 19:25]. She even follows Joseph or Arimathea as he carries Jesus’ body to the tomb, and as Joseph rolled the stone across the entrance, Mary Magdalene sits opposite the grave [Matthew 27:61]. Her devotion even draws her back to the tomb on the third day [Mark 16:1]. She carries spices to anoint His body. Mary Magdalene and her friends want Jesus to be properly buried.

Jesus' love results in victory over sin and death. There is no need for burial spices. He is risen! But Mary does not know this yet. She only sees that the stone has been rolled away. Now her grief is doubled. Not only is her Master dead, but someone has taken His body. She runs and tells Peter and John the terrible news [John 20:1-2].

Her devotion draws her yet again to the tomb. Mary Magdalene wants to be where she last knew Him to be. She is weeping and then she looks into the tomb [John 20:11]. Two angels are sent to begin the process of breaking through her grief and showing her the risen Lord. **“Why are you weeping?”** they ask her.

Jesus' love meets her in the garden. Jesus also asks her, **“Why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?”** Jesus is gently speaking, trying to get Mary to see her risen Lord instead of the empty tomb. Jesus understands grieving. Even He wept at the grave of Lazarus [John 11:35]. Jesus is not put off by honest emotions, but He wants Mary to understand that her tears need not be from grief. Mary Magdalene still does not recognize Him. He may have looked different somehow in His newly risen state, but more likely Mary is so grief stricken and focused on trying to find Jesus' body that she cannot begin to recognize Him. Thinking Him to be the gardener, Mary's devotion even leads her to say that if He shows her where Jesus' body is, she will carry Him away [John 20:15].

Jesus' love calls her by name. Jesus says to her, **“Mary!”** Speaking her name breaks through the fog of grief, and Mary finally recognizes Him [John 20:16].

The Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, knows all His sheep by name. Anyone who believes in Him becomes part of His flock and learns to hear His voice. Mary had been hearing Jesus teach and converse with His followers for many months, so she knew His voice well. The fact that Jesus calls her by her first name reflects His desire to have a personal first-name-basis relationship with each believer.

I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. John 10:14-15

When Mary recognizes Jesus she says, **“Rabboni!”** which means teacher. The word for teacher can take one of three forms in Hebrew. First is “Rab,” or master, which gives the lowest degree of honor. The second is “Rabbi,” or *my* master which is a title of higher dignity. The most honorable title is “Rabboni” which means *my great* master. When Mary Magdalene uttered this word it was at once an expression of her joy and an acknowledgement of Him as her Lord and Master.

Her devotion places Jesus as Lord of her life.

Jesus' love instructs Mary Magdalene to go and tell. Jesus tells her to go to the disciples and to tell them **“I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.”** [John 20:17]

Her devotion compels her to find the disciples and announce to them, “**I have seen the Lord,**” and that He had said these things to her [John 20:18]. We can imagine the excitement in her voice as she shares with the disciples what she has seen and heard.

From this account of Jesus and Mary Magdalene we see that
Jesus’ love results in our deliverance, setting us free to serve Him.
Jesus’ love brings us eternal life, promised to each of us who believe in Him.
Jesus’ love results in victory, defeating sin and death for us.
Jesus’ love meets us where we are, breaking through grief and hurt.
Jesus’ love calls us by name, and we can hear His voice.
Jesus’ love compels us to tell others about Him.

The most important response from Mary Magdalene is that she accepts Jesus as Lord and Master. All other acts of devotion arise out of that decision. She serves Him, wants to be with Him, worships Him, and her devotion culminates with the insuppressible desire to tell others that she has seen Jesus.

What is *your* response to the love of Jesus?

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Questions for you to ponder:

1. Is there anything binding you and keeping you from being totally free to serve Jesus? Jesus is able to deliver you just as He did Mary Magdalene. Describe what, if anything, binds you and then pray, asking Jesus in faith to set you free.

2. Read and meditate upon Isaiah 12 and Psalm 118. Describe in your own words what Jesus has done for you by going to the cross.

3. The love of Jesus should prompt several responses from us. What are they? How can you show devotion to Jesus?

4. Read John 14. How do you think Jesus speaks to us today? What can you do to be able to hear Him more clearly?

5. Read Mark 5:18-21, Matthew 28:19-20, and Acts 1:8. What are you instructed to do with what you know about Jesus' love?