

Good Shepherd, Easter, 2022

John 20:10-16

Mary Magdalene

It was very early on Sunday morning when a group of us went to the grave of our Lord. We were going to finish the burial of Jesus who had died on Friday afternoon. I still don't understand why Jesus had to die. We believed that He was the Messiah. Now He's gone! I don't understand why our religious leaders hated Jesus so much. The lies that were told about Jesus were awful! The things the soldiers did to Jesus were horrible! I was with the Lord's mother, all day Friday, trying to comfort her.

I was horrified at the things they did to my Lord! It was awful! I saw the crown of thorns on His head. I remember the pounding of the hammers. I heard Jesus say, Father, forgive them! I remember how the people yelled unkind things at Jesus. I wondered when the darkness of night came at noon! Jesus sounded so lost when He cried out, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? I tried to be strong, but it was so hard.

Time passed by slowly. I remember how Jesus seemed so relieved when He said, It is finished from the cross. Towards the end of His life, Jesus cried out, Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit!

And then, Jesus died! And my world fell apart.

My name is Mary. I come from the town of Magdala on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. I am a follower of Jesus. There were quite a few of us who followed Him during His ministry. I am the only woman mentioned in all four of the Easter gospels. I do not say

that to boast. I was the one who was most confused by the happenings on Sunday. That is why I want to tell you my story.

On Sunday morning I went with the other women to finish the burial of Jesus. We were asking ourselves who would roll the stone away. I found out later that we would not have been able to embalm Jesus anyway because the stone had been sealed by Pilate and the soldiers would not have allowed us into the tomb.

As we got closer, we saw that the stone was gone from the entrance. I told the other women that I would go back and tell Peter and John about this. As I hurried back, I kept wondering what had happened. I thought the enemies of Jesus had stolen the body? Why would they do that?

I knew that Jesus' enemies hated Him enough to kill Him, but would they hate Jesus so much that they would take His body and hide it? It didn't make sense to me! Jesus was dead, why torment those who believed in Him? Thoughts like this were running through my mind as I ran through the streets of Jerusalem. When I reached the place where the disciples were staying, I told them what I thought had happened.

The disciples didn't believe me!

However, Peter and John said that they would check it out and so they ran to the tomb. But I was tired after hurrying into the city. I had to rest for a while.

After a short time, I started back for the tomb. I didn't see Peter and John. I wish I would have. Peter and John told me later that they had gone into the tomb and had seen the burial cloths that had been around Jesus.

When I went back to the tomb, I missed seeing the other women I had been with earlier in the day. I wish I would have seen my friends, because they had spoken to an angel at the grave who had said Jesus is not here; He has risen, just as He said! Then as my friends were returning to the city, they saw Jesus – alive!

But I didn't know what the others knew! I had thought that the enemies of Jesus had become grave-robbers! Have you had someone close to you, die? You know how lost I felt!

I followed the trail back to the tomb. I admit - I was crying. It had been a very difficult day! I stood by the tomb and looked in. I saw two angels! They were dressed in white and were sitting where Jesus had been. One of them asked me, Woman, why are you crying?

I said, They have taken my Lord away and I don't know where they have put Him. You can understand how I felt. I was lost. I didn't know where to go or what to do. I had just lost my friend and Lord!

I didn't know where to go next. I turned around and saw a man standing there. It could have been the man who was in charge of taking care of the garden. He spoke to me, Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?

With tears in my eyes, I replied, If you have carried Him away, tell me where you have put Him, and I will get Him. The man just said, Mary. It was Jesus. I didn't know that it was Jesus! Now I recognized Him! It was Jesus! He was alive! Here was my teacher. Here was my Lord. Here was my Savior!

It was a happy and glorious day! I ran to the disciples and said, I have seen the Lord!

I was lost that first Easter. I did not find Jesus, He found me! I was looking for the body of Jesus. The last thing I expected was to see a living Jesus!

Jesus came to me when I needed Him. I needed to know that He was still my Lord – that He was still there to help me and to guide me. He was there! Because Jesus lived, I knew that He would always be with me.

Jesus has already come to you personally. He was there when you were baptized. He welcomed you into God's family. Jesus is there when you receive His body and blood for your forgiveness. Jesus is there whenever you read and hear the Scriptures. Jesus promised, I will be with you always.

You have heard my story; how I, Mary Magdalene, was lost and how Jesus found me. I am not lost now! I am with Jesus in heaven. I enjoy eternity with my friends and people you know, whose souls are in heaven because of their faith in Jesus.

Jesus died, to pay for our sins! He lives and has conquered death. I know that my Redeemer lives! I want to share Easter joy with you one day!

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