

Mary Magdalene Meets the Risen Lord

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Preacher: Alex Cowie

[0:00] to a John's Gospel in chapter 20 and to these verses that we were reading and we want to think about the section from verse 11 where Mary Magdalene meets the risen Lord and of course we will focus particularly on the words Jesus verse 16 Jesus said to her Mary she turned and said to him Rabboni which is to say teacher Mary Magdalene then meets the risen Lord and one of the things we've got in this by way of introduction is something that's true for the people of God in every generation and it's helpful to us to see that it was true for folk who actually knew the Lord

Jesus in this special way they listened to him they saw his miracles they fellowshiped with him they sat at his feet as it were and learned from him and yet what is true is they did not understand what God was doing in providence in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ and in that we can identify with them because God often does things that leave us totally baffled we sometimes are not only baffled we're distressed we don't know what's happening and the death of Jesus was for these disciples the men and the women like that it had a tremendous impact upon them and left them bewildered and that's why when we were reading in Mark in verse verses in chapter 15 there and in verses in 16 at the beginning of it you see that they were totally baffled by what had happened and despite the fact that they had been taught by Jesus of about the necessity of the death of Messiah his death came to them as a shock it seemed to them to mark the end of their hope that he would establish his messianic kingdom and we ought never to forget that when we read these familiar passages the way they viewed his death was with shock and bewilderment and it seemed to them that their hopes were blasted Jesus was not after all Israel's redeemer and Mary Magdalene perhaps more than all the others felt this most keenly and she felt it most keenly because she had been delivered by the Lord Jesus Christ from the powers of darkness which only cast out from her seven demons and whenever you hear some of these blasphemous stories that are around and about us today about some relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene you just consign them to where they belong out of the door of your mind she had this deep sensitivity she had been delivered from evil most deep and dark and she had this peculiar burden on her heart to find the body of the Lord Jesus Christ where can it be and she describes his body as the body of the Lord and she's bent on discovering its whereabouts and it seems to me that there's a number of things we can learn from this not least we can learn about what devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ is really about it's not half-hearted it's wholehearted it's persistent in the way but to begin with I want us simply to look at the scene at the tomb as the gospel record gives it to us and from the information that you gather from the four gospels we see that Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of

James and Joseph and also Salome and Joanna went to the tomb together it's described elsewhere as the tomb of the rich man the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea wherein no body had been laid that was the choice tomb the sepulchre the rock tomb in which the body of Jesus had been laid and we're told in the in the scriptures in the gospel record that these women had gone early in the morning of the first day of the week in order to complete the anointing of the body that's what they were about to anoint to finish off anointing the body the dead body and we read there in Mark 16 that it was to their great surprise that the that the large stone had been removed from the the mouth of the tomb and although it was dark darkish it was clear that the body was no longer in the tomb that was the that was the the thing that shocked and the body had been removed as they thought they have taken says Mary they have taken away the body of my Lord they have taken it away verse 13 they have taken away my Lord and I do not know where they have laid him this is the way

Mary is thinking and we're told that this is the message she communicated to the others to Peter and John and the other disciples I think the best way to understand this that the other women simply lingered at the tomb but Mary Magdalene made haste to go to the other disciples and to tell them what had been revealed to them by the heavenly messengers and we read for example in Luke's gospel in 24 10 that Peter and John they went to the tomb where the women had lingered and of course had then gone home and they went in response to what Mary Magdalene reported though they didn't believe they were quite settled in their minds that there was an explanation for the empty tomb and it was not that

Jesus had risen from the dead and I say that I emphasize that because you know it's very helpful to when you're talking to people about what it is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ to bear these things in mind for example the Islamic world in its doctrine at least does not accept Jesus really dying I was telling the family yesterday that out of conscience as inter-moderator I did a special effort to go to to Dow and Vale to the cafe I'd been promising myself to go and it just wasn't happening so I went and there was a young Asian fellow came in and he lives just around the corner from the church and he'd been going there for quite a long time they knew him quite well so I sat with him and I was chatting with him and because of course we're into the Easter season as it were remembering the sufferings and death and resurrection

[9:02] I just happened to say to him you know that I worked a lot with Muslim folk in Caban Hill years ago and I was interested and this is true of course I was interested that they believed that Jesus did die and that he did rise again now strictly speaking that's not what the Islam teaches most definitely and yet in a popular way the Muslim people believe it and quick as a flash he said oh I do too oh I do too but the scene that's set before us is that even the very disciples who for three years plus had listened to Jesus were taught by Jesus did not at that point when Mary reported and when

Peter and John went to the tomb running they did not believe that he had been raised from the dead but our focus here is on Mary Magdalene she returned to the tomb and she returned to the tomb in the hope of gaining more precise information on where the body had actually gone and when she saw these angels she didn't run away because she was afraid she answered their questions because she was longing to get an answer and we've referred to that already in verse 13 she tells them why she's weeping they've taken away my Lord that is the body and I don't know where they've laid it she wants to have an answer she's not leaving the tomb now that she's back again till she gets an answer about the whereabouts of the body and my dear friends up until this point in the scripture account there isn't the slightest glimmer of light on a risen

Jesus but I want to highlight the point that she returned to the tomb to get answers she persisted she wanted to know she's seeking Jesus albeit then the body of her Lord but there's a principle there that's relevant to you and me she kept seeking she didn't give up she wanted answers and you know in the Christian life we sometimes pass through times of a spiritual darkness we lose a sense of the Saviour's nearness and we're to persist in seeking him in seeking his return to us it was William Cooper wasn't it who said where is the blessedness

I knew when first I saw the Lord where is the soul refreshing view of Jesus in the word sometimes we lose that we lose it we lose an appetite for the word and we we are not to give up we're to we're to learn from Mary here to keep seeking for the answers we need that's the first thing the scene of the tomb the second thing is the Saviour's revelation to Mary and of course suddenly she's disturbed by the approach of another person and she thinks that it is the gardener the commentators are not agreed and I don't think we can be agreed on one reason why she didn't recognize Jesus it could have been because she was we're told she was weeping copiously and her eyes were full of tears and through the mist she couldn't recognize him perhaps it was because of the grief on her heart the blinding effect on it or maybe indeed because her eyes were prevented by divine intention whatever maybe a combination of them she did not recognize it was Jesus nor recognize his voice verse 15 woman why are you weeping whom are you seeking she supposing him to be the gardener she says what she says no recognition the fact is when we've looked at all the possibilities we don't know why she simply didn't recognize him and yet

Jesus could in a moment with a word speak and she would recognize he listens to it and he holds back Jesus lets her talk out her trouble her concern if you have carried him away if you the gardener tell me where you've laid him verse 15 and I will take him away and then with a word Jesus speaks to it and the revelation occurs but you see the yearning of her heart is to see Jesus to know where he is tell me did you see him whom my soul loves song of Solomon 3 verse 3 and there's something here for you and me there's something here about earnestly seeking a word from him to free us from our confusion and our uncertainty and our longing for it and here with a word he dispels our darkness and her sense of hopelessness with a word that brings light and hope and joy and peace he simply says

[15:53] Mary Maria in the Greek and most probably it was Miriam which is the Hebrew but with that word he dispels her darkness and scatters all that uncertainty and subdues that longing with his presence and his word of power and you see this is a reminder to you and me of how the Lord comes to us suddenly suddenly he speaks peace to us isn't that again to go back to the song of Solomon suddenly it's the voice of my beloved he speaks now I think I've said this to you before I'm sure I have I wouldn't begin to try to capture what was in that word whether it was Maria in the

Greek or Miriam as I think in the Hebrews I wouldn't try to put in what was in the load of the tone but surely surely we have enough sense and understanding and imagination to recognize that there was in the word from the Savior the word from the shepherd that which the sheep recognized the good shepherd knows the sheep and he calls them by name and they listen to they hear his voice and for sure light flooded in to her soul and she recognized she heard his voice and all fears were gone and that's the way it is in our experience he speaks to us he allows us to hear his voice

I have redeemed you you are mine be not afraid and this is what happened in our experience this revelation of his of the risen Lord broke upon her and it broke upon her at the right time precisely the right time with a maximum impact on her soul and my dear friends we ought to entertain this hope in the same way that he will speak to us that he will open our hearts to the truth that he will not leave us in darkness and in uncertainty nor will he leave us to sink in despair we must entertain these things about him he will not do that he is the good shepherd who knows his sheep who calls them by name and who speaks a word of light and life and joy and peace and surely we can learn from this to look to him in this way to ask him to speak a word to us that we might hear his voice in the word that's what brings about the change in our own experience and that we would know more of that in our experience someone said it passes knowledge that dear love of thy my saviour

Jesus yet this heart of mine would know thy love in all its height and length its depth its everlasting strength know more and more we would know it masters speak oh speak to me and he spoke her name and the darkness was past and the uncertainty and the feelings of hopelessness were gone and lastly and briefly Mary's response to the revelation and we see there that for her there was instant recognition Rabboni some and of course the reference here to it means teacher verse 16 she turned and said to him

Rabboni which is to say teacher or master it can be master and perhaps the better translation is master but as some have noted and I agree with them in the Hebrew language the e sound at the end is the personal pronoun my for example an easy example is Eli my God and it seems to me that it's not just master that is being said but my master Rabboni somebody has said I think it's Liam Morris in his comment he says she used the local the Galilean variation but she uses it and identifies herself with him my master my teacher my guide in the truth of

[22 : 27] God and of his salvation I like to think that there's a little bit more in it with reference to Mary Magdalene after all Mary Magdalene had been mastered by the devil she had been possessed by demons evil forces had dominated her life and driven her to a life of evil and wonderful thing it is you see that she can say there at the tomb through the tears Rabboni my master Jesus had set her free Jesus had saved her from the destruction of the wicked and she calls him my master she had earlier called him my lord when she thought he was dead but now he's alive gloriously alive my master i remember reading somewhere on this and i'd never come across it before that the great preacher john wesley had this

Rabboni as his favorite name for the lord jesus christ that's what he called him my master that's very revealing and there's something we can learn from that you see because ultimately if jesus is our savior truly our savior he is our master and we can learn here as who are standing there as it were at the tomb with Mary to recognize him in our own hearts and to simply call him my master he'll not always lead us you know in the plainest path it'll not always be easy it'll be often difficult but the bottom line is as our master we can depend on him to lead us in the way that is right and let us therefore weigh what we learn here of this revelation to

Mary Magdalene of the risen Lord Jesus Christ and say in our hearts with new reason to Jesus Rabboni Amen