

# I Have Seen the Lord

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Date: 31 March 2013

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[ 0 : 00 ] Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Hallelujah. Oh, you're getting really good at that.

In the patriarchal ancient Near East, women were second-class citizens. So like in courts, a woman's testimony wasn't admissible in a court of law in Christ's time.

So it's fascinating that the first person that the resurrected Christ should reveal himself to is a woman. And the first person whom Christ told to proclaim him resurrected was a woman.

That's cool, eh? The women are all nodding. The men are stationary. That woman was Mary Magdalene, and she was, I just think, one of Christ's most devoted followers.

When the disciples took off, when Christ was arrested, she stayed at the cross until the end and watched him die. And she followed the funeral procession and watched his body being placed in a tomb.

[ 1 : 14 ] And she was determined that she would look after his body and make sure it was buried properly. I think the finality of these things must have been devastating for her.

Now, as a historical figure, we know very little about her, this woman, Mary Magdalene. In Luke's Gospel, it says that Christ cast seven demons out of her, and after that she became a group of women who followed and supported Christ in a variety of ways.

There is a medieval tradition, which you might be aware of, that she was a prostitute, that she was the woman who washed Christ's feet with her hair. That idea originally, for your interest, that idea originally came from Pope Gregory in the 6th century, who believed wrongly that all the Marys in the Bible, apart from the mum, all the Marys were the same person.

Anyway, the Catholic Church declared that that was wrong in 1969. So it did take 1,300 years. But it was good to sort that out, right?

So, so. If you're ever frustrated by the slowness of the Anglican Church, and our decision-making, just bear that story in mind.

[ 2 : 45 ] So, here we have Mary Magdalene, right? She's weeping at the empty tomb of Jesus. Now, the immediate context leading up to this point is that she'd gone to the tomb.

If you look back about, sort of, 10 or 20 verses, she'd gone to the tomb. It was empty. She didn't see anyone, so she raced back. She told Peter and John, they went to the tomb.

The lads saw it was empty. They took off. She's there. Remained. She remained in deep, deep sorrow. So, such a brutal situation, right?

She had seen this man who had healed her, who had given her life, whom she had followed. She'd seen him killed unjustly, and she just wanted to take care of his remains, to make sure it was done properly.

And if she wasn't devastated enough, now the body's gone. She probably thought, perhaps it was stolen by grave robbers, or maybe the religious leaders, for whatever reason.

[ 3 : 45 ] She didn't know. And it says in verse 11 here, it says, she stooped to look into the tomb. And reading verse 11, and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head, and one at the feet.

Then, there are two things, which Mary does, which the passage makes a big deal of them. Firstly, it's the crying.

The angels say, woman, woman, why are you weeping? And Jesus, who she thought was a gardener, in verse 15, says, again, woman, why are you weeping? And they're rhetorical questions. And they are actually gentle rebukes. Christ had said he would rise. You shouldn't be crying. This is a time to celebrate. And I think, we can fall into this mistake, sometimes I think.

We despair when we shouldn't. We despair over our sin, or our shame, or guilt, and the heaviness of that. Why are you weeping?

[ 4 : 58 ] Christ has forgiven you. Celebrate. You are forgiven. Okay, moving on. Verse 15, it says that Mary, Mary says this, supposing him, Jesus, to be a gardener.

She said, sir, if you've carried him away, just tell me where you laid him, and I'll take him away. See, it wasn't even on her radar that Jesus could be alive, despite the fact that he'd talked about it. Her estimation of Christ was too small. And then Jesus says, Mary. Mary. I don't know how he said it, but something happened.

Whatever was blinding her, that single word was enough to remove it. And this is a fulfillment of what Christ had said about six chapters earlier in John 14. He said, the good shepherd calls his own sheep by name, and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice.

So all of Mary's pain was swallowed up. But still, still I don't think she grasps the magnitude of what's happened, because she calls him teacher.

[ 6 : 07 ] Teacher. Teacher. I'll come back to that. This is going to be a short sermon, by the way, just so you don't feel ripped off. Which brings us to the second mistake Mary makes.

And I know it's terrible. Mistake's not the right word, but... She clearly comes to Christ with something in her mind, in her heart, that's wrong, and Christ corrects it.

So don't think I'm being mean. I'm just telling you what it says here. So in verse 17, clearly Mary grabs him in some way.

Perhaps she falls at his feet, grabs him around his ankles. And Jesus says, do not cling to me. What a difficult thing to hear from Jesus, eh? I remember my daughter being scared one night when she was like one and a half, and so we brought her into bed, and I'm just like, you know, 3 a.m. or something.

I'm so tired. And she's just wanting to play, like... And I remember just looking at her and going, no! And she just, her face, I locked eyes with her, no!

[ 7 : 23 ] And then she just melted into just tears, just burst out crying, cried and cried and cried and cried. I felt pretty bad. But... You know, a difficult thing, I'm assuming she loves her father, working on that assumption.

You know, a difficult thing to hear somebody say, no, stop, you're wrong. What are you doing? Stop that. Especially when you think it's something nice and lovely that you're doing, right? And she probably thought she was doing something really lovely here.

And he goes on, this is what Jesus says to her. He says, you know, don't cling to me. Don't hang on to me. Don't grab me. And he says, this is the reason, for I have not yet ascended to the Father.

Go to my brothers and say to them, I am ascending to my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God. So his message is not, I'm alive! It's, I'm ascending.

It's interesting, right? What does that mean? What's going on there? Well, Jesus wants Mary to know that the relationship has changed.

[ 8 : 33 ] She's thinking, Jesus, it's you. You're back. We can, we can do, we can, it's like the good old days. We can cruise around.

You can do your stuff, and it'll be awesome. But, and John makes, makes a, makes a point of letting us know that, that, that, her estimation of Jesus was teacher.

Because it says like, you know, she says, Rabboni, right? Which is Aramaic. So if you don't, if you don't understand Aramaic, it's definitely teacher. Just so everyone's aware, it's definitely teacher, is what John wants us to, wants us to understand, right?

That's her estimation. Teacher, great! You can cruise around, you can teach me stuff, it'll be cool, be like, you know, back in the days. Good times. So in her mind, the big win in the situation was that Jesus was not dead, which is great news.

But it's not, it's not the thing that Jesus wanted to get across to her at this point. Mary, you don't get what's happened.

[ 9 : 43 ] you were trying to hang on to what happened before, but the relationship has changed. As I think what Jesus is trying to get across.

I'm not alive in front of you now to resume what was happening before. I'm going to be with the Father. And he uses this word, ascend, which in John, and this is like 20 sermons all squished into one sentence.

When John talks about ascend, he's like, when Christ descends, he is being enthroned as the Lord of all things. I'll come back to that.

So something bigger is happening here, Mary, and it's wonderful. But she comes to Christ with a small assessment of the situation.

Oh, you're back. That's, wow, wow, great. And Christ corrects her. Now, stepping back from the passage a bit and looking at it as a whole, Mary weeps because she thinks Jesus is dead.

[10:49] She clings to him because she thinks it will be like it was before. And it's not going to be like it was before.

Now, let me mush let me mush these two ideas together as a bit of a summary here, okay?

Christianity is about a personal relationship with Jesus. Absolutely.

Definitely. A hundred percent. But Christ is not just this really interesting, you know, influential historical figure that lived a long time ago that's kind of interesting, right?

He is, he is not dead. He is alive. He has risen. We can, we can know him. We can talk to him.

So that even when we are alone, we are not alone. That is something to celebrate. That's wonderful, right? That's the first thing.

[11:51] Second thing. But our relationship with him cannot be this over-friendly, casual, guru, student type situation. Christ's ascension, and I'm closing up here, Christ's ascension is not just a location change for him.

Christ's ascension is his enthronement as the Lord of all. Now, enthronement isn't a word we use a lot, but it's like God, when he enthrones Christ's, when he enthrones Christ, it's like God is giving him the control stick of the universe.

Christ is Lord of China, of Russia, of Africa, of North America. He's the Lord of the marketplace.

He's the Lord of philosophy.

He's the Lord of your really interesting professors, your teachers, your bosses. He's the Lord of your families. He's the Lord of your house, of your bedrooms.

He's the Lord of your dining rooms. Christ is the Lord of all. And that is about the best thing we can know about Jesus.

[13:17] You see, this is going to sound a bit harsh, but it is not enough to believe that Christ died for your sins. It's not enough to think you are forgiven.

You must believe he is the Lord of all. And this is what Jesus wanted to get across to Mary. So my prayer this Easter is that the Holy Spirit would help us know the fullness of who Christ is and that we would live accordingly.

He has risen. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.