

Jesus' Appearance to Mary Magdalene

John 20:11-18

October 22, 2023

1. The Throne of Grace (11-12)

a. Mary's Grief (11)

- i. Mary Magdalene had followed Jesus since He cast out seven demons from her (Luke 8:1-3).
- ii. Mary Magdalene was one of the women at the foot of the cross during Jesus' crucifixion (cf. 19:25).
- iii. Mary's grief is highlighted in this passage of Scripture; she was so full of grief that she hadn't considered how she would open the tomb to anoint Jesus' body (cf. Mark 16:1-3).
- iv. Grief is so disorienting, but Mary brings her grief to the right place.

b. Mary's Encounter (12)

- i. Mary sees two angels dressed in white sitting at the head and the feet where Jesus had lain.
- ii. The position of the angels is significant; they sat at the head and foot where Jesus had lain, the grave clothes likely lying between them.
- iii. Their position is similar to the location of the cherubim who were fashioned at either end of the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:18-19) which framed the Mercy Seat – the place where God atoned for the sins of the people.
- iv. It would appear that a deliberate link is being made between the Mercy Seat and the Empty Tomb. Jesus is both the atoning sacrifice of God and the One Who sits enthroned between the cherubim.
- v. Hebrews 4:14-16 "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore **come boldly** unto the **throne of grace**, that we may **obtain mercy**, and **find grace to help** in time of need."

2. "Why Are You Weeping?" (13-15)

a. The angels ask Mary why she is weeping (13).

- i. Mary's grief in the context of the empty tomb is the point of contention.
- ii. When Mary sees the empty tomb, she weeps thinking that the body of Jesus has been stolen.
- iii. Mary's grief continues to disorient her; to her, the empty tomb only adds to her pain.
- iv. She cannot perceive the message of the evidence before her, the tomb is empty, and her Lord has risen!

b. Jesus asks Mary why she is weeping (14-15).

- i. Mary's grief keeps her from recognizing Jesus (14).
 1. As Mary turns from the angels, she encounters Jesus, but she doesn't recognize Him.
 2. Though Mary does not recognize Jesus, she has come to the right place and Jesus has come to meet her (cf. James 4:8).
- ii. Jesus recognizes her grief and the source of it (15).
 1. Jesus asks her a probing question showing His concern; He does not minimize her grief; instead, He asks questions to draw her out.
 2. Jesus' second question goes to the cause of her grief, the death of her Lord, and the apparent theft of His body.
 3. Mary mistakenly assumes that Jesus is the Gardener, and in a sense, He is! He's the Gardener Who has risen again in this garden to restore what was lost in the Garden of Eden.
- iii. Grief often blinds us to Jesus' presence in our life; it is at these time's we must bring our griefs to the Mercy Seat!
 1. When darkness veils His lovely face, I rest on His unfailing grace; when all around my soul gives way, He then is all my hope and stay. On Christ the Solid Rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand!

3. The Ascension (16-17)

a. Jesus speaks Mary's name (16).

i. By calling Mary's name He expresses His knowledge of her; though she does not recognize Him, He knows her by name.

1. Isaiah 69:14-18 "But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me."

2. The Good Shepherd calls us by name (cf. 10:3-4).

ii. Mary immediately recognizes Jesus.

1. Once Mary hears Jesus call her name, she turns toward Him.

a. Mary turns from grief to joy from confusion to understanding.

b. Hearing and faith are linked; Jesus the Good Shepherd is pursuing us, calling our name; we must have faith to hear and believe.

2. Mary responds, "Rabboni" (Master, Teacher).

a. Jeremiah 29:13 "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

b. Mary's faith was rewarded!

b. Jesus commissions Mary (17).

i. Jesus tells Mary not to touch Him.

1. This is likely to place emphasis on the new way the disciples would interact with Him after His ascension, which would be spiritual and by faith.

2. Jesus would later ask Thomas to touch His hands and His side, so we know that it wasn't wrong for the disciples to touch Him; Jesus was highlighting the change in His relationship with the disciples preparing them to transition from sight to faith.

3. "What needs to stop is not a particular act of touching but a misplaced reliance on the physical presence of Jesus" (Edward Klunk III).

4. For Jesus to be fully present with His disciples, He must first ascend to His Father so the Holy Spirit can be sent to indwell them (cf. 14:16).

ii. Jesus sends Mary to the disciples.

1. Jesus tells Mary to go to His brothers.

a. This title highlights the new relationship that we have with Jesus and our Heavenly Father.

b. Jesus' death and resurrection purchased our sonship (cf. 1:12-13)!

2. Jesus tells Mary to proclaim His ascension to the Father!

a. Mary becomes an apostle to the apostles.

b. She proclaims the fulfillment of all Jesus has taught.

4. "I Have Seen the Lord" (18)

a. Mary obeys immediately.

b. She proclaims Jesus' resurrection.

c. She proclaims what Jesus said to her.

Conclusion:

1. Have you brought your grief to the Throne of Grace?

2. Has your grief blinded you to God's presence in your life?

3. Jesus is pursuing you in your grief and calling your name. Are you willing to turn to Him?

4. Are you proclaiming what you have witnessed to others?