



MATT BLACK, Sun, Mar 18, 2018  
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# 1 | JOHN 20:11-18

## THE RISEN CHRIST KNOWS YOUR NAME: MARY MAGDALENE

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Open your Bible if you will to John 20:11-18. Today we are looking at a message entitled: “When God Knows Your Name.” This morning I want to proclaim the name of our risen King!

### **I NEED A RESCUER**

Sometimes in the crazy busy lives we live, we forget that we have a loving heavenly Father who cares about every single detail of our lives. He is our Creator. He is also our great Rescuer. I need a Rescuer. I need someone to save me and rescue me!

I feel like God’s been rescuing me all my life. When my twin sister and I were just an hour old, a helicopter rescued us and carried us from St. Francis hospital in Blue Island and flew us to Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood. I don’t know about you but I’ve needed rescuing.

At age 4 I had developed a heart murmur which required open heart surgery.

But the greatest rescue I experienced was when I was 15 years old. I was invited to a Christian meeting with thousands of kids. It was like a youth rally. My parents had divorced when I was 8 years old. I had gotten into a lot of trouble and on juvenile probation. Now my life was about to radically change. I decided to go to that meeting.

This group of Christian evangelists did a martial arts demonstration. They broke bricks on the stage. Here is one of the bricks they broke that night. But that wasn’t the amazing thing.

I’ll never forget the man who spoke that night. Keith Craft got up there and he said, “If you don’t stand for something, you’ll fall for anything.” He said, “If the world were filled with perfect people, and you were the only sinner, Jesus would have died just for you, that’s how much he loves you.” Wow. That message rescued me. That night I put my faith in Christ.

I was so lost, but then Jesus found me and rescued me. It was like God called out my name that night. “Come to me, you who are weary and burdened by your sin, and I will give you rest.” I answered that call from God.

### **GOD IS CALLING YOUR NAME**

Have you answered that call? God is calling your name. I can remember when I was a child, I’d be playing in the backyard, and my mom would call me – “Matthew, come inside! It’s suppertime.” There was something about my mama’s voice that made me come running.

Did you know God is calling each one of us here today? The Bible says, “God is not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance” (**2 Pet 2:9**).

I want to tell you the story this morning of Mary Magdalene. She answered God’s calling on her life. Will you answer God’s call today? We are going to start out in Luke 8:1-3.

## **1. MARY’S STORY (LK 8:1-3)**

We read in Luke 8:1 that Jesus “went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, 2 and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, 3 and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod’s

household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means” (Lk 8:1-3).

Mary Magdalene is a woman Jesus healed of “seven demons.” She is named with “other women” who had been healed, but she is named first. It’s not by accident that Mary Magdalene is mentioned before the others. In her world, “the order of naming indicated the order of importance.”<sup>1</sup> Why is she important?

### HER DISTINCTION

To begin, she was the last at the cross and the **first to see the risen Lord**. But that’s not what most people know about her. Most people throughout history have believed she is the Bible’s most famous harlot. The only problem is, the Bible never says Mary Magdalene was a harlot. How did Mary get 2000 years of bad press? Mainly, because there are too many Mary’s in the Bible. More than 50 percent of the women in Palestine in Jesus’ day were named either Mary or Salome.<sup>2</sup> She is not the woman of ill repute that poured oil on Jesus’ head in Luke 7:36-50. There it mentions a sinful woman anoints Jesus for his burial. The other three times, the account is of Mary of Bethany. Mary Magdalene had nothing to do with anointing the feet of Jesus. That was Mary of Bethany.

### HER DWELLING

Mary is called Magdalene because she is from Magdala. I was just in this bustling town two months ago. It has a synagogue which is one of the oldest synagogues in the world. There was a rabbi there and people could drop in any day and learn from the Bible, especially on the Sabbath. Since the Bible tells us that Jesus taught throughout the Galilee, it is certain that he taught and frequented this very spot.

### *A Wealthy Town*

Luke 8:3 indicates that Mary Magdalene was a woman of wealth and means to be able to travel and to provide for Jesus out of her “means.” This is consistent with the recent discoveries in the town of Magdala. They have discovered three elaborate mansions of the time of Jesus. These mansions were paved with colorful and intricate mosaic floors, which can still be seen today. There were certainly many more. Magdala was a town where the rich merchants lived.

Another impressive feature of the city are the many mikvaot (or, ritual baths) which are the earliest ever discovered in the country to use ground water that flows from the Sea of Galilee. The plumbing is still good and running to this day!

Magdala is beautifully preserved today by a landslide that took place probably 1500 years ago. In fact when I was there you could still see the walls they put up facing the mountains where the landslide was taking place. The pillars in the synagogue were removed and placed in the quickly-constructed wall. The pillars are still there in the wall today.

<sup>1</sup> Renita J. Weems. *Just a Sister Away* (San Diego: LuraMedia, 1988), 88.

<sup>2</sup> Liz Curtis Higgs. *Unveiling Mary Magdalene: Discover the Truth About a Not-So-Bad Girl of the Bible* (New York: The Crown Publishing Group, 2004), 143

So now we know perhaps why out of the 14 times Mary Magdalene is listed in the Bible, all but one, she is listed first. She is from a very prominent town and is a woman of wealth and means.

### HER DEMONS

How many of you can testify that money cannot cure our problems? Though she had a lot of money and perhaps lived in a nice mansion in a beautiful town of Magdala, she was broken and lost. Money can't unbreak us. We find out something of Mary's past here in Luke 8: Mary was a woman afflicted with seven demons, and Jesus healed her. That's an amazing testimony isn't it?

We read in Luke 8:2, "some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out."

Mark 16:9, "Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons."

### *A Widow?*

Mary was wealthy. Mary perhaps was a widow, since no husband is mentioned, yet she is a woman of means. I can just imagine Mary Magdalene, alone in this big mansion, nothing to worry about in regard to money, but she is miserable. She is afflicted with seven demons.

One day when she had ventured outside of her home, perhaps she hears someone preaching in her synagogue. She hears the words of love. She hears the words of life. She feels hope.

### *Weary and Afflicted*

She's lived with demonic affliction: thoughts of suicide, bitterness and hatred for no reason sometimes. At times she displayed violent and uncontrollable rage. She was in anguish and torment.<sup>3</sup> I can hear her, "When can I find rest for my afflicted soul?"

### *Wonderful Savior*

The Bible doesn't record the details, but we read here in Luke 8 that Jesus was with his 12 disciples, likely in Magdala preaching and healing.

Somehow Mary Magdalene was there where Jesus was, but out of her mind. The Bible says she had seven demons. It's one of two places in the Bible that names the number of demons (the other is Mk 5:9, *legion*). Jesus healed several women who had "evil spirits" but Mary Magdalene heads the list.

This story gives me so much hope for those that we consider hopeless. There are so many people in our congregation today **who at one time you your life you were like Mary Magdalene**. We sometimes think of demon possession as insanity, but demonization has many symptoms, that we can all relate with:

- thoughts of suicide
- bitterness and hatred

<sup>3</sup> Mark I. Bubeck, *The Adversary* (Chicago: Moody, 1975), 144-6.

deep depression and despondency  
 horrific nightmares  
 violent, uncontrollable rage  
 self-inflicted injuries  
 restlessness and insomnia  
 anguish and torment

The Bible does not record that Mary Magdalene was in any way an immoral woman. But she was a tormented woman. She was a woman who was tortured with thoughts of despair and anguish – tormented by seven demons... until Jesus came!

Maybe you know someone who is so far gone, you think, “They’ll never get it. They’ll never come to Jesus.” That’s true. “We love him because he first loved us” (1 Jn 4:19, KJV). Jesus has to rescue each one of us. He has to draw us. Jesus said, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him” (Jn 6:44). Jesus came a long way to save Mary, and he came a long way to save you. He left his throne in heaven. He was worshipped by the angels. But he left his exalted glory to humble himself and rescue you. Jesus had to come to earth to rescue you and die for you.

### *Won by Jesus Touch*

Jesus wasn’t doing group healings. The Bible says he laid his hands one “each one” (Lk 4:40). Those healed by Jesus usually felt the personal touch of Jesus. Out of all the people that needed healing, Mary is named first in Luke 8:2. Jesus sought her out personally. Can I tell you this, Jesus is seeking you out personally today.

Can we at least understand this: Jesus love you personally? If you were the only sinner on earth and everyone else were perfect, Jesus would have gladly come to touch and heal and die just for you. Mary Magdalene was touched and healed by Jesus, and what an effect it had on her! She was transformed.

### **HER DEVOTION**

Look back at Luke 8. We read of “Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, 3 and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means” (Lk 8:2b-3).

Mary provided for Jesus “out of” her “means.” This leads some to believe that Mary was born into a family of means, or perhaps she was the widow of a husband with means. The Bible doesn’t tell us how she had money to support Jesus. But what we do know is that she was one of many women who were Jesus’ disciples and who supported the Lord’s ministry financially.

Imagine talking to Mary Magdalene before she knew the Lord. I can just hear her screams of torment from the demons. I can hear her confessing to those closest to her: *“I have no hope. I am miserable. I am depressed. I am tormented.”* At that time she could never have dreamed of being an important part of the ministry of Messiah. But that is what Jesus can do for us. He can heal us and make our minds whole.

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## 2. MARY'S SADNESS (MK 15:33-41)

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Mark 15:33-41, “And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. 34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?’ which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ 35 And some of the bystanders hearing it said, ‘Behold, he is calling Elijah.’ 36 And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, ‘Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.’ 37 And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. 38 And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. 39 And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, ‘Truly this man was the Son of God!’”

40 There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. 41 When he was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him, and there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.”

### MARY'S AT THE CROSS

We read in **John 19:25**, “standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene” (Jn 19:25). They were close enough to hear him speaking from the cross (**Jn 19:26–27**). Mary stayed there until the bitter end.

Mark's Gospel tells us that it was only thanks to Mary Magdalene that the disciples even **learned where Jesus' body was laid after his death**. Mark records that Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Christ in order to give it a proper burial. Joseph had access to Pilate because he was a prominent member of the Sanhedrin, the ruling council of Jewish leaders (**Mk 15:43**). All four gospels record Joseph's action of retrieving Jesus' body. Mark adds that Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses secretly followed Joseph to the tomb and “saw where he was laid” (Mk 15:47).<sup>4</sup>

### YOU AT THE CROSS

None of us can travel back in time to see Jesus, but in a real way, we all need to see Jesus high and lifted up on the cross for your sins and mine. Jesus said, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (Jn 12:32).

Do you live your life with the love of Jesus at the center? He exchanged his life for yours. For Mary, she would not leave Jesus. She stayed with him, gazing at him on the cross.

If you ever doubt God's love, look to the Cross. Have you come to that place and seen that your sin was so bad it meant Jesus had to perish for it for you to go to heaven?

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## 3. MARY'S SAVIOR (JN 20:11-18)

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Mary was the last at the cross, and the first to see the Savior risen from the dead. Look over at **John 20:11-18**, “But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 180.

stooped to look into the tomb. 12 And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. 13 They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” 14 Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

15 Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” 16 Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” 18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that he had said these things to her.”

### **MARY WEPT**

Mary was the last at the Cross. She followed Joseph of Arimathea to the tomb. She saw where the body was laid. She had some inside information. She had informed the disciples that the Lord’s body was missing. So she goes back to the tomb. And she is weeping. Now, she feels someone has desecrated her Lord’s grave. Someone has stolen the body of her Lord.

There was evidently no thought of resurrection in Mary Magdalene’s mind. She had seen up close the devastating effects of the bitter blows Jesus had received on the way to the cross. She had witnessed firsthand as His life ebbed from Him on the cross.

She had watched as His lifeless body was unceremoniously wrapped in linen and hastily prepared ointment and left alone in the tomb.

She thought she was coming to the tomb for one final expression of love to her Master—to whom she knew she owed everything. She wanted to finish preparing his body.<sup>5</sup> But now the body was gone.

### **MARY’S VISITORS**

Can you imagine the shock as she looks into the tomb, and there she sees two angels sitting in that tomb where the body of the Lord had laid?

She’s looking at angels! They ask her: “Woman, why are you weeping?” She tells them how her Lord’s body has been stolen. She is physically at the empty tomb of her risen Lord, but her heart is still at the cross. She can’t get over the death of the Lord.

Listen to the cry of her heart to the angels: “They have taken away my Lord” (20:13)

### **MARY’S LORD**

And she turns around. She’s upset. She’s done with niceties. She’s desperate to find the Lord’s body. She wants some time alone with him. Like you would at a funeral as you approach the casket.

She turns around, and here is a man she assumes is the gardener. Without accusing him or judging him she just says, “Tell me where you’ve laid him, and I will take him away.” Can you imagine? Little Mary Magdalene is ready to carry a dead body herself.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 181.

The evidence is mounting. She's seen the empty tomb. She's seen the angels. When is she going to realize it's Jesus?

There he is, the risen Lord, appearing for the first time. But she doesn't recognize him. She thinks he's the gardener.

### **MARY'S NAME**

Jesus looks at this one who was so dedicated to her Lord, and he says, "Mary!" Immediately, she knows. She knows that voice. She knows that love in his voice. "Mary!" The risen Christ knows her name.

Our risen Lord knows your name too! He's been calling you since you were born. You know him, but perhaps you've been running from him. Listen you don't need to run! He has conquered death for you. He has done all that you need to be justified before a holy God. He has lived the perfect life. He's died an all-atoning death. He will exchange your record for his if you will just come to him!

### **MARY'S TEACHER**

She turns to him and says, "Rabboni!" That means "Great Teacher." She recognizes her risen Lord is also her teacher. Jesus calls us all to be disciples. We are called to be learners. We come to Christ by being a humble learner. Christ says if you come to me, you need to have the humility of a child. You need to see your need and come. If a father opens his arms and says, "Jump," a humble trusting child jumps because he knows his father will catch him. Jesus is calling all of us to him today. He is our great "Rabboni." He says, "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened with your sin, and I will give you rest." He says, "Learn of me, for I am lowly and humble in heart. Take my harness upon you, for my harness is easy, and my burden is light." Is the risen Christ your Rabboni?

### **MARY'S DESIRE**

Then we see something so sweet. She is clinging to Jesus. She doesn't want to let go. She just wants to stay there forever. And Jesus says, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God'" (Jn 20:17).

She's clinging to her Lord and she doesn't want to let go. Have you gotten there with Jesus? Do you know him? Jesus says, "Unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God" (Jn 3:3). Has Jesus opened your eyes so that you let go of everything in this world and you are clinging to him?

### **MARY'S PROCLAMATION**

What does Mary do? "Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'—and that he had said these things to her" (20:18). She had a message to bring. Notice Christ says, "Go to my brothers" (20:17). This is first time Christ calls us brothers. Before he had called us servants and friends, but now he says we are family!

So Mary goes and proclaims to Christ's brothers and sisters, "I have seen the Lord!" (20:18). What about you? Have you met the Lord? We have not seen him face to face, but have you met him this morning in the Word? Can you hear his voice in your heart calling you to him?

### **Conclusion**



Today would be a wonderful day to take that step of faith with the Lord. No matter who you are or what you've done, Christ is waiting for you, extending his hand to you. He says, "All day long I have stretched out my arms to you" (Rom 10:21; cf Isa 65:2). He says, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me" (**Rev 3:20**, NIV).