

AUGUST 2022

WOMEN'S MONTH

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HOME GROUP & DEVOTIONAL MATERIAL

Sunday Sermon: "Mary Magdalene" – Similo Sanqela – 7.8.2022



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1 minute ago

Mary Magdalene By Similo Sanqela 7 Aug 2022



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Scripture: Luke 8:1-3

Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God's word to you.

Observation

There are many stories and legends about Mary Magdalene. But who does Scripture really say she is?

Whilst she is not named often, she is mentioned in all four of the Gospels. Several women followed Jesus and there is some debate as to whether Mary

was wealthy for Luke links her with Joanna, Suzanna and other women, all of whom, he says, financially supported Jesus from their own resources. Mary is always mentioned first in the lists of these women (Matthew 27:55-56; Mark 15:40-41, 47, 16:1; Luke 8:2-3; 24:10). Mary's presence at the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus gives her a status that resounds down the centuries.

Mary is called Magdalene because she came from Magdala, a small town on the western shoreline of the Sea of Galilee. Mark and Luke both tell us that Jesus had freed Mary of seven devils (Mark 16:9 and Luke 8:2), giving rise to her reputation as a prostitute. However, none of the Gospels identify her as a prostitute in



Spend some time in worship.

Scripture. Possession by evil spirits generally led to mental disorders rather than promiscuity and it is likely that this was the situation in Mary's case.

The perception that she was a prostitute though, may have arisen from the story that Luke had just told. Prior to referring to Mary by name Luke tells the story of a woman who was a sinner, coming to Jesus when he was a guest of Simon the Leper and washing his feet with her tears (Luke 7:36-50). The assumption that this was Mary arises from the fact that Jesus discusses with His host during the supper the question of who would love more strongly – the one who is forgiven little or the one who is forgiven much. Simon suggests the latter. Following this discussion we learn that the woman in question accompanied Jesus when He left the town (Luke 8:2-3).

Luke tells us that there were women present at the crucifixion, whilst Matthew, Mark and John name Mary specifically as being in that group (Luke 23:49; Matthew 27:55-6; Mark 15:40-41; John 19:25). Mary is also named as one of the three women who went to the tomb on the Sunday (Matthew 27:61; Luke 24:1-11), and Mark and John tell us she was alone when she was the first person to see the risen Jesus (Mark 16:9; John 20:11-18).

The Gospels portray Mary, not so much as a repentant sinner but as a healed and a faithful follower and supporter of Jesus. He entrusted the Good News of His resurrection to her so she could proclaim it to the disciples and so to the world. Mary of Magdala – disciple of Jesus.

Important note to the Group Leader:

Please be aware that you may have a woman or women in your group who suffer abuse. Be sensitive and ready to step in if there are signs of distress to pray with the women concerned, even if this is done after the session in private.

Be aware too of married couples where the husband is present and where the woman is upset.

Pray about any action God wants you to take in regard to such a situation. It is advisable for women to counsel women and men to counsel men.

Icebreaker:

Who has been a faithful friend to you? Have you ever told them you see them in this way? Why/why not? If you have, what was their reaction? What do they mean to you?

Application

- When has a friend helped you through a difficult time in your life? How did they show their friendship and loyalty to you? What did that mean to you and what difference did it make?
- How important to you are other people's opinions of who you are? Why do they matter to you? Discuss, within the group, who God says you are. Allow others to tell you how they see you and how they think God sees you Which opinion do you find the easiest to accept about yourself?
- Who do you think you are? What difference has Jesus' presence in your life made to your opinion of yourself? In what way has Jesus set you free in the way you see yourself?
- If someone was to ask you how devoted you are to Jesus how would you respond? How do you show your devotion to Him?

- How do you:
 - As a man regard women and their place in society?
 - As a woman see other women and yourself in society?
- Why do you respond in this way? In the light of what you have discussed, heard and read in regard to Jesus' relationship with Mary, what adjustments, if any, could you make in your relationship, treatment and opinion of women?
- How would you handle a situation where you were present when a woman was abused, physically, emotionally, spiritually?
- Who, amongst your female friends, relations, acquaintances, etc., do you know who may be suffering some form of abuse? How do you/can you help them?
- How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

Prayer

Pray for any women who are abused in your circle, whether you know them by name or not. Pray also for children – and men – who suffer abuse of some sort or another. Then pray for one another in regard to the issues that have been raised during your discussion time, and in regard to other needs of the group.

Service

How can you encourage a woman or women in your circle who may need a word of hope or blessing this week? Be brave. Ask God to give you the words/actions in that situation. Report back to the group as to what happened as a result.

Bibliography

<https://interestingliterature.com/2021/06/mary-magdalene-jesus-story-summary>

<http://womeninthebible.net/women-bible-old-new-testaments/mary-magdalene/>