

Women of the New Testament – Lesson 5: Mary Magdalene

Psalms 31:24 Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.

Did we learn our lesson? Study Questions from Lesson 4 (Woman with issue)

1. According to Luke 8:43, how is the woman's infirmity described?

Answer: An issue of blood.

2. According to Luke 8:43, how long had this infirmity lasted?

Answer: Twelve years.

3. According to Luke 13:16, who holds humanity in the bondage of illness?

Answer: Whom Satan hath bound.

4. According to Luke 8:47, after being healed, who did the woman declare her cause to?

Answer: She publicly announced (she declared unto him before all the people).

5. Complete the following scripture:

Mark 5:36 Be not ***afraid***, only ***believe***.

True / False

True The woman spent all on cures (LUK 8:43 – Spent all her living)

False The woman could participate in religious functions only (LEV 15:19-20 – She shall be put apart)

False The woman reached out to touch the hand of Jesus (LUK 8:44 - Touched the border of his garment)

True The woman was healed by her faith in Christ (LUK 8:48 – ***Thy faith hath made thee whole***)

Extra Credit - In your opinion, are you a help to your friends, and if so, how?

Lesson 5: Mary Magdalene

'I learned that courage is not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it' – Nelson Mandela (2012)

Being afraid indicates an understanding of danger. Courage is a function of risk assessment and a decision of how much risk you are willing to take. In the world, courage can be foolish, as sometimes the risk is too high (the courage to violate the speed limit by 5 mph vs 50 mph – A much higher risk).

However, it is not the same for a believer:

- **Matthew 10:28** ***And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.***

The Lord tells us how to assess risk in this world. If we are His (**JOHN 10:28** – ***No man can pluck you out of my hand***), the believer can live without fear, as the risk is limited to this earthly life. If you do not have Christ, then you may want to be careful (**1 JOHN 5:12** – He that hath not the Son of God hath not life).

Mary Magdalene just may be the most courageous believer in the New Testament as she is not only transformed from worldly to spiritual, but demonstrates an unmatched zeal.

Who is Mary Magdalene?

Also referred to as the Magdalene, it is in reference to her place of origin – The small fishing village of Magdala (Migdal) located on the west coast of the Sea of Galilee. It is not far from the town of Capernaum, which is where she most likely encountered Jesus, as He preached and taught there on many occasions. There is the remnant of a synagogue from the time of Christ, which indicates the community attempted to live as practicing Jews, studying Mosaic law, and observing Jewish social structure.

Most likely of a Hebrew family, she would not be wealthy, but also not poor. It is very probable she lived as a Gentile, resistant to traditional Jewish life:

Luke 8:2 – A troubled and disobedient past

(2) And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils.

Mary is noted as having ‘seven devils’ expelled from her – During the time of her possession she would be non-compliant to Mosaic law, as the demons would seek to destroy Mary’s life:

Evil spirits – The negative influence of Satan

Matthew 15:19-20 – What defiles

(19) For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

(20) These are *the things* which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

Satan will seek to enable all that is undesirable in humanity (**GAL 5:18-20** – Works of the flesh), seeking to unleash the evil from within the heart. This would have a tremendous negative impact on her psychological health (negative attitude – May include being unrepentant, unreasonably argumentative and combative), and spiritual health (an inability to have joy, peace, and tranquility in harmony with God). See **GAL 5:21-23** – Fruits of the Spirit

Infirmities - The physical effects of Satan

Luke 13:16 – Bringing illness and discomfort

(16) And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?

As noted in the last lesson, Satan (and demons) use illness as a tactic to steer humanity away from God (distraction of pain / suffering, and bitterness of ‘why me’ often separate us from the Lord). In most references to healing by the Lord and His disciples it is accompanied with casting out devils. Consider how Satan used pain and suffering to attempt to drive Job (**JOB 2:1-13** – His grief was very great) into disobedience:

The good news – The Lord healed Mary of her infirmities and cast out the devils, freeing her from their bondage and allowing her to see the truth:

Matthew 11:28-30 – Bringing illness and discomfort

(28) Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

(29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

(30) For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

The Lord applies our faith and releases us from our bondage, no longer to labor in sin (See **JOHN 14:6** – *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me*).

What we know after Mary’s healing

After her release from possession, Mary Magdalene is noted as being present during the Lord’s crucifixion, burial and resurrection, which indicates she was much more than a spectator to these events, but completely committed to the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ:

Dedicated servant

Luke 8:3 – A ministering believer

(3) And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

Mary and the other women are credited with tending to the needs of the Lord, taking care to ensure nothing is undone or lacking.

Mary's life after coming to know the Lord has been characterized as energetic, with zeal in service, and never wavering in availability.

Dedicated Follower

John 19:25 – Present in difficult times

(25) Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

Most of the Apostles had abandoned the Lord in His most trying time of suffering and pain. Only John (**JOHN 21:7** – The disciple whom Jesus loved), Jesus' mother, aunt, the wife of Cleophas – and Mary Magdalene were brave enough to risk the crowd, the high priest and his officers, and the Romans, to stand in solidarity with the Lord, witnessing the brutality with He was subject to.

Mark 15:47 – Never leaving the Lord's side

(47) And Mary Magdalene and Mary *the mother* of Joseph beheld where he was laid.

As Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus performed the burial of the Lord, Mary remained.

Mark 16: 1 – More than a servant, a friend

(1) And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

Christ is crucified as a criminal and buried in private. Mary and the others with her to bring honor, love and devotion to their Lord – Jesus was much more than a charismatic healer: He is the **Son of God!**

The testimony of Mary Magdalene

John 20: 16 – Jesus reveals Himself

(16) Jesus saith unto her, *Mary*. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

After finding the tomb empty (**JOHN 20:1-2**), learning of His resurrection (**MARK 16:5-8**) she informs the disciples, who do not believe her (**LUKE 24:8-11**) – It is Mary Magdalene to whom the Lord first reveals Himself. The Lord could have chosen anyone (certainly any of the Apostles) but He did not, which is a testimony to the special place Mary has in the heart of the Lord as the bravest and most devoted of all – A friend of God, whom she claims as her Lord!

Mary had the courage to stand by the Lord when very few others would. At the risk of being apprehended as a follower of Jesus, she placed all confidence in Him as Christ had directed:

Matthew 10:32-33

(32) *Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.*

(33) *But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.*

The believer's faith can be a source of courage in the face of all worldly obstacles, as we look to the day to stand before our Lord as His friend (**JOHN 15:13** – **No greater love**)

Next Lesson: Herodias

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Study Questions

1. According to Luke 8:2, what two adverse conditions did Mary Magdalene suffer from?

2. According to Matthew 15:19, what defiles a person?

3. According to Luke 8:3, what is revealed of Mary's service?

4. According to Mark 16:1, why did Mary and the others come to the tomb of Jesus?

5. Complete the following scripture:

Psalms 31:24 Be of good _____, and he shall _____ your heart,
all ye that hope in the _____.

True / False

Reference

T F Mary had a legion of demons within her

T F Mary witnessed the crucifixion of Christ

T F The Apostles believed Mary's report of the Lord's resurrection

T F The Lord first appeared to Mary Magdalene

EXTRA CREDIT – In your opinion, are you courageous with the gospel of Christ, and if so, how?
