



<sup>1</sup> *The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. (John 20:1)*

I hope the reader will forgive my over indulgence with the character and subject of Mary of Magdala; but she is a striking figure of faith and love that is unsurpassed in Scripture as relates to common humanity. She is one of my favorite characters of the all of the Bible, and one of the two women that I hold in the greatest esteem along with Ruth, the Moabitess woman.

There are unsubstantiated claims by theologians<sup>1</sup> that Mary was a woman beset by carnal sins. That may or may not be true, but I do not believe we can deduce such an intimation from the record. She seems to have come from a good family of Magdala, a small town overlooking the Sea of Galilee. She must not have been a woman of ill repute since friend, Joanna, was a woman of some social standing, being the wife of Chuza, steward of King Herod. (Luke 8:2-3) But Mary, very much like the rest of us, was not unblemished by sin demon possession. *“Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.”* (Mark 16:9) Demons cannot enter a heart uninvited, or in which the entrance door has not been left ajar. These sins may have been of the type common to those who are in a particularly well-respected social class, and the greater of these that gives birth to all others is that of PRIDE.

Mind you, I am not claiming this as an established fact, but Mary’s absolute lack of pride after the demons were cast out suggests to me that there must have been a high degree of it that needed repenting of after. Mary was among the last women who remained at the cross until the body of Christ had been removed. She was at the Garden Tomb until the stone was rolled over the entrance at the beginning of Sabbath (this being a High Sabbath as well – Passover). Mary Magdalene was first to the Garden Tomb, early on the first day of the week, while it was yet dark. (John 20:1) Mary was among the first women (who came a bit later to the tomb) to report the empty tomb to the disciples. And Mary was the first woman to carry the news of the resurrected Christ to the disciples at the direction of The Lord Gardener (Jesus): . . . *go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.* *Mary*

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<sup>1</sup> *Theologians* – That class of people who study Scripture with the intent of showing that it is not the inerrant Word of God and that their interpretation of Scripture’s hidden meanings which contradict the clear meaning is correct. Further they would have you believe writings are of far more use in guiding your life than Scripture.

Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her. (John 20:17-18)

Please observe the humble devotion that drives Mary to risk the wrath of the Jewish rulers in demonstrating her love and loyalty for her Lord. There is an unnamed woman who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears. Though there is no certain evidence that this was Mary Magdalene, it would surely have been in her character to have done so. *37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, 38 And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.* (Luke 7:37-38) The woman who entered, uninvited, the house of the Pharisee showed the same kind of courage and determination that Mary showed in her standing by the cross until Jesus was taken away, waiting at the tomb until it was sealed by the stone, and braving the dark streets of Jerusalem to arrive at the tomb while it was yet dark. (It was not customary in that age for women to travel the streets alone during hours of darkness) It is certain that this first anointing of Jesus was not the same for which Mary of Bethany is remembered and revered (Luke 12) six days before the death of Christ.

The unnamed woman of Luke 7 did all things in a manner similar to Mary of Bethany. She brought an alabaster box of ointment, further proof of her social standing due to the great expense of it. One act performed by this first anointing, and not the second, was the washing of Jesus feet by the tears of the woman. Additionally, the act of greatest humility was the kissing of His feet. Perhaps the woman used her collection of tears she had saved in a tear bottle to wash His feet. Mary is noted for her profuse tears – even at the Garden Tomb when her tears blinded her from recognizing the Gardener as Jesus.

Well, this is a mystery, and we cannot say for certain, but I believe the first woman to wash the feet of Jesus was Mary Magdalene, and the second to be Mary of Bethany. Both loved the Lord with deep and genuine love that was pure and above reproach. It is my prayer I shall be able to ask Mary Magdalene, face-to-face, in Heaven regarding this matter.

Regardless of what sin or blemish Mary Magdalene evidenced before being made whole by Christ, she was a changed person after coming to know and love Him<sup>2</sup>.

There are two almost unrelated events that happened today that constrain me, out of love and pain, to mention. The first was the falling asleep in Christ of a loving and faithful wife, Sarah. She was married to my friend, the Rev Geordie Menzies-Grierson of Newcastle, England. She was a woman full of faith and the love of Jesus. Physical death has made a temporary separation of these two loving people. Our prayers are offered that the Lord will provide solace and peace to the heart of Geordie+. No prayers are needed for Sarah in the land of the living to which she has flown away. I am privileged and inspired to know Sarah.

The second event is of an altogether different nature. I was called today by my friend who leads our local VFW chapter to accompany him and a lady to the home of her abusive husband to gather her belongings and to be protected sheltered by the House of Ruth until some better resolution could be found. The home was a dismal scene of misery and darkness. It was a heart-breaking experience. The couple obviously held each other in great affection. The husband was a former Marine and a retired

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<sup>2</sup> God will transform us if we let Him; recall if you will Saul of Tarsus. If God can make Saint Paul out of him, why would you think Mary Magdalene would be less blessed by Him. Or, you for that matter.

Army NCO. The wife was a self-sacrificing lady who had nursed her husband back to health from an illness of more than a year. But there was a conspicuous absence of Godly faith<sup>3</sup> on the part of the husband. It struck me as utterly tragic that such a marriage would have been one made in heaven if only Christ were invited to be the central figure of the wedding. The weather was stormy and dark, and glowering, burgeoning clouds filled the skies; moreover, the hour was approach evening. I wondered what depressing and painful specters would occupy that home once the wife as departed.

I silently thanked God that I have a loving wife, and a kind and loving Lord in my own marriage to preclude such a tragedy from happening in my home. It made me know that my home will always be safe from such tragic developments because Jesus Christ lives in our marriage.

There are so many good and faithful women like Ruth and Mary Magdalene who suffer from the abuse of a faithless and unbelieving husband. Rather than condemn the husband, would it not be wonderful if we could convince the husband of the benefits of Christ and restore the marriage to the footing God intended?<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> He was not just lacking Godly faith, but gratitude for all he had been given; his wife who cared for him, the medical team that provided healing treatment him, his recovery and life. He was too busy thinking what he did not have to be grateful for what he did have.

<sup>4</sup> The life God intends for us is greater than we can imagine on our own. Saul of Tarsus thought he would "be somebody." Blinded, given real sight, he became someone he could have never imagined without the Holy Ghost. The last apostle, he became the foremost and spread the Gospel to the ends of the known earth. This husband cannot grasp how wonderful his life would be if he would but follow God's instructions. Just like all of us.