

Love The Great Motivator
John 20:11-18 (NKJV)

11 But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. 12 And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. 13 Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." 14 Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, 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, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.

As Peter and John have come to the tomb and went in and saw the grave clothes lying in a very mysterious manner. They have left. John believes that Jesus is raised from the grave.

Now Mary comes back to the tomb. She has probably not come into contact with Peter & John. She may have been with the other women when Jesus appeared to her, but the context doesn't seem so. It seems that Jesus appeared to the other women later.

But the question that I keep asking myself is why does Jesus appear first to Mary Magdalene?

- I. Who might we have expected Jesus to appear to first?
 - A. Maybe His mother Mary.
 1. Actually Catholic tradition teaches just that.
 2. "At dawn on Easter Sunday Jesus rose from the dead and tradition tells us He appeared first to His Mother. She thus shared in the joy and glory of His triumph" Short Catechism of Mary, Cardinal Charles Journet, 38).
 3. Here we clearly see that Cardinal Charles Journet is in contradiction to the gospel writer Mark.
 4. Mark 16:9 (NKJV) Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons.
 - B. Maybe to Peter.
 1. Peter was the leader no doubt as is seen by his preaching on Pentecost and the first 10 chapters of Acts.
 2. But Peter had denied the Lord.

3. His fellowship was broken and would need to be restored as later seen in John's gospel
- C. Maybe to John or James the sons of Zebedee.
1. After all they had requested to sit on the right and left hand of Jesus in His kingdom.
 2. Wasn't John the beloved, the disciple whom Jesus loved?
 3. Hadn't leaned on Jesus breast at the supper?
 4. Had he not been at the trial and crucifixion?
 5. Doesn't he seem to be the first to have believed that Jesus was raised from the dead?
 6. Wouldn't he write the Revelation?
 7. But no it is not John that Jesus first appears to and gives this special blessing of seeing first the risen Christ.
- II. Jesus appears first to Mary Magdalene.
- A. Proverbs 8:17 I love those who love me, And those who seek me diligently will find me.
1. It seems that Mary was the first one to the tomb.
 2. John 20:1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, **while it was still dark**, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.
- B. What made her so special?
1. Proverbs 8:17 I love those who love me, And those who seek me diligently will find me.
 2. Why did she love Him so?
 3. Luke 8:2 Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons,
 - a. We do not know what that all involved.
 - b. But it was such a dramatic change that Mary never forgot who had made her whole.
 4. Jesus had healed thousands of people, but they were like the 9 lepers who did not return to give thanks.
- C. There is no reason to connect Mary with the sinful woman who anointed Jesus' feet at the religious leaders house.
1. Luke 7:36-47 36 Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him.

And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. 37 And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, 38 and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."

- D. But Jesus uses this occasion to teach the religious leader something about real love.
1. 40 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." So he said, "Teacher, say it." 41 "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?" 43 Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged." 44 Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. 45 You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. 46 You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. 47 Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much.
- E. The conclusion.
1. "But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."
 2. I feel sorry for those Christians who never really saw themselves and sinners of the worst degree.
 3. They can never love much, and thus their service will be less.
- F. The truth of the matter is that when it comes to measuring up to what God expects of us it is like jumping the Grand Canyon at it widest point.
1. You my jump 3 feet or 30 feet farther than me but we both came up way short.
 2. We all crash and burn.
 3. That is why we have a tendency to compare ourselves with other rather than Jesus.
 4. People may be better than the people down at the church but they are not

better than Jesus.

5. They have missed the mark just as far as those down at the church.

III. What can we learn from this.

- A. Isaiah 40:31 (NKJV) 31 But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.
- B. Ezra 8:22 "The hand of our God is upon all those for good who seek Him, but His power and His wrath are against all those who forsake Him."
- C. Isa 55:6 — Seek the Lord while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.
- D. Mt 6:33 — But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.
- E. Mt 7:7 — "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 — For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

IV. Love Him, Seek Him early

- A. God has a blessing for those who pursue Him.
- B. Mary would not, could not leave the tomb without knowing where her Savior was.
- C. Follow hard after the Lord.
- D. Psalm 42:1 As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God.