

Mary Magdalene - proving Jesus' humanity!

Song of Solomon 3¹⁻⁴; Psalm 42¹⁻¹⁰; 2 Corinthians 5¹⁴⁻¹⁷; John 20^{1-2,11-18}

I held him and would not let him go. [Song of Solomon 3⁴]

Do not hold on to me. [John 20¹⁷]

One tradition tells us that Mary Magdalene was a woman of uncertain morals and dubious income and one who was shunned by society. On the other hand there is a fairly convincing argument that Mary Magdalene was Jesus' wife and human partner.

How easily we fall into a trap of seeing everything through the lens of sex: some struggle with the idea of Jesus associating with a prostitute and others struggle with Jesus having a wife and of engaging with - perhaps even enjoying - the physical side of marriage.

What we do know about Mary Magdalene is:

- ✦ Jesus healed her: **from whom he had cast our seven demons** [Mk 16⁹; Lk 8²].
- ✦ She may not be the **sinful woman** of Luke 7 [7³⁶⁻⁵⁰] but she is listed amongst the women who accompany Jesus and financially support his ministry [Luke 8²⁻³]
- ✦ It could be that Mary is the sister of Martha who anoints Jesus' feet and wipes them with her hair [Jn 11²] and then anoints Jesus again [Jn 12¹⁻⁷] and it is Jesus who says, **leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial.**
- ✦ She is a witness of the crucifixion [Jn 19²⁵] and the first to witness the resurrection [Jn 20¹]

Whatever the nature of the relationship, Jesus and Mary Magdalene were obviously close and she is there. Indeed, her closeness is a simple proof of Jesus' Humanity.

But Mary Magdalene is for us an inspiration on how we may follow Jesus:

- ✦ Followers of Jesus are real people with real passions. The point that is being made in the Song of Solomon is important: it is clearly a dream in which a

young woman experiences physical desire for her lover. However, even in her dream as she searches him out, there is self control. **I held him and would not let him go until I brought him to my mother's house and into the chamber of her that conceived me** [SofS 3⁴]. As a Christian it is important that Christ is allowed to master our passions.

- ✦ Followers of Jesus are real people with real difficulties. The Psalmist within faith and confidence in God is brave enough to share what Dr Martyn Lloyd Jones famously called 'Spiritual Depression.' **My tears have been my food day and night; I remember [how I led the] procession to the house of God; I pour out my soul; why are you cast down o my soul; my soul is cast down within me; deep calls to deep.** The antidote isn't instant but is expressed in the Christian talking to themselves: **Hope in God; for I shall again praise him.** It is also the confidence that **the Lord commands his steadfast love.** It isn't a betrayal of faith to feel down, it only becomes that when you forget that God always holds you. Remember, even Mary Magdalene had to be healed - and she lived close to Jesus!
- ✦ Paul reminds us that we don't make ourselves what God wants us to be - that is God's action in us. His action is inspired by **love** and raises us from **death** to the point that we **no longer live for ourselves but for him who died and was raised for [us]**. The glorious and liberating truth is that **if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see everything has become new.**
- ✦ Finally, take note that Mary Magdalene was the first to preach about the resurrection. The verb used is ἀγγέλλουσα, which means to **announce** or proclaim. That is the task of the Church - to tell others about the difference God has made to us.

Mary Magdalene is an example of the difference living with Christ makes .