

The Lord's Message: Mary Magdalene: Loyal Follower of Jesus

Date: September 6, 2026

Where: Tilghman Methodist Church

Scripture Reference: Luke 8:1-3, John 20:10-16

Today, we are continuing to look at the Faithful Women of the Bible. For the month of September we are going to be focusing on three faithful women in the New Testament, starting with Mary Magdalene.

Mary Magdalene's reputation has been tarnished by the church and also by the world. I hope that when we finish our examination of Mary Magdalene that her reputation will be restored to being a Loyal Follower of Jesus and nothing more.

Let us pray.

We first learn of Mary Magdalene in Luke 8:2. Jesus has been going around the towns healing people of all kinds of sickness. He must have healed several women, one of whom was Mary Magdalene, of seven demons.

Magdala was a prosperous first-century fishing village and was known for its famous fish-salting industry on the Sea of Galilee. Salt would be brought in from regional salt flats around the Mediterranean. The fish would be put into plaster vats or stone pools where layers of coarse salt would be placed on them. After sitting in these vats or pools for many days, the fish would be taken out and hung on these wooden towers called "fish towers" to air dry under the hot Galilean sun. After this process, the cured fish would be put into baskets or jars and transported by mule wagons and ships across the Roman empire. This was a prized commodity.

Archeologists have found the vats or pools and other artifacts of this trade in Magdala. They have also unearthed the remains of an ancient synagogue.

Mary Magdalene had seven demons, compared to the man that Jesus cured of a legion of demons on the other side of the Sea of Galilee in the graveyard of Gerasenes. Now, we do not know how these demons affected Mary Magdalene. The scripture does not give a detailed account of her symptoms either medical or psychological. Some have theorized that her life before Jesus was one of pain, isolation, and deep despair. Whatever her life was before Jesus cured her, it was changed remarkably after Jesus removed these seven demons from her. This is good news for all of us. It does not matter what is in your past, you can be forgiven and made new in Christ. Paul describes this best in **2 Corinthians 5:17**.

Sadly a sermon given by Pope Gregory the Great in 591 AD suggesting that Mary Magdalene was the prostitute woman in **Luke 7:36-50** who anointed Jesus' feet with expensive perfume gave an incorrect impression of Mary. This was a complete error on the pope's part, but unfortunately many people still believe this today. The world uses this to degrade the honor of this loyal and faithful woman.

In **Luke 8:3**, Mary Magdalene, with some other women, express their gratitude for what Christ has done for them, by supporting the ministry of Jesus with their own funds. Their support came in four ways: financial contributions, traveling with Jesus and the other disciples, preparing meals, and being eyewitnesses to the resurrection. Now, we do not know how much Mary Magdalene was able to contribute, but the other women were very wealthy. Joanna, whose husband was the manager of Herod household, was very wealthy. Susanna, we do not know anything, except that she was mentioned here as supporting Jesus and the ministry. She must have some provenance that the first century readers would have recognized her name.

All of these women, and others, gave their money, their possessions, and whatever supplies they had to cover transportation costs, providing and preparing food, and other needs. They expressed their deep gratitude for how Christ had changed their lives, some physically and others spiritually. They traveled with the rest of the group of disciples and listened very carefully to Jesus' teachings and sermons.

It is Mary Magdalene and the other women that stayed loyal to Jesus, even when He was nailed to the cross, **John 19:25**. The male disciples of Jesus were all hiding for fear that they would be brought to trial and crucified also. These included Peter, James and John, Jesus' closest circle of friends. It was the women that stayed near Jesus in His darkest hour.

It is the women who, along with Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, prepare Jesus' body for a hasty burial, it is the reason that three days after Jesus' death on the cross, the women are going to the tomb to finish the burial preparation, **Luke 24:1**. They find that the stone is rolled away, but Jesus' crucified body is not in the tomb. Instead, they find two angels who tell them that Jesus is alive, **Luke 24:4-8**. Luke tells us who those women are in verses 9-10. They are the first preachers of the Gospel. They are the first to tell the Good News. The reaction they get from the male disciples is going to be typical of anyone that hears the Gospel, they did not believe them, verse 11. Even after Peter and John go to the tomb, they still did not believe that Jesus was alive, **John 20:8-9**.

It is not until Mary Magdalene goes back to the tomb and sees for herself the risen Jesus that they understand. Let us look again at this beautiful encounter of Mary Magdalene with the risen Jesus. Mary returns to the tomb, and she is in deep despair. Tears are streaming down her face as she looks in and sees two angels where Jesus' crucified body was. The angels ask her woman, "Woman, why are you crying?" She replies, "They have taken my Lord away and I don't know where they have put him." Now Jesus is standing near her, but she does not recognize Jesus. She thinks He is the gardener. Jesus asked the same question, "Woman, why are you crying?" Mary replies, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have put Him, and I will get Him." Jesus just says one word that changes her temperament. It was the same word that caused the seven demons to flee from her when she first encountered Jesus, "Mary!" The sadness is gone, and she replies, "Rabboni," which means, My Teacher. This is a beautiful intimate encounter that Mary has with Jesus.

Sadly, the world has used this encounter to suggest that Mary and Jesus' relationship was sexual. How perverted the world can be! Again, the world uses its perversion to degrade a loyal and faithful woman. The Bible tells us the truth.

Mary remained loyal and faithful to Jesus through out His ministry, His crucifixion, and now His resurrection. Mary stayed with Christ during the highest time and the lowest time of His life on earth. She is rewarded by being the first to see Christ. She goes to the others and exclaims, "I have seen the Lord!"

In the darkest point of our lives, Jesus is still near us. When our life is a mess, if we believe in Jesus, He will save us and change our lives forever. Like Mary let us remain loyal and faithful to Jesus, despite what the rest of the world does and thinks of us.

Let us continue to listen to God and do what He says.