

Mary Magdalen

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[0 : 00] John chapter 20, we read at verse 16, Jesus said unto her, Nay. She turned herself and said unto him, Abonai, which is to say, My Master.

Jesus said unto her, Nay. What I'd like us to do over the next few weeks, we plan to begin today in the morning's series on looking at those whom our Lord addresses by name in the New Testament. And there aren't all that many. There's plenty of people that Jesus speaks to, and plenty of people that you think Jesus has addressed by name, but we only actually read of a very few people that Jesus actually addresses by name, or that is rather recorded for us that he has addressed by name. And that's what I'd like us to look at over these next few weeks. And we'll be beginning this morning with Mary Magdalene here, whom Jesus addresses personally by name. Obviously, she's a very special lady.

Her relationship to Jesus is all but unique, and we'll look at that in just a moment too. But over the course of the next few weeks, as far as I can ascertain, and I'm open to correction on this, but as far as I can ascertain, we can identify nine individuals whom in the New Testament our Lord, in either his earthly or risen capacity, addresses individually and personally by name.

[1 : 36] So we'll be looking at those over the next few weeks. But we begin today, obviously, with Mary Magdalene. And when Jesus addresses her with this single word, the addressing of her name, then that changes everything for her.

Because you'll see in the preceding verse, Jesus has already spoken her. She sees him, but she doesn't realize it's him, whether she's looking through her tears and perhaps her vision's a bit blurry, or whether it is just shielded from her eyes and it's kept from her who he is.

He speaks to a woman, why weep us now? Now, this doesn't just, I mean, woman in the sense of our, the way we might use it now, culture and language, but rather it's a term of respect, the term that Jesus uses to address his own mother.

It would translate most into our modern term, ma'am. You know, as you might address the queen, ma'am. And that's the sense of it here. So, woman, ma'am, why are you weeping?

What seekest thou? Whom seekest thou? She's supposing him to be the guard and say, Sir, thou born immense, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. So there's already this little conversation between them, and yet she doesn't know it's Jesus.

[2 : 54] Jesus, her life remains in that state of mourning and sorrow and devastation that it was even before. Even when she saw the angels who speak to him, woman, why need us thou?

She said, I'm because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. So seeing angels, which she clearly doesn't know for sure, are angels seeing Jesus, whom she thinks is the guard, doesn't do it for her.

And even when Jesus speaks to her, we could say, well, the sound of his voice, that's what does it. But yes, she hears his voice, but she doesn't know it's him until he addresses her by her own name. Jesus said unto her, Mary. She turned herself and said, I'm with her, Bonai, which is to say, Master, suddenly she knows it's him.

Now, of course, not all of those that we will encounter in our series as we look ahead will in fact be what we could call saints of the Lord. Not all of them will be in a saved condition, as far as we can tell, either here or hereafter.

[4 : 01] But they have this distinction of being amongst those whom Jesus addresses by name. And Isaiah tells us in chapter 43, in verse 1, that now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, fear not, for I have redeemed thee.

I have called thee by thy name. Thou art mine. When the Lord calls people by name, it is significant. We said with the children that it is the Lord who puts into the heart of parents what they will call their

children.

You might think, well, no, because, you know, for years and generations, we just called our children after their grandparents or after, you know, an uncle or aunt or somebody in the family.

Yes, okay. But who called them by their name? And who were they called after? Well, after a previous ancestor all the way back. And do you really think that all the way back, the Lord didn't know how many generations, how many people would be called by that name until it came to you, until it came to the individual.

Even Jesus' own genealogies have got various occasions when the same name crops up over the course of the generations. Of course they do. This is standard practice in families for people to call somebody after a previous relative or to include their name somewhere.

[5 : 22] It's a very, very common practice. It doesn't mean that the individual is any less unique, nor does it mean that the Lord has not put that name into the hearts of their parents to call on it.

It is the Lord ultimately who names us each one. Because just as Adam named all the creatures of creation and whatsoever they were called, that's what their name was.

That's what we read there, you know, at the beginning in Genesis when the Lord brings all the creatures to Adam and he identifies them all and whatsoever he gives them, that is it.

And the Lord brings them all. He formed man of the dust of the ground. He planted the garden. He brought the beasts to him. He took the man, put him in the garden. And he commanded him what he should and shouldn't do.

And he gave him everything. And whatsoever name man gave the beasts of the field, that was their name. So there is a certain authority associated with the naming of someone.

[6 : 24] And this is also why, for example, God sometimes changes people's names. Remember, for example, that although Solomon has the name Solomon, that of course means peace, the Lord also gave him the name Jedidiah, which is of course, you know, the blessing, the gift of God that he gives, of Leicester, of Jehovah.

And likewise, of course, he changes Abram's name from Abram to Abraham. Not just high father, which is what an exalted father of Abram means, but a father of many nations.

He changes Sarah's name from being Sarah, my princess, to just our princess, a princess of all the Lord's people. Likewise, he changes Jacob's name to Israel.

Instead of being a supplanter, he becomes a prince with God. That is what Israel means. When the Lord takes individuals, he not only names them, but sometimes he changes their name because the name is part and parcel of the identity and the character of the person.

When we read of Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law, coming back to the land of Israel after the famine and coming back to Bethlehem.

[7 : 41] And people say in Ruth chapter 1, they say, oh, is this Naomi? And she said, call me not Naomi, which means my sweet one, but rather call me Mara, which means bitter.

For the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty. Why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me.

Call me Mara. Of course, that's what the name Mary comes from. It's from Mara, which means bitter. But also, in some sense, it's reckoned by some to be a contraction or a changing through the languages of the Hebrew name Miriam.

From the Old Testament there, of course, Moses and Aaron's sister, and the name of that, the name means rebellion. But Mara of itself means bitter. And Mary Magdalene had something of quite a bitter life, of course, before.

We first encounter her, in John's account of the Gospel, you turn back from chapter 20, you'll see that we encounter her there at chapter 19, verse 25.

[8 : 47] Now, there's stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother and his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene. That's the first mention of her in John's account.

We have her in Mark, of course, in chapter 16, at verse 9, where we read, And that's the first hint we get of what had afflicted her, and how she had been affected, and what Jesus had done for her. And we read that Mary Magdalene was there at the cross, in Mark's account of the Gospel, looking on and far off, among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the mother of James, and the lesson of Joseph, and Salome, who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him and ministered unto him, and many other women, which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

But amongst them all, there was none more devoted than Mary Magdalene. Now, in Luke's account of the Gospel, we read in chapter 8, verses 1 to 3, that as Jesus went throughout all the areas of Judea and the villages, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God, the twelve were with him, and certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary, called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils.

And Joanna, the wife of Cusa, Herod, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance. So whatever they had, in terms of food, or resources, or provision, they expended it on Jesus and the apostles.

[10:24] Now, remember, as we've said in the past, that it's not just a case of, oh, we love Jesus, so we're doing it for Jesus, he's one person. Everywhere Jesus goes, he brings the twelve disciples with him. So you're not just feeding one man, you're feeding thirteen grown men.

Now that's going to take some doing, day in, day out. These women must have effectively begged themselves, emptied themselves of all the resources that they had, just to sustain Jesus and the disciples.

That's the kind of love that is being shown. And right to the end, here is Mary Magdalene. Mary, whose name means bitter, and who had a very bitter life.

It's a wonder in some ways that the gospel accounts don't give us the actual narrative of Jesus casting out those devils from Mary Magdalene.

When she's such a significant figure, you would expect perhaps that that narrative of him, him casting out those seven devils, that would be a big deal.

[11:24] That would be something that would be recounted. Perhaps it is something that took place when the other disciples were away on their preaching tours, or when they had been sent out, you know, perhaps they weren't there to witness it.

So none of the gospel authors were eyewitnesses of what happened, so maybe that's why it's not there. We don't know. The incident itself is not there, but the fact of it is recorded.

And Jesus addresses her by name. And when he addresses her by name, everything changes for her. She knows that it is him.

She knows it is him because he knows her. And the reason he knows her is because he speaks to her personally. Now, it is far more common for Jesus when he addresses people not to name them individually, and particularly women.

There are only two women who are addressed by name that we have recorded, addressed by name by Jesus. And one of them here is Mary Magdalene.

[12:32] Usually he uses the term we've spoken about here, woman, ma'am. This polite, almost formal way of addressing somebody in public.

And this is how he addresses her usually. This is how he addresses most of the women that he speaks to with this polite, public formality. But using her individual name, that changes everything. Now, I'm from a generation where using somebody's Christian name, their first name, used to be an indication of friendliness and of closeness. In the days before, everybody just had their first name on a name badge, but never their last name or their details.

You would address somebody by their last name. It would be Mr. So-and-so or Mrs. So-and-so or Miss So-and-so or whatever. And it would be your last name with your prefix.

Mr., Mrs., Miss, whatever. But, you know, you would never tell somebody you're Christian. You never tell somebody your first name. That would be too, you know, too close. That would be too sort of informal. That would be way too sort of unofficial.

[13:36] And gradually it has changed. Now it has changed that it used to be that by giving somebody your first name, you were giving away something. You were letting them in a bit instead of just making them address you by your last name and by your title.

You know, now you give them your first name, so you're letting them in a bit. But now they're all first names. And what you don't do is you don't give people your last name. Because by giving your last name, they can identify you or your address or your details or whatever the case may be.

And they can hone in on your benefit. Just get a first name. That doesn't tell them anything about you. And they say, we have completely come full circle. But in Jesus' day, to address somebody by their given name, that was close.

That was personal. It wasn't the sort of public informality of the name badge. So you can call somebody whatever you like. Hi, this is so-and-so speaking. I'm calling from whatever the company

may be.

We'd like to interest you in a particular offer as you get these calls from. And the first thing they do is they say their first name. They don't tell you their last name. They don't tell you where they live or anything about themselves.

[14:47] But they'll give you their first name. And this kind of artificial informality is, if you like, a protection. It's almost like an anonymity now. But it's not in Jesus' day.

To use somebody's given name is to come close. It is to go straight to the heart of who the person is. It is to know their identity.

To know their character. To know their personhood. Jesus said unto her, Mary. She turned herself and said unto her, Abonai.

Which is to say, Master. She suddenly knows it's Jesus. She knows it's him. And she knows that he knows her. And what she is there for. And all the things swirling around in her mind and in her head. She knows. She doesn't have to tell him. She doesn't have to speak about. Because he knows. He knows everything about her.

[15:43] Because he knows her personally by name. Jesus said previously in John chapter 10 verses 2 and 3.

He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth. And the sheep hear his voice. And he calleth his own sheep by name.

And leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them. And the sheep follow him. For they know his voice. Now, in one sense we could say, well, Mary didn't know his voice.

Obviously. Because he spoke to her beforehand. And she didn't immediately say, oh yes, it's you, Lord. Now, partly you could say that's context. If you're not expecting to see somebody somewhere, you don't see them.

Now, I'm sure you've had situations where you could walk past somebody in the street. If you happen to walk past them in a city on the mainland where you don't expect to see them. You could be completely not seeing them because you don't expect to see them there.

[16:47] They're completely out of context. And so you miss them. Because you're not expecting to see them there. If it's out of context, you're just not registering the same way.

And as far as she's concerned, Jesus is dead. And his body is gone. So whoever she is seeing through her tears there in the garden, it can't be him. So she doesn't immediately think, oh yeah, that's the voice of Jesus.

But when he addresses her by name, Mary, she turned herself and said, I'm going to say, Master. And in that one word, he knows that she knows that he's got everything in the palm of his hand for her life.

And he knows as well that the first thing she wants to do is throw herself at his feet and seize him, as it were, by the ankle. Touch me not. For I am not yet ascended to my father.

But go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend to my father and your father, to my God and your God. Now when he says my brethren, he doesn't just mean his four brothers, his physical brothers, of course.

[17:56] He means those who believe in him. He means his disciples. As Hebrews tells us, chapter 2, verses 11 and 12. For both he that sanctifyeth and they who are sanctified are all of one.

For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren. And again, likewise, at verse 17 of the same chapter. Wherefore, in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of his people.

So those who are believing and trusting in Christ, he calls them his brethren. He said that already before. You know, when people say, oh, your mother and your brothers are outside, they want to speak to you.

He said, who is my mother and my brothers? Those who do the will of God. He looked around at him and the disciples said, whoever does the will of my father is my mother, my sister, my brother. So go and tell my brethren. Means go and tell the disciples. Say unto them, I ascend to my father and your father. So Mary, Michael came and told the disciples, i.e. his brother, that she had seen the Lord and that he had spoken these things unto her.

[19 : 05] When he addresses her by name, she knows that he knows everything. He knows her personally.

He knows her inside out. He knows what he's done in the casting out of the seven devils. He knows how faithfully and lovingly she's ministered to him and to the apostles. He knows that she's been the first of the grave.

He knows the devotion of her heart. He knows that she doesn't have the kind of resources that Joseph of Adamathia and Nicodemus would have. A hundred pound weight of spices and so on. But she's bringing what she has because out of her devotion and love, she just loves the Lord Jesus. With a heart that is breaking, what does it say in the Psalms? The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.

A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. And the Lord does not despise her broken and contrite heart. But rather, when he is risen from the dead, the first person he appears to, as Mark tells us, as John the Ritz here, is Mary Magdalene.

[20 : 13] And the very first person he speaks to is not his own mother or his own brothers or even Peter or John or any of the others. It is Mary Magdalene.

And he speaks to her by name, Mary. When he calls her by name, as we've said already, she knows that he knows everything.

And I would suggest to you that part of what the Lord wants suffering souls to do, those who are weary and heavy laden, as he says at the end of Matthew 11 there, He knows it, come unto me, all you that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lonely in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

He wants the weary and the heavy laden to come to him. Just as Mary there is weary and heavy laden. But if you look at the context of that end of Matthew 11, what's the preceding verses?

[21 : 20] The preceding verses 25 to 27 in Matthew 11 say, At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto these.

Even so, Father, for it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me and my Father, And no man knoweth the Son but the Father, Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, And he to whomsoever the Son will reveal them.

And then he says, Come to me, all ye who labour and are heavy laden. He desires to reveal himself in a way that only he can To those who are weary and heavy laden, And who are burdened down with everything that is going wrong in their lives.

And who find no solution in this world. And, you know, the sooner we discover that there is no solution to be found in this world, And all its glitter and all its distractions and all its supposed wealth And all the diversifications of the world.

That is not going to satisfy. It is not going to fulfil. It may stimulate our taste buds for a little while. It may be the flavour of the month for a little while.

[22 : 47] But it will not satisfy deep down. Because that emptiness within the soul is that which only the Lord can fulfil.

And that is why he says he thanks his Father that nobody will know him except whomsoever the Father through him reveals himself to.

And he reveals himself to his own people who come to him in their weirdness, In their heavy ladenness, in their broken heartedness. And he speaks to them by name.

And as he addresses them by name, they know that he knows. He knows everything they have been through.

He knows the burden that they carry. He knows the brokenness of their heart. He knows the shame of their past and their anxieties about the future. And their uncertainty in the present.

[23 : 45] All of these things he says, I know. I know. I know. And I know you. And he addresses us by name.

Jesus said unto her, Mary. And that's all it took. He just needed to speak her name. And she knew it was him.

And she knew that everything now had gone in an instant from being the worst day of her life. To being the greatest day in the history of the world.

And it happened in a moment. In a moment she goes from this brokenness of this empty grave that she is convinced has been grave robbed.

And these strange people that she's seen that she doesn't recognize as angels. And the fact that Peter and John don't know what to do either. And she's just weeping her heart out in the garden and turns around.

[24 : 42] And she thinks it's the gardener but it's not. It's Jesus. And he speaks to her and she doesn't know what to say. And then he says, maybe. She turned herself and said unto him upon her master.

And suddenly it's all right. It's all right. Because she thought he was dead but he's alive. And she thought he was gone but he's right there.

And she thought she would never see him again. And now he will never leave her for time or for eternity. It is all changed. When the Lord addresses her by name.

And that is what he seeks to do in the heart and speaking to the soul of every single one of those whom he calls to be his. Now as we've said in the weeks ahead we'll see that not every individual that Jesus calls by name is necessarily a saved person.

But we'll come to that in due course. I think we can certainly take it that Mary Magdalene is. But after you've seen the risen Lord. After he has spoken to you by name.

[25 : 51] You know what more is there to do? It's all downhill from there or so you would think. Well I think we can take it Mary Magdalene doesn't take it as going downhill. It's just up.

It's just good from there on. Because once you have Christ. Everything in the world is different. Everything in the world is new. Everything in the world is transformed.

And whatever burden you may still have to carry. He bears it for you. And whatever anxiety or concern or problem you may have. You know that he knows. He knows because he knows you by name.

And you know that he knows you by name because he addresses you by name. Jesus said unto her. Mary. And so her life, her heart, her complete world is changed because of it.

And yet as we've said. After that what can you do? Whatever can compare with that. You're living in that forever. And in fact we read at verse 18. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord.

[26 : 53] And they had spoken these things unto her. And then what then? Mary Magdalene disappears from the narrative. Now I think we can safely take it.

And when we read in the Acts of the Apostles in chapter 1. You know of how the apostles gathered in the upper room. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication. With the women. And Mary the mother of Jesus.

And with his brethren. I think we can safely take it. Mary Magdalene was there. But she's never named. She's never named at all in the narrative. After this incident.

She goes and tells his disciples that she had seen the Lord. And that he had spoken these things unto her. And then. She's not mentioned anymore. It's not because she's not important.

It's not because she's vanished off the face of the earth. It's just that. That which she had been put in the world to do. Has now been accomplished.

[27 : 52] And all the rest of our life. The Lord knows. And it's written in his hand. It's written in his book. But it doesn't have to be written for us. That's between the Lord and Mary.

She has seen the Lord. She has met the Lord. The very first one to do so. And he has spoken to her by name. What else do you need?

No wonder there's no further mention. No wonder she quietly takes a back seat thereafter. No further narrative. But what else do you need?

Because nobody will ever take the place. That unique place in history. That she has. The first to meet with the Lord. The first to be spoken to by the risen Lord.

The first to be addressed by him. In his risen condition. By name. But that which the Lord does for Mary.

[28 : 51] I would suggest to you in all reverence. He does quietly and through his spirit. And by his word. He does to each one. That he calls. It's not a case of.

Hey you. Or you know. Everybody just come and follow me. When he deals with us. He deals with us as individuals. He deals with us as individual personalities.

As to his mind. Little children. And he calls. Jesus. And he calls. By name. Those whom.

He would reveal himself to. You see. He spoke to me. And she didn't recognize him. Maybe the Lord has been speaking to you. For years. Or for months. And you haven't recognized. That it's him. Perhaps you put it down to. It's just a coincidence. Or it's just something that happened. Or you can't possibly say. That's the Lord. And all these different instances. And maybe one day.

[29 : 47] By the grace of God. You'll be in a state of grace. Where you're able to look back. And say. That was the Lord. That was the Lord. That was the Lord. That was the Lord. I just couldn't see it. All these ways.

By which he brought me. All these times. He was speaking to me. I couldn't hear it. I didn't know it was the Lord. She didn't know it was him. She. Supposing him to be the gardener.

Say that to him. Sir. If thou is born. And hence. Tell me. Where thou is laid. And I will take him away. Just so long as I've got Jesus. I'm okay. She says. But Jesus said. I'm going to her.

Hey. I don't know what your individual name is. I don't know if it's the same name. As your parents gave you. Whether you choose to go by a different name. Now. That's personally.

It's between you and the Lord. Whatever it is. That identifies you. Individually. And personally. The Lord knows. The character.

[30 : 40] The personality. The history. The future. The identity. Of who it is you are. And as the Lord calls. There will come the day. If you are truly seeking after him.

As many was here. When the Lord calls you. By name. And when he does. It will not only change your life. It will change your world.

That's right. It will be a full basis.

Thank You.