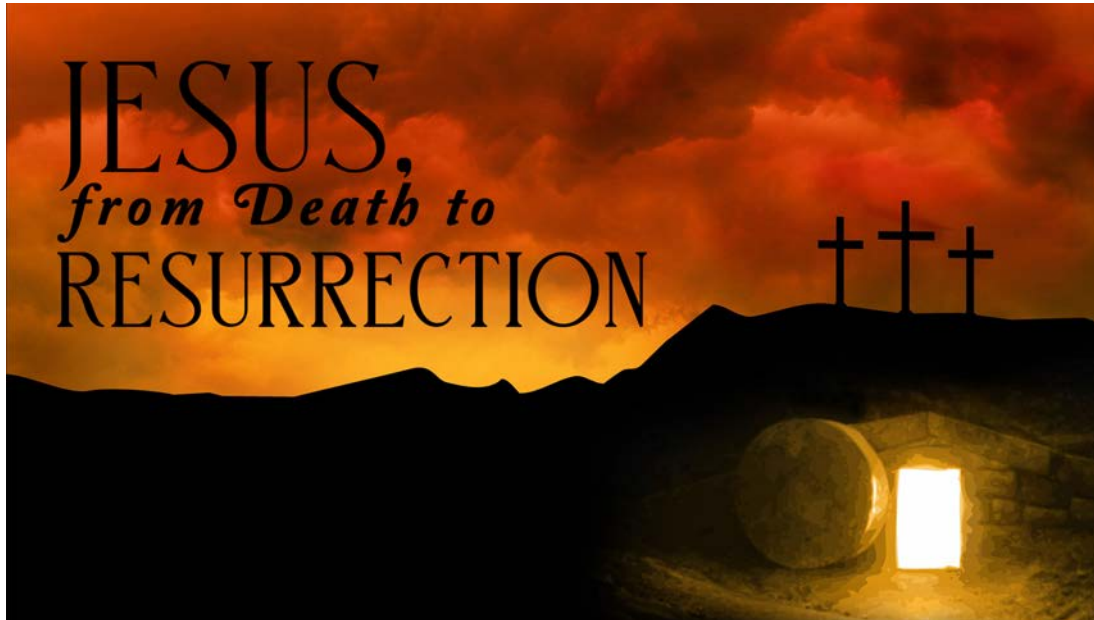


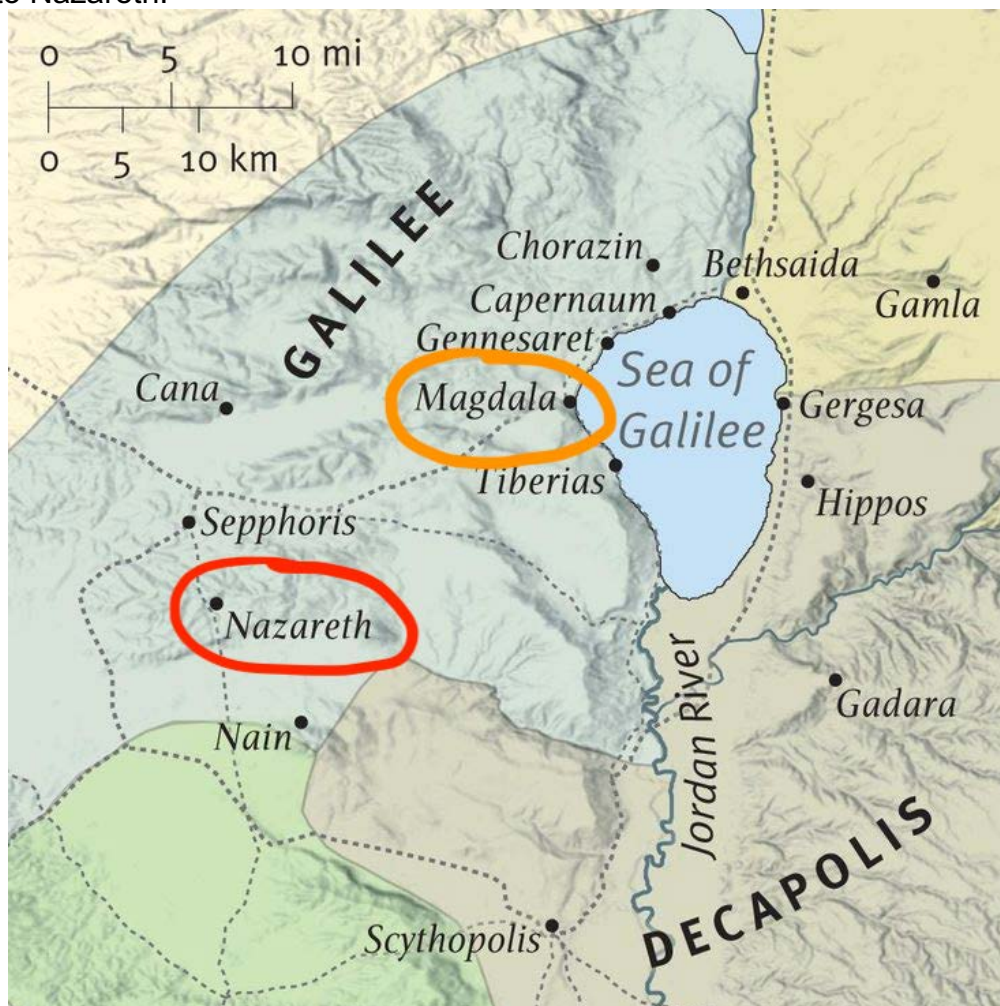
If you've been with us over the last several weeks, you know we've been talking about the death and resurrection of Jesus.



Last week, we saw the events of the resurrection of Jesus unfold before our eyes...again, the resurrection is the Mt. Everest of our faith...if Jesus isn't alive and He didn't rise from the dead, then there's no hope of us rising from the dead. Last week we encountered the first person to see Jesus alive? A woman. A lady named, Mary Magdalene. Now, I didn't go into a tremendous amount of detail about her last week because I wanted to wait and do that today. So, let's talk about her. She's called Mary Magdalene because she's from a town called Magdala. It's a beautiful place. I've been there.



Here's a picture of the foundation of the synagogue that was used in the days of Jesus. And Magdala is very close to Nazareth.



See Magdala in the orange circle and Nazareth in the red circle. They were only about 15 miles apart. Now we know by the time we reach the resurrection of Jesus, Mary has been a long-time follower of Jesus. We also know she had been possessed by seven demons, but Jesus cast those demons out of her...freeing her from that terrible bondage and oppressing anguish. By the way, I don't want you to be confused...Mary is often confused with another lady who was a former prostitute, who anointed Jesus' feet with oil. They are not the same person.

Well, I had you turn to Luke 8...because this is where we meet Mary for the first time in Scripture.

**Luke 8:1-3**

Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him,<sup>2</sup> and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out,<sup>3</sup> and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them<sup>[a]</sup> out of their means.

Amazing, isn't it...how we see where women funded the ministry of Jesus, and also traveled with him from village to village as well as the 12 Apostles. Jesus elevated the status of women big-time! It made me think of the woman at the well. A Samaritan woman...she was the very first person who wasn't a Jew that He shared the Gospel with...a woman. Again, women were treated terribly in the first century. Women were seen as property...as no better than a good horse, donkey or cow. Rabbi's

said in the Mishnah: **“It is better that the words of the Law be burned, than be delivered by a woman.”** In fact, in a court of law, a woman’s testimony wasn’t even allowed. But, Jesus changed all of that by appearing to Mary...but, not only Mary, we learn in Matthew and Mark’s account that Mary, the mother of James and Salome were with Mary, but they split up as Mary Magdalene took off to tell the disciples that Jesus’ body was gone! But, now she’s come back and she’s confused, she’s crying, beyond upset, but nonetheless she has returned. Matthew Henry, the great Bible commentator, sums up her emotions this way:

**“Although this good woman lost him, she would remain by his grace, for his sake; she would remain in his love, even when she lacked the comfort of it.”** Matthew Henry

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Mary is grieved beyond belief. She’s not even thinking about a resurrection...she’s already said, “Where have they taken Him?” She thinks someone has taken the body? The Romans? The Jewish leaders? She couldn’t wrap her head around a resurrection. But before we’re too hard on her, remember Peter and John didn’t believe in the resurrection at first either. We know Thomas (Doubting Thomas as he’s called), he didn’t believe initially, either. No, Mary had gone to the tomb and she sees that it’s empty and she’s bewildered.

**John 20:11**

**11 But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb.**

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Mary is in great pain and sorrow. I’m sure she feels helpless, lost...beyond words... You’ve been there. I know you have. Maybe you’re there now. A place where life doesn’t make sense. Mary was scared to death...panicked...And you know what...that’s when that little voice in our head starts talking to us.

You know that little voice? You see, we all have this little voice in our heads that we live with that talks to us and whispers all the doubts and the negative stuff. What is that voice? Who is that voice? Scripture tells us that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers against the rulers of the darkness of the unseen world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

That voice of fear, doubt, anxiety, worry, panic...that’s most likely common from the demonic realm. There are hierarchies within Satan’s army and you can read all about it Daniel 9 and 10. Scripture is clear...demons exist and they do the bidding of Satan and they do so by whispering into our lives. They know our weaknesses inside and out and they want to paralyze us with fear and doubt. Listen, every day, we battle with what we know from Scripture/Lord versus the lies that Satan wants to feed us through his minions. Lies that bring confusion and fear.

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That’s Mary. She said: “They’ve taken the Lord!” But church, how many times had Jesus told them that he was going to die and rise again? Can I remind you of just one of many? Let me set the scene. The disciples and Jesus are going to Jerusalem for the last time and they, in essence, pull over to the side of the road to talk, (and this is right before the Triumphal Entry).

**Matthew 20:17-19**

**17 And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way he said to them, 18 “See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death 19 and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day.”**

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Jesus had told them over and over again what was going to happen to Him; and yet, it didn’t register. And you know what? When we go through tragedy, which is obviously what Mary Magdalene was experiencing, she couldn’t see the past the pain. And that’s where Satan pounces by sending those



voices of defeat and doom...and it's those voices that can be so deafening that they drown out the voice of the Savior. **How about you?** What are you hearing inside of your thoughts today? Whose voice are you listening to? That will determine how you're living your life. Watch this...

**Isaiah 26:3-4**

**<sup>3</sup>You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. <sup>4</sup>Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.**

Where is your mind today? Brothers and sisters, think about it, most of the things **we fear** in our lives never happen. Have you thought about that lately? Our worst fears seldom come true. But, Satan uses that fear to punish us, and that's what was happening to Mary. She couldn't think straight...she couldn't remember the voice of Jesus and what He had told them. She's looking inside the tomb:

**John 20:12-13**

**<sup>12</sup>And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. <sup>13</sup>They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."**

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Take a look at this...



What is that? That's the Ark of Covenant. You say, "So, what does that have to do with the tomb?" Well, the two angels sitting at the head and foot of where Jesus had laid was symbolic of the cherubim that sat on top of the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant. Think of this: inside that tomb where Jesus' body lay...on that slab of rock, there was an angel on either end of that slab, symbolizing a new mercy seat. No...the Ark of the Covenant is no longer needed...that mercy seat, with two angels on top...where blood was sprinkled to cover sin...the need for that ark is over, it's finished now...the final sacrifice has been made...two angels mark the spot.

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You know honestly, I don't think Mary realized she was looking at angels. I believe she was too grief stricken...straining through tears...blurred eyes...lack of sleep... It's like she was talking out of her head... "They've taken him...where is He?" Getting no satisfaction from these guys, she turns to leave...probably thinking: this is pointless!!

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**John 20:14-15**

**<sup>14</sup>Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup>Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing**

him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.”

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Again, I believe her tears are blinding her eyes as her doubts are blinding her thoughts. A RESURRECTION? That’s the furthest thing from her mind. She thinks He’s the gardener; after all, how had Jesus looked the last time she saw Him?



That’s rough! I’m so sorry...but, that’s the truth and it proves my point. Jesus was almost unrecognizable! And this was prophesied by Isaiah.

**Isaiah 52:14**

**<sup>14</sup> As many were astonished at you— his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—**

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Something else. Every time Jesus appeared after His resurrection, He had to identify Himself. Why? Because He looked so good, compared to how He had looked three days earlier! He was in His glorified resurrected body. The same body He has right now...and it’s not changed or aged a bit in over 2000 years. Remember, the same thing happened to the two disciples Jesus met on the road to Emmaus later that afternoon. They didn’t recognize Him either.

So, Mary didn’t recognize Him. And now we’ll see the first words spoken by Jesus after His resurrection.

**John 20:16a**

**<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, “Mary.”**

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“Mary!” He said her name. Mary...of all He could have said, He just said: Mary...

**John 20:16b**

<sup>16</sup> She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher).

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You know, they say one of the most beautiful sounds to a person’s ears is the sound of their name. Somebody who remembers your name, that means they care about you. In this case...Jesus loved Mary and He had shown that to her by dying for her and now, He calls her by name: “Mary.” And that’s...

**John 10:4**

<sup>4</sup> When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

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I think of the song *He Knows My Name*.

**He knows my name**

**He knows my every thought**

**He sees each tear that falls**

**And He hears me when I call**

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And He does. He knows your name. For Mary...she’d come to see a dead body; but instead, found the Risen Savior!! She’s absolutely and totally blown away...she’s made a journey in her soul...from absolute devastation to exaltation! From gut-wrenching pain...to mind-blowing joy!!! What’s amazing is that Jesus had been standing there the whole time. So often, we miss Him in our pain. Listen...listen to that still small voice...speaking to you...the voice of the Savior...not of fear. He’s saying: “I love you! I’m here for you!” David wrote in...

**Psalm 34:18**

<sup>18</sup> The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

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Jesus is near today...speaking to hearts...He wants to bring you peace! **Well, Mary runs and falls at His feet...grabs Him around His legs.** She’s clinging to Him for all she’s worth...she doesn’t want to lose Him again...

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**John 20:17**

<sup>17</sup> Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

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There are many conclusions that have been drawn from verse 17, as to what it means. Some say it was Jesus’ way of saying... “Don’t panic Mary, I’m not leaving yet.” And He wouldn’t. He would be on the earth another 40 days. Some say verse 17 means Jesus had not yet physically gone back to heaven to His Father to “present Himself and His blood in the throne room of heaven before God.” Like a fulfillment of the Day of Atonement. I get that...but, Jesus did say on the cross in Luke 23:46, “Father into your hands, I commit my Spirit.” I believe Jesus’ Spirit left His body and went to the Father that very moment. That’s just me. Bottom line: I believe this whole exchange was to get Mary from clinging to Him...so as to get her up and going. Going to do what? Share the Good News. He’s alive!

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Jesus told her: “GO TELL MY BROTHERS.” Church, this is the first time that believers have been called “brothers.” This is new. They’ve gone from slaves of sin, to disciples, to friends, and now to brothers. It’s as if Jesus was saying to Mary, “Mary, I’ve not risen to stay with you...I’ve told you over and over that I must leave...so now, don’t cling to me, go tell the good news.” And she did!

**John 20:18**

**18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that he had said these things to her.**

And so, that’s the testimony of a woman! A woman that Jesus changed...saved...made new...delivered from demons and fear and doubt...the same thing that He wants to do for you. Whose voice will you listen today? Christ’s or Satan? Listen to Jesus as He calls your name!

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We come to celebrate Communion now. We’re reminded by our Lord to remember...remember His beaten and pierced body and poured out blood for us. Jesus said, “As much as you have done this, do so in remembrance of me.” So, as we take communion today, we remember that Jesus called our name... Do you remember when He called your name? When He drew you to Himself and you prayed to be saved? Remember that as you partake today, and rejoice!

So, if you’re a born-again believer and follower of Christ, I encourage you to participate with us. Please do so as families. If you have children who have yet to make the decision to trust Jesus, they may come with you, but encourage them not to partake until they have made their own profession of faith in Jesus.

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**Also note the communion cups.** There’s a wafer on one end, juice on the other w/pull tabs. We have tables set up for you. After you’ve finished partaking, you can leave the cups in the containers provided on the tables. **I invite now to come forward beginning with the front rows!**

**He knows my name**

**He knows my every thought**

**He sees each tear that falls**

**And He hears me when I call**

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