

**Mary Magdalene            Good Friday 2019****Scriptures:****Luke 8: 1 – 3**

Soon afterwards Jesus began a tour of the nearby towns and villages, preaching and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom of God. He took His twelve disciples with Him, along with some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases. Among them were Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons, Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's business manager, Susanna and many others who were contributing from their own resources to support Jesus and His disciples.

**Matthew 27: 55 – 56**

And many women who had come from Galilee with Jesus to care for Him were watching from a distance. Among them was Mary Magdalene, Mary (the mother of James and Joseph), and the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee.

**John 19: 25**

Standing near the cross were Jesus' mother, and his mother's sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene.

### **Mary Magdalene speaks –**

I am Mary Magdalene; I grew up in Magdala, a prosperous town on the west bank of the Sea of Galilee. I was filled with seven demons that controlled my mind and my life. I suffered a serious mental and physical illness. Though I begged for mercy, no mercy had been given; instead my delusions locked me in a nightmare world, isolating me even from small pleasures and simple kindness. I was treated like an outcast, no one saw a person in me, and I was always chased away by people wherever they saw me. I couldn't tell between the day and the night because I was always moving up and down, not knowing where I was going. I would find a place to sleep even under the shrubs and bushes.

I fed myself on anything I found in dustbins and on the streets. No one was interested in making a normal conversation with me. When people saw me, I was insulted because of the bad smell and the tattered clothes I was wearing. I lost the sense of belonging and respect; no one really cared for me. Animals were treated far better than me. I was rejected.

And then, I heard the voice. The voice of Jesus. "Mary".

Despite the heat, I shivered as He drew near, my stomach suddenly queasy. Though I backed away, I could feel a great light advancing toward me, forcing the darkness away. The demons began to wildly wail and scream, and yelled, "Leave us alone, Jesus of Nazareth".

And his voice again, with firm authority: "Be silent and come out of her".

I was violently thrown hard on the ground and I fainted. All of a sudden my familiar companions were themselves begging mercy, but no mercy was given. And then – total silence. I was stunned.

Suddenly the eyes that had once been holes swallowing the light now shine like pools reflecting the sun. I was restored to my right mind and the bondages of the past are now gone, I am a new creature!

"Mary" - he called my name again with a smile that flashed across his face whenever I saw him. He warmed my heart with his love.

I was not sure whether to smile or cry because I was never treated with respect. When he looked into my eyes, I saw love, peace and hope and He took away the thought in my mind that I always had about my name, **“Bitterness”** You are so kind, so gentle. I was known. I was loved.

He helped me up off the ground and he spoke to me as though He had known me all my life. He treated me with respect and dignity, he never cared about the smell and tattered clothes I was wearing. I was just somebody to him. Mary.

For the past three years I followed the Rabbi across Galilee and Judea, providing for him wherever he went, I loved his laughter. I felt privileged to tell my story, grateful to be among his growing band of followers.

How could I not love such a man? How could I not want to do everything for Him? To be close to Jesus; to witness healing after healing; to be stirred, surprised and refreshed by His teaching.

And now here I am at the foot of his cross, he had promised the poor in spirit they would surely inherit the kingdom of heaven, is now on chains. His hunger and thirst for righteousness has left him not full, but empty and broken. Unblessed, He has become a curse, his body hanging naked on a Roman cross.

Rabboni, Master, Jesus, I still need you. Don't leave me. Don't die. You are the reason that I live.....you are the one who restored my life. Could the world go on as though nothing has happened? How could the mountains keep from crashing down, the sky resist falling?

I can't betray you now; you have done so much for me. It's so painful to see you dying. Stop them now, I know you can! Don't let them do this to you. I know you have absolutely done nothing. Please! It's by your extravagant grace that I live. There are still more who need your grace. You don't deserve to die like this!

Forgive me for not doing anything for you. I am so helpless and so much in pain. You always said, nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Again you said, fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name, you are mine.

Prayer:

Lord, make me a woman like Mary Magdalene, who follows you not because of a legalistic understanding of her faith, but because of an overwhelming sense of gratitude and love for your own extravagant grace. Help me surrender my darkness to you and flood me with the light of your presence. We ask this, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.