

Crushing Sorrow

John 20:11-18

We are honored to be with you again today. It is a privilege to study God's Word with you; thanks for joining us. We are Heralds of Hope, and this program is one way we fulfill Jesus' last command. Jesus told us in Matt 28 to "Go ye therefore and teach all nations." Through this program, we want to teach everyone about Jesus and the things we have learned from Him. We pray for Jesus' Kingdom to be strengthened through the things we share, and we encourage you as you walk with Him and follow Him.

Today our study continues in John 20, and we will be taking a close look at the interaction between Jesus and Mary Magdalene; this story is found in verses 11-18. Mary Magdalene was the first one to see Jesus after His resurrection. What a privilege for her and what an honor.

Mary was also one of several women who had accompanied Jesus during His ministry. They helped Him and the disciples with food and many other practical things. At the beginning of the chapter, we heard she was headed to the tomb while it was dark. What was it that motivated Mary Magdalene? Why was she spending so much time with Jesus? Let's think about this question before we move into today's teaching.

Remember that this was the lady whom Jesus delivered from seven demons. The Bible doesn't tell us much about her life before she met Jesus but imagine how her life must have changed. She was freed from those seven demons, and I am sure that was a big improvement for her. Because Jesus changed her life so drastically, after that, she just wanted to be with Him.

This reminds me of the story in Luke 7; Jesus was eating at the house of Simon the Pharisee, and a woman came in and washed the feet of Jesus with her tears, dried them with her hair, and anointed them with ointment. In verse 47, Jesus said of this woman, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." This reminds me of Mary Magdalene because she loved Jesus for a similar reason. She was forgiven of much.

The question is, have you been forgiven much or little? How you answer this question determines how you act toward Jesus. It should be obvious no one is forgiven a little bit; everyone who has been forgiven by Jesus has been forgiven a huge amount. The problem is our perspective; some people think, "I was never too bad; I am a good person; Jesus didn't have to do much to save me." These are the people to whom little have been forgiven. Their love for Jesus can't grow because He didn't do much for them; they don't really need Him. Don't be like that, be like Mary Magdalene.

Understand your sin, any sin, is a big deal before God. There is no such thing as a little sin. God sent His Son to die for us, and we can be forgiven. This is never a small thing. It is always major and should cause us to love Jesus with all we got and cause us to give Him everything. Just like Mary Magdalene was doing.

We thank you again for joining us here on Hope for Today. Now let's give our attention to Bible teacher J Mark as he teaches us the rest of today's lesson.

Some happenings in life leave a deep wound of sorrow which is hard to heal. Some sorrows are soon changed to joy. But some come down on us like a crushing load. All of us have had disappointments that have turned into crushing sorrow. All of us have laid loved ones in the grave.

Mary Magdalene had such an experience when she found the tomb empty where Jesus had been buried. Jesus meant so very much to her. As the events of the last several years came crowding through her thoughts, she felt she could not give Him up. It was Jesus who had rescued her from evil spirits and had given her peace and joy.

John's Gospel tells us how she was crushed with sorrow and how her sorrow was changed to joy. It is found in John 20:11-18.

11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,

12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. 14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

From Mary's **CRUSHING SORROW** we should find the **REVELATIONS** by which her sorrow was turned to joy.

The first Revelation was: **The Vision.**

The first part of the chapter informs us that she had come early to the tomb and found the stone taken away. She ran to Peter and the other disciple to tell them that somebody had stolen the body of Jesus. They came, looked in the tomb, and concluded that Mary was correct.

They went again to their own home. But Mary came back to the tomb, heartbroken. There she was by the tomb. Then she stooped down and looked in. She saw the vision of angels. There were two of them, one at the head, the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain. Angels are heavenly messengers, and they had a word for her. It was a question they asked her, "Woman, why do you weep?" Her response was the same as it had been to the disciples. She answered, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."

There was the vision of the angels as the first revelation to turn Mary's crushing sorrow into joy. To be able to tell what caused her sorrow was the first revelation toward turning that sorrow into joy.

The second Revelation was: **The Voice.**

After she had this conversation with the angels, she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing there. But in her distress, she did not know it was Jesus. She supposed Him to be the caretaker of the garden. Who else would have done something with the body of Jesus if not the caretaker of the garden? So, she said to Him when He asked her why she was weeping, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away."

Here her loyalty showed, didn't it? She was very loyal to Jesus. She would not let the grave robbers do anything with His body. She would somehow take care of this. She supposed Him to be the gardener.

Then she heard her name in that voice. There's no sweeter sound on earth, they tell us, than one's name. And I would like to add, no one can speak your name like Jesus. It was that way with Mary. All He

said to her was, "Mary," and she immediately recognized Him. His voice told her who He was, and she immediately responded. It was His voice and her name that made it real to her.

Oh, I see her crushing sorrow being turned to joy right there with the revelation of the voice.

The third Revelation was: **The Verification.**

First was the vision, then the voice, now the verification. It was His command, "Do not cling to me." My English Bible reads, "Do not touch me." I studied very carefully this statement in the Greek New Testament, and I find the idea is, "Stop hanging on to me."

He went on to say, "I have not yet ascended to my Father." I believe Jesus was trying to help Mary understand that now that He was risen from the dead, nobody would be able to take Him away from her again. It was not necessary for her now to cling to Him. So His command was, "Stop hanging on to me."

His commission to her was, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." Go tell my brethren. The first message of the resurrected Christ was to go and tell. It came to Mary, Mary Magdalene. His commission to her was, "Go tell my brethren."

And she quickly went. She came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that He had said these things unto her. She told the disciples everything. His memory was in her mind, and she said everything that He had said to her. The third revelation verified His true presence.

By these three revelations, Mary's crushing sorrow was turned to joy: by the vision, by the voice, and by the verification. We cannot do what she did, but by believing, we too can have our sorrow relieved. Do you believe in Jesus Christ as the risen Son of God?

Thank you, J Mark, for this teaching from God's Word, and thank you for joining us. It is a privilege for us to study God's Word and learn from it. Now take what we've heard and put it into practice. The teaching and instruction in the Bible is for us, and it is meant to be lived.

Don't be like the man in James 1 who sees himself in a mirror then goes away and forgets what he looks like; instead, be like the man in v 25 who looks intently into the Word and is a doer of the work. God says, "that man will be Blessed in what he does."

And we bless you as you follow Jesus and share Him with those around you. If you have any questions or if you would like today's teaching, just contact us and ask for it by title or tell us the passage. We also have a study guide available designed to help you learn more from each lesson; it is called the Hope Herald. Please let us know if you are interested, and we would be happy to give you one.

Here are a few ways you can reach us. The quickest and easiest way is through email. Our email is mail@heraldsofhope.org. If you don't have email, you could send us a letter, send it to Hope for Today, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. Another way you can contact us is through our website. Our website is Heraldsofhope.org. Please look on our website for this teaching and other similar teaching. There you will also find other resources available from Heralds of Hope. Again, the website is heraldsofhope.org

We thank you again for joining us for today's program. I encourage you to join us again next week as Pastor J. Mark continues teaching from the Gospel of John. We look forward to being with you then and will leave you with this blessing from Number 6. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace.