

## LESSON 11

February 14, 2021

Unit III: The Call of Women

Showing Loyalty

**DEVOTIONAL READING: Romans 4:13-25**

**BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: Mark 15:40; 16:1-9; Luke 8:1-3; John 20:10-18**

**PRINT PASSAGES: Luke 8:1-3; Mark 15:40; John 20:10-18**

**Key Verse** —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. (Luke 8:1b-2, KJV)

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The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out. (Luke 8:1b-2, NIV)

### Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do these things:

- Discern Mary Magdalene’s motivations for committing her life to Jesus.
- Appreciate the sacrifices Mary Magdalene made in order to follow Jesus.
- Embrace a lifestyle of wholehearted discipleship.

### KEY TERMS

**Healed (Luke 8:2)**—Greek: *therapeuó* (ther-ap-yoo’-o): served; “cured” (NIV).

**Kingdom (Luke 8:1)**—Greek: *basileia* (bas-il-i’-ah): the territory subject to the rule of a king; sovereignty; royal power.

**Ministered (Luke 8:3)**—Greek: *diakoneó* (dee-ak-on-eh’-o): served; attended to; “were helping” (NIV).

**Preaching (Luke 8:1)**—Greek: *kérussó* (kay-roos’-so): heralding; publishing; “proclaiming” (NIV).

### PREPARING THE LESSON

- Refer to the Townsend Press SS Commentary Teacher’s Edition for an additional lesson plan—with word studies, insights on teaching adults, learner matrices, etc.
- Review last week’s student assignments (“Your Life” and Your World!”).
- Thoroughly review your student book for your adult or young adult class.
- Please note that you have the option of using your subscription bundle supplements, i.e., Lesson Scenario, Student Activity Sheet, SSL-AAG

### WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS

Being a truly committed follower is often difficult, but there are persons who reveal consistent loyalty no matter what happens. How do you show your loyalty and faithfulness? Mary Magdalene demonstrated her unwavering discipleship and loyalty to Jesus through her action.

### **THE LESSON IN FOCUS**

As we reflect, we have likely experienced the death of at least one person who meant a great deal to us. Perhaps we were touched unforgettably by their honorable example, an important sacrifice or gesture of kindness, words of wisdom, lessons for living, or their undeniable love for us. Relationships impact us deeply and some change our lives forever. Whether young or old, male or female, it is hard to let go of those whom we have loved. Mary Magdalene demonstrated her tremendous loyalty for Jesus by her devotion to His ministry, and by her presence and sorrow in His death. Jesus affirmed and honored Mary's sincere affection for Him by allowing her to be the first person to whom He appeared after the Resurrection.

### **THE LESSON IN CONTEXT**

Although church traditions have marked many women of the New Testament as promiscuous, there is no basis for this claim concerning Mary Magdalene. She was from a town called Magdala in Galilee, hence the name Mary Magdalene. Magdala was a thriving center for the fishing industry and was a manufacturing center for wool and woolen dyes. Jesus cured Mary Magdalene from an unknown illness, and she devoted herself to His ministry, as one of the women who provided for Jesus and His followers from their own financial resources. Mary Magdalene was a witness to Jesus' ministry in Galilee and Judea. In addition to listening to Jesus teach and supporting the ministry financially, she may have also dealt with other practical ministry details. Mary joined a small group of women as witnesses to the Crucifixion from a distance (see Mark 15:40)—likely the same group who gathered with the disciples and Jesus' family in the Upper Room after the Ascension (see Acts 1:13-14). Mary was present at the Crucifixion (see Mark 15:40-41; Luke 23:49; Matthew 27:55-56; John 19:25). She helped to prepare Jesus' body for burial (see Luke 23:55-56; Matthew 27:61). She was one of the first to arrive at the tomb on Easter morning (see Mark 16:1-11; Luke 24:1-11, Matthew 28:1-10; John 20:1-18). This consistent series of actions shows her tremendous loyalty and love for Jesus. While all three Gospel accounts recorded her presence on the day of Jesus' resurrection, each one includes different details about what exactly happened (see Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12; John: 20:1-18), making it challenging to develop a tight chronology of events.

### **OPENING INQUIRY (Choose from the items below.)**

1. How do you define the word loyalty to someone?
2. Which qualities in a person inspire you to be loyal to him or her?
3. Share a significant way in which someone has demonstrated his or her loyalty to you.

### **INSIGHTS**

Every born-again believer has experienced spiritual transformation through Jesus Christ. The encounter with Jesus strengthens, supports, and sustains our faith. Our personal salvation

experience should serve as a foundation that gives meaning and motivation to our service in our local church. The work of God in our lives may also lead us to support others in doing ministry and missions work that we have not been called to do. God has equipped some to pray, some to give, some to encourage, some to labor behind the scenes, and some to stand on the front lines of ministry. Teamwork and division of labor allow us to carry the Gospel of Jesus throughout the world.

## **EXPLORATION**

By every measure, the crucifixion of Jesus was a bloody, brutal, horrific event. Imagine how those present to witness His death likely cringed at His pain and anguish on the Cross. Only the loyal disciple would have the strength and courage to stand with someone and witness the sight of his public execution. Despite the unspeakable agony of the Cross, we are able to rejoice in it, with gratitude. Knowing that the wages of sin is death (see Romans 6:23), Jesus endured the agony of Calvary for our sakes. He died for our sakes, in our place, enduring the penalty of sin and purchasing salvation for us with His own blood.

## **ADDITIONAL EXPOSITORY INSIGHTS FOR THE TEACHER**

### **COMMENTARY**

Luke 8:1-3; Mark 15:40

KJV

AND IT came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,

2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

3 And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance

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40 There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome;

NIV

AFTER THIS, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him,

2 and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out;

3 Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means

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40 Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph, and Salome.

Toward the end of His time of public ministry, Jesus toured Galilee, ministering to the masses as He headed toward the moment of His sacrifice on the Cross. Luke and Mark record the names of the women who followed and supported Jesus' ministry; they were not among the Twelve, but they too were disciples, or followers of Christ. Their attitude of devotion and generosity for Jesus were impacted, at least in part, by their personal experiences of healing and deliverance through

His ministry. Mary Magdalene should not be confused with Mary from Bethany (see John 12:1), the sister of Lazarus and Martha. As noted previously, Mary Magdalene came from Magdala of Galilee. At Jesus' command (see Luke 8:2), Mary experienced deliverance from demon possession (specifically, some form of healing or deliverance from some condition such as mental illness, depression, suicidal tendencies, or some unidentified physical infirmity). The second Mary who was present has been identified as the mother of the disciple James, the son of Alphaeus (see Mark 3:18). Salome is described as the mother of James and beginning, middle, and end of Jesus' earthly ministry.

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

- Adult Question: We are often tempted to give greater honor to front-line or visible roles in ministry. Explain the importance of the ministry that Mary Magdalene and other women fulfilled for Jesus.
- Young Adult Question: These women were saved and then they served. Many persons today identify themselves as Christians without any evidence of service, sacrifice, or stewardship. Explain how this contradicts the biblical model of Christian discipleship.

## COMMENTARY

John 20:10-13

KJV

10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

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.

NIV

10 Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

11 Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb

12 and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

13 They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," said, "and I don't know where they have put him."

After the Crucifixion, the male disciples returned to their own living quarters, in seclusion with each other and/or with their families. Mary Magdalene, however, remained at the burial site, hoping for some clue or answer—processing her intense grief over Jesus' death and the mystery of His missing body. As she lingered, Mary stooped and looked one more time, through her tears, into the tomb. That time she saw something unexpected: two angels that neither she nor the disciples had seen earlier. The sight of angels was often frightening—as in the case of Mary (see Luke 1:30), the shepherds (see Luke 2:10), and Zechariah (see Luke 1:11)—but Mary Magdalene was already overwhelmed with emotion when she saw the angels in the tomb. The angels were aware of what Mary did not know: that the time for being fearful and sorrowful had

ended. Sometimes, we are so focused on our despair that we miss the miracle and answered prayer that God is working out before our very eyes.

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

- Adult Question: Is it possible to be so distracted by painful or other emotions that you miss a significant occurrence, possibly an angel of God? Some angels appear to us as strangers (see Hebrews 13:2).
- Young Adult Question: These women followed Jesus to the end. What do their actions during Jesus' crucifixion and death suggest about their devotion to Him while He was with them? Share your thoughts.

## COMMENTARY

John 20:14-18

KJV

14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew  
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.

NIV

14 At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. 15 He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

17 Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

Mary was unconcerned about the angels in front of her, and unaware of the identity of the Man standing behind her as she turned away from the tomb. She was likely relieved to see the unknown man, hoping that He could answer her question. Jesus spoke to Mary, asking whom she was seeking and why she was crying. When Jesus called Mary by name, the sound of His voice was suddenly familiar to her. She immediately recognized the voice she heard as that of her beloved Jesus. Mary Magdalene apparently reached for Jesus, but He told her not to "touch him" (see verse 17) because He had not yet ascended to the Father, signifying His deity. Jesus sends

Mary to testify to the others than she has seen Him alive. Jesus' appearance immediately transforms Mary Magdalene's sorrow to excitement and joy. Whether Mary realized it or not, being the first witness of the Resurrection was a tremendous honor. When others gave up and left, Mary refused to stop searching for Jesus. Jesus recognized her persistence with the privilege of being the one to tell the others that Jesus is alive and well.

## **DISCUSSION STARTERS**

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

- Adult Question: When you have an opportunity to share your encounters with Jesus, do you go with excitement?
- Young Adult Question: When Jesus spoke Mary's name, she recognized Him. Jesus knows His own. How does it make you feel that Jesus knows your name? Briefly share.

## **LIFE APPLICATION**

Refer to Adult Book (See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)

— This week consider your loyalty to Christ. In what areas can you improve (e.g., devotion, witnessing, service, obedience, giving)? Examine yourself and make plans to improve.

(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)

— This week invite someone else to actively participate in a ministry activity with you.

Refer to Young Adult Book (See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)

— Mary Magdalene was the first witness to Jesus' resurrection. Her witness is a model for confessing believers who still testify that Jesus lives. Recall the moment of your first confession of faith in Jesus and rejoice that He has called you by name and given you the gift of salvation.

(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)

— You have friends who need to hear the Good News of the Resurrection. Use your social media platforms to share this Good News. Good News is meant to be shared, and the world still needs to hear it. So, get on your way quickly, like Mary, and tell others that Jesus is risen!

## **NEXT WEEK'S LESSON**

The lesson topic for Sunday, February 21, 2021, is "Risk Taker." The Devotional Reading is Colossians 4:7-15, the Background Scriptures are Acts 18:1-26; Romans 16:3-4; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19, and the Printed Texts are Acts 18:1-3, 18-21, 24-26; Romans 16:3-4.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Lord, we pray for commitment to remain faithful and loyal to You even when our situations and outlook seem hopeless. In every storm, help us remain strong and hopeful rather than being overwhelmed with despair. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## **HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS**

**(February 15-21, 2021)**

**Priscilla: Called to Minister**

**MONDAY**, February 15: “Paul Reflects on His Ministry” (2 Timothy 4:9-18)

**TUESDAY**, February 16: “Greetings to Saints in Jesus Christ” (Colossians 4:7-15)

**WEDNESDAY**, February 17: “The Holy Kiss Strengthens Ministry Bond” (2 Corinthians 13:11-13; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28)

**THURSDAY**, February 18: “Ministry Shifts from Jews to Gentiles” (Acts 18:4-11)

**FRIDAY**, February 19: “Roman Official Refuses to Settle Dispute” (Acts 18:12-17)

**SATURDAY**, February 20: “Greetings to All Sisters in Ministry” (Romans 16:1-2, 6-7, 12-13, 16)

**SUNDAY**, February 21: “Priscilla, Key Outreach Minister” (Acts 18:1-3, 18-21, 24-26; Romans 16:3-4; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19)