

The Final Days of Jesus  
**CLINGING TO JESUS**

Tuesday, April 7

Reading: John 20:11-18

**John 20:16** *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.'* "

Mary Magdalene has gotten a "bad rap" through the centuries. She is often portrayed as a prostitute or "wanton woman" but nowhere in the New Testament is Mary identified in this way. All we know is that Jesus cast seven demons out of her and she spent the rest of her life following Him (Luke 8:1-3). In fact, she is usually seen in the company of Jesus' mother Mary and Salome (the mother of the disciples James and John), among others suggesting she is in the same age range (40's to 50's). When all the other followers of Jesus had deserted, Mary was still there.

Mary returns to the tomb to weep. She hears the angels but does not recognize what they are because of her grief. She does not even recognize Jesus at first but thinks Him to be the gardener. Perhaps a combination of grief, blurry eyes from weeping, and no expectation of seeing Jesus was the cause. It is also interesting that after the resurrection other people did not recognize Jesus until He wanted them to (see Luke 24:13-32).

Jesus simply said her name. Suddenly Mary realized she was speaking to the risen Lord. She fell to her knees in worship, crying out "Rabboni!" (teacher) and clung to Him, never wanting to let Him go!<sup>1</sup> Jesus assures her that He had not yet ascended to His Father so they would still have time to spend together. He would be on earth for another 40 days before His ascension. But now He had a mission for her. She was to go and tell His "brothers" (the disciples) that He was alive and that He would soon return to the Father.

**LESSON ONE:** "Why Are You Weeping?" At the Last Supper Jesus had said, "You will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy" (John 16:20). That is exactly what happened when Mary realized it was Jesus speaking to her. In our times of sorrow, the resurrection brings us joy, for Jesus promised, "Because I live, you will live also" (John 14:19). The risen Christ calls us to abundant life and He knows us by name!

**LESSON TWO:** "Do Not Hold On To Me." There was nothing wrong with Mary's desire to hold on to Jesus and stay at His feet in worship. But Jesus had a job for her to do. Worship must be more than singing and worshipping in church. Worship must also involve doing what Jesus has called us to do – be His witnesses to a lost world. How would you rate your worship? Does your experience at worship services continue into your life the rest of the week? Do you worship Jesus in everything you do, say, and think?

<sup>1</sup> Jesus' response in the Greek is "Stop clinging to Me."