



GROWTH GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Winter Quarter - Lesson 8 - Week of March 5, 2023

Lesson: **DELIVERED FROM DARKNESS**

Bible Verses: Luke 8:2; Luke 7:36-50; Mark 16:9; John 20:16-18

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

- What is your favorite game to play?
- What is your favorite movie?

DISCUSSION

Mary Magdalene was a woman from whom Jesus cast out seven demons (Luke 8:2). The name Magdalene likely indicates that she came from Magdala, a city on the southwest coast of the Sea of Galilee. After Jesus cast seven demons from her, she became one of His followers.

Mary Magdalene has been associated with the woman in the city who was a sinner and washed Jesus' feet (Luke 7:37). The city of Magdala had a reputation for prostitution. This information, coupled with the fact that Luke first mentions Mary Magdalene immediately following his account of the sinful woman (Luke 7:36-50), has led some to equate the two women.

Mary Magdalene witnessed most of the events surrounding the crucifixion. She was present at the mock trial of Jesus; she heard Pontius Pilate pronounce the death sentence; and she saw Jesus beaten and humiliated by the crowd. She was one of the women who stood near Jesus and tried to comfort Him during the crucifixion. Although this is the last mention of her in the Bible, she was probably among the women who gathered with the apostles to await the promised coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:14).

Mary's response to recognizing Christ (after His resurrection) burst from a heart full of love and joy (John 20:16-18). She spontaneously prostrated herself before Jesus, clasping his feet (a cultural expression of adoration). Jesus responded by saying, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" In obedience, Mary Magdalene ran to the disciples with the news that she had seen the Lord, and she told them all that Jesus said to her.

1. Why is it significant that Mary was the first to see Jesus (Mark 16:9)?
2. Mary was not only the first, but she was also the last. What was she last at?

When you understand the role of women in first century Jewish society, it's extraordinary that this story would feature women as the discoverers of the empty tomb. Women were incredibly low on the social ladder in first century Palestine. In light of this, it's remarkable that the chief witnesses to the empty tomb are women who were friends of Jesus.

Jesus' resurrection was the most pivotal point in history, and yet he waited until Peter and John had left the empty tomb before he made His presence known to one lone woman (John 20:10-14). While most of the disciples scattered in fear at the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, along with some of the leading women, stood at the cross until the end.

Here's what we know about Mary Magdalene: (1) She was a woman possessed and controlled by seven demons. (2) At some point, she had an encounter with Jesus, and He delivered her from the clutches of Satan and into the hands of God. (3) She grew to love Jesus after her deliverance. (4) From that point on, her mission was to do what she could to serve her Savior.

Have you ever been delivered from darkness? Describe your experience. Once Jesus delivered you, what were your first actions to show your appreciation to Him?

Lessons We Learn from Mary Magdalene

1. Gratitude should drive us.
2. Your past doesn't matter when you are in Christ.
3. Don't let deflated hopes keep you down.
4. Christ's love set even the worst of the worst free.
5. Being saved should result in a life lived for God.
6. Christ should be the one we love the most.
7. You don't have to be defined by your past.

Jesus will deliver us from darkness, and He expects us to appreciate His deliverance like Mary Magdalene. Once we have been delivered, God expects us to live for Him.

Prayer Focus: God, help me live as though I have been delivered from darkness.