

Day Twenty-Eight

Jesus: Real, Relevant, Raw and Radical!

A Dream in a Tomb

Matthew 27:55(NLT) *And many women who had come from Galilee with Jesus to care for him* were watching from a distance. **56** *Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary (the mother of James and Joseph), and the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee.*

Matthew 27:59-60(NLT) *Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a long sheet of clean linen cloth. 60 He placed it in his own new tomb, which had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance and left. 61 Both Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting across from the tomb and watching.*

Mark 15:40-42(NLT) *Some women were there, watching from a distance, including Mary Magdalene, Mary (the mother of James the younger and of Joseph), and Salome. 41 They had been followers of Jesus and had cared for him while he was in Galilee. Many other women who had come with him to Jerusalem were also there.*

Mark 15:46-47(NLT) *Joseph bought a long sheet of linen cloth. Then he took Jesus' body down from the cross, wrapped it in the cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a stone in front of the entrance. 47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where Jesus' body was laid.*

Mark 16:1(NLT) *Saturday evening, when the Sabbath ended, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome went out and purchased burial spices so they could anoint Jesus' body.*

Luke 23:49(NLT) *But Jesus' friends, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance watching.*

Luke 23:55-56(NLT) *As his body was taken away, the women from Galilee followed and saw the tomb where his body was placed. 56 Then they went home and prepared spices and ointments to anoint his body. But by the time they were finished the Sabbath had begun, so they rested as required by the law.*

John 19:25(NLT) *Standing near the cross were Jesus' mother, and his mother's sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene.*

Jesus was and is simply beyond description. There are no words, no matter how lofty or eloquent, that can describe the person of Jesus. His love is unending. His grace is matchless; His patience, endearing; His beauty, breathtaking. He is indescribable,

irresistible and incomparable. In the words of that old spiritual song, “Oh, Lord, it is hard to be humble when you are perfect in every way...” Yet, there is no one more cloaked in humility than Jesus. Jesus is the Perfect Man. Is it any wonder that He was loved the way He was loved, especially by the women?

Don't miss this incredible fact that all of the gospel writers tell us that the women were there from the beginning to the very end. Don't allow your mind to run ahead in regards to Jesus' death and resurrection. Don't just jump to Sunday. Linger with me a little longer and look with fresh eyes at Friday night and Saturday. Look, if you can, from the perspective of the biggest group of Jesus' disciples that was actually present, the women. We have several names, among them, a lot of Marys, including Jesus' mother, His aunt Mary, Mary Magdalene and Salome. Both Matthew and Mark point out that there were many other women; women who travelled with Him, supported His ministry and followed Him.

Jesus treated women with dignity, respect and value. He did not relegate them to the back of the line or pigeon-hole them in regards to their function. He gave them value like no other man they've ever met. We see this throughout the gospels. When He heals a woman that was bent over for 18 years, the Pharisees throw a fit, because it was the Sabbath. Jesus calls her a daughter of Abraham to the delight of the crowd and the chagrin of the religious leaders. The longest conversation recorded for us, between Jesus and another person, is Jesus talking to a woman; not just any woman, a Samaritan. Jews and Samaritans had a distinct loathing for one another. No self-respecting Jewish Rabbi would give any Samaritan the time of day, and a Samaritan woman on top of that, “Oy Vey!” To make matters worse, Jesus is the one who initiated the conversation.

He allows a woman with an issue of blood to touch Him; that was a big no-no. He first ignored a Canaanite woman, but she kept on coming after Him. Then, He teases this Syrophenician woman about being a puppy under the table and that bread belongs to the children. She responds right back and says, “The dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the table.” He stops and marvels at her faith, then heals her daughter. Listen to what Luke writes in **Luke 8:1-4(NLT)**. *“Soon afterward 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, **2 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; 3 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.**”*

Don't read this with western eyes. How nice, men and women traveling together. You need to understand how unique and revolutionary this was for this time! Jesus heals them, delivers them, and then travels with them. Luke mentions these women traveling

with Jesus by name, and on top of that, they are supporting Him financially! Hello! Women did not travel with men; they were told to stay home. Jesus had men and women traveling together, studying together and doing ministry together. Jesus even had them pay the bills, including a woman named Joanna whose husband worked for Herod; the same Herod who was trying to kill Jesus. Watch what Luke writes in this often-used passage and see if you can see how revolutionary this Rabbi really was.

Luke 10:38-42(NKJV) *“Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. **39** And she had a sister called **Mary, who also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word.**”* This is usually the verse we use when we talk about not being too busy like Martha and to be more like Mary. But there’s a phrase we should not overlook: **“Mary who also sat at Jesus’ feet.”** “To sit at someone’s feet,” meant to be someone’s disciple. Paul used the same phrase in referencing his discipleship under Gamaliel. **Acts 22:3(NKJV)** *“Then he said: **3** ‘I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but **brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers’ law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.**”*

No wonder Jesus was seen as a radical. **I don’t know if the church of today has ever caught up with the way that Jesus treated women.** No wonder they were the first and the last at the tomb and the cross. It is difficult to wrap your mind around the depth of their loss. The scene at the cross was not just the faithful few. It was, in Mark’s words, “many other women.” They had hopes. They had expectations. They had dreams. Now, all of their hopes, all of their dreams, lay dead in a tomb.

Have you been there? When something that you so desperately wanted, something that you so desperately needed, suddenly comes to a crushing halt? The only thing that you are left with is a feeling of gut-wrenching disappointment! You have nothing left, not even a slight hope, because all you counted on is gone! All that is left in its wake is a sense of duty. These women watch carefully as Jesus is embalmed and laid in a tomb. **It’s Friday night; the dream is dead.** What’s left is simple devotion to a “Man” who changed your life. You thought, you hoped, you held your breath, but now you can just sigh, shrug your shoulders and wonder, “What now?” So, because of your love for this radical Rabbi, you are going to pay Him a final act of respect. The men had their turn, and you watched them as they hurriedly did what needed to be done, but tomorrow, you’ll come and you will do it right. You will come back to the grave, you will anoint His body, not because it will change the outcome, but simply to demonstrate your love.

Friday is a very difficult day. Maybe you feel the pain that these women felt. For you, it has been Friday for a very long time. Sure, you’ve had moments of reprieve, but you are still stuck at a “dream in a tomb.” Maybe it’s a relationship. Maybe it’s a marriage, and the only reason you are still around is out of duty. You have no hope of things ever changing, so you just go through the motions, but the pain is ever present. Maybe it’s a

loss of some kind. Whatever it might be for you, I want to encourage you with these simple words: Don't stop, keep moving forward. Do what needs to be done. Learn from all these women at the cross and the tomb. Listen to their voices. You will hear them tell you: "Prepare what needs to be prepared, even if you think it won't change the outcome." You have to leave the outcome in the hands of the "One" who is laying in the tomb. You might think, "But wait; there's only death in the tomb." **When you see a tomb, God sees a womb.** Just get ready, be patient; the "Seed" has to die before it can live...

Prayer:

- **Pray and release your pain to the Lord.**
- **Ask Him to strengthen your resolve and to give you the courage to be strong during the "Friday" that you are in.**
- **Ask the Lord to help you discern the real enemy of your faith and pray for those who hurt you.**
- **Take a moment and thank the Lord for His comfort and love.**
- **Pray for others who you know are hurting and be an encourager to them.**