

# Mary and Thomas (Quality: Good)

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Preacher: Mercer, Seth (1930-2017)

[ 0 : 00 ] For I read the word of God that I feel the Lord has laid upon my heart for the evening service, I must just read the verse that we read to you this morning, which you will find in the Gospel of Mark, chapter 16, reading verse 14.

Mark's Gospel, chapter 16, reading verse 14. Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

And those of you that were with us this morning, as the Holy Spirit may be your remembrance, you will know that we tried to convey one particular truth to you, and that is that in spite of the weakness, the fears, the unbelief of the Lord's own beloved disciples, that still he loved them, and that their salvation did not stand in themselves whatsoever, that their standing for eternity was in Christ alone.

What a mercy this is, sir. Because we too find how weak we are, what fears we have, what unbelief.

We also find rages, at times especially, within our poor hearts. And yet the Lord upbraided them.

[ 2 : 30 ] Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

I have often felt, especially on what we know as Easter Sunday, that the glories of the resurrection are rightly declared, and need to be declared.

But there is a dark side to all this, and that dark side is found in our own hearts, and how we find, and the Lord's people still find, that unbelief is one of the most prevalent and dreadful sins that rage within their poor hearts.

So I just leave these few thoughts, and just once more just to seek to declare this, that whatever we are, however we feel, and yet rightly viewed, that our salvation is in Christ alone, there would be no hope for us without this.

The salvation of the Lord's people is in him. I leave that and turn now to the other word that has also been with me for today, and that you will find in the chapter that we've read together, the Gospel of John, chapter 20, and I read verse 29.

[ 4 : 26 ] The Gospel of John, chapter 20, and I read verse 29. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed.

Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. Now here again this evening, we have a further description of the sin of unbelief.

You see, we know, if we have been taught by the Holy Spirit, what a dreadful sin unbelief is.

Could you join with the truth contained in our opening hymn, and say before your God this evening, remove this hardness from my heart, this unbelief removed, and I dare not leave it there, because we, if we come in with the first part of that verse, we shall certainly come in with the second.



Remove this hardness from my heart, this unbelief removed, to me, the rest of faith impart, the Sabbath of thy love.

[ 6 : 01 ] Oh, that it could be such a Sabbath day with us, that the Lord might reveal himself to us, as we know that he did to Thomas, that we too might join with Thomas, in spite of all his unbelief, to say, my Lord, and my God.

God. Now, with this subject, I have, I trust, the Lord has given me the pattern.

I've often felt the truth of that which Ken David gave utterance to regarding the temple that Solomon was to build.

and he could say this regarding every detail of the temple, all this, said David, I had by the Spirit, as the Lord's hand was upon him, and he gave it to him after this pattern.

I cannot speak for other, for God's servants other than myself, but I have often felt and must constantly pray that the Lord would give me the pattern.

[ 7 : 28 ] What I mean is this, that he might show me, constantly show me how I am to speak from his holy word. Well, here we must once more venture upon him this evening.

And the way that I must try and speak from this subject is first to show you the contrast between Mary and Thomas.

For there is such a contrast. The Lord loved them both. Let me make that clear. But we are character.

Everyone in the chapel this evening is different in their disposition. their personality. And dear friends, the Lord deals with his people in that way and manner.

There is a word in Psalm 25 that will help me here, for it's God's word. What man is he, what woman is she, what man is he, whom feareth the Lord, him, her, shall the Lord teach in the way that he shall choose.

[ 8 : 51 ] We have this truth running right through the Bible. We have it in this chapter. Well, the Lord help us to look a little into it.

God's word is the first thing surely we must notice is regarding Mary. The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early.

Now, we do not read this of Thomas, but we read it of Mary. Mary. There's one point I wanted just to clear this evening, because some of you may remember that I mentioned as we were speaking from the account in Mark's Gospel, and I need just to turn back to this for a moment, when the Sabbath was passed, and very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising of the sun.

Now, I believe that I said this, that I felt that in one of the Gospels, it said before the rising of the sun. No, but it doesn't actually put it in those words, and I wanted just to clear that point this evening.

But in Matthew's Gospel, it speaks of it like this, as it began to dawn. on the first day of the week. In Mark's Gospel, we read, and very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising of the sun.

[ 10 : 36 ] In Luke's Gospel, it speaks of it like this, very early in the morning. Now, in John's Gospel, it is put in these words, the first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark.

Now, that was indeed before the rising of the sun, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher.

Now, I must try and draw this comparison this evening between Mary and Thomas. You say, dear Mary, and how dear she was.

And yet, what did we read this morning in Mark's Gospel concerning Mary Magdalene, out of whom the Lord cast seven devils? What a poor sinner she must obey.



what a poor, vile, wretched sinner she was. And yet, dear friends, if we know anything of our own hearts, we must associate ourselves with Mary Magdalene, because we are no better than her.

[ 12 : 00 ] And if the Lord has had mercy upon us, then he has cast out of us seven devils, as he did with her. But you may remember when the Lord was speaking on one occasion, and I cannot just remember which Gospel it is in, but the poor, dear woman, and we read, she was a sinner, and she comes where Jesus is.

She comes behind him. She washes his feet with her tears, and wipes them with the hairs of her head. She anoints his feet.

And then there was Simon the Pharisee. And you know how the Lord dealt with him. And it may not be in that particular word, but the truth I want to bring before you is this.

The Lord said on one occasion, who would love the Lord most? And the answer was this, the one to whom the Lord had forgiven must.

How the Lord had forgiven dear Mary Magdalene in a very marked way. But oh, how she loved him. You see, dear friends, the more we know the love of Christ in our hearts, the earlier we shall be at the sepulcher.

[ 13 : 31 ] The more exercised we are in our souls, the sooner we shall be, as it were, upon our knees in the morning, pleading for mercy for Jesus' sake.

I wonder how many of us here this evening began the day like this. I mean in the exercises of our soul. Oh, this is so important if we are to be really blessed.

the Lord has told us, seek and ye shall find not, and it shall be opened unto you, ask and it shall be given you. And still he fulfills this.

So then with dear Mary Magdalene, come as she comes early to the sepulcher, while it was yet dark, and see if the stone taken away from the sepulcher.

Now this is what is upon my heart. She was so exercised, she so loved her Lord, that she must be at the sepulcher.

[ 14 : 41 ] She must be there, you say. She came to the sepulcher with a burdened heart. She came with the hope, and of course as we read, we would not leave this thought out, but as it is contained in Mark's gospel, particularly there, and we read it this morning, and when the sabbath was passed, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome had bought sweet spices that they might come and anoint him.

Now they had prepared these sweet spices on the sabbath, as it was then to them. They rested on the sabbath.

But you see there was preparation for this first day of the week. And it is like that with us. You see the Jews still keep the Lord's day on Saturday, but we keep the Lord's day on the first day of the week.

We know it now as Sunday, the Lord's day, the first day of the week. And so these godly women came to the Sabbath.

You know we do not read that Thomas was there, do we? We do not read that Thomas was there. We do not read that the beloved disciples of the Lord were there, not in the same way.

[ 16 : 21 ] Now there's teaching in this for us. I know I mentioned this this morning, but it's so with me. Dear friends, we so need the Lord yet to bless us here.

And it can only be through his word. And how solemn is the responsibility that I hold as a pastor, and I'm so aware of the need that your souls may be fed.



But there's the other side to this, and that is God give an exercise in your hearts. The more exercise we each know in secret before our God, the more hope there will be that he will yet bless us.

And friends, this is what we need. Without this we meet in vain. And we need what the Lord said to Abraham to be fulfilled yet for us, and it's this, that in blessing I will bless thee.

No, it can only come through the word of God. And so we just notice this, that it was Mary Magdalene, and we would not leave out the other godly women.

[ 17 : 39 ] But in John's gospel, the Lord has seen fit that it should be recorded like this, and it's for a purpose. what is the purpose? I just further noticed that she runs and comes to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved.

The author, as I believe it to be, of this gospel, John himself, Peter and John, those two loved disciples, highly favoured disciples.

disciples. And we find this, that Peter comes to the sepulchre with the other disciple. The other disciple did outrun Peter and came first to the sepulchre, and he stooping down and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying, yet went he not in.

You see the difference in their disposition and character and personality. But where do we find Peter? Then cometh Simon Peter following him and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie.

You see Peter went in. You see the contrast in their disposition. But oh, the Lord teaches his people that. He knows how to teach every one of us.

[ 19 : 08 ] And so we have it here. But then I just want to notice this briefly, that after Peter and John had come to the sepulchre, we read this, then the disciples went away again unto their own heart.

heart. You see, they didn't stay at the sepulchre. They didn't wait around the tomb to see his sovereign power to save.

They were dear men, favoured men, but they returned to their own home. But you see, Mary couldn't. Mary, out of love to her saviour, she must be there, you say.

And this is a point I want to make very clear. Oh, dear friends, if you would be blessed in your souls, you must be constant at the throne of grace.

You must be constant around the word of God in secret. How many of us read our Bibles in secret? Do you just depend on the minister on the Lord's day to read his word?

[ 20 : 30 ] Do you perhaps depend on your husband to read his word around the family altar? You see, there's such danger in all this. Real religion is a personal matter, and the Lord will make it a personal matter with us.

I remember and I have heard people speak like this sometimes, and they have said, well, I've got too much to do to read my Bible. I've got too much to do.

I'm too busy. My time is too taken up. I do not have time to read my Bible. Oh, dear friends, the things of time and sense, they perish with their using.

we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we shall carry nothing out. What is most important to us?

The things of this life or our never dying souls? The Lord Jesus has told us so plainly. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

[ 21 : 44 ] or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? So here then you see, and the Bible tells us to whom he gives much, he expects much, but Mary had been so favoured she couldn't leave the sepulcher.

She must be there. And dear friends, we too will be exercised like this. And I hope you will receive this in the spirit of love that I desire to give it to you.



But friends, we shall want to be in the house of God whenever we can be there. We shall want to be in the house of God. Now this is very plain in this account here.

And I just turn for a moment to the account of Thomas in this. and I just draw your attention to that that is recorded.

When the Lord Jesus, and we read it in verse 19, then the same day at evening, the same day, the first day of the week, then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, peace be unto you.

[ 23 : 16 ] And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.

But what do we read in verse 24? That Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

Friends, how searching this is. How searching this is. Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

You know, as we gather together for worship and as we gather for our prayer meetings on Monday evenings and preaching on Wednesday, none of us know when the Lord will come.

It's not depending, this does not depend on your pastor. This does not depend on any minister. This is the exercise that they carry.

[ 24 : 28 ] But true blessing does not rest upon any minister or any pastor. It can only come through the Lord. How sad and how solemn if any of us are not in the house of God when Jesus comes.

Now I leave that thought with you. How solemn. Now I make this very clear. The Lord knows all that's in our life. He knows our duties and our responsibilities.

this is. But friends, this is something that is between our souls and God. How can we really expect the Lord to bless our souls if we are not found in his house?

How can we expect him to bless ourselves if we are not in his house? Can you see what I am trying to come to this evening?

dear Mary, she could not leave the sepulchre. She waited around the tomb to see his sovereign power to save. You see, she had to stay there.

[ 25 : 43 ] She couldn't go home, could she? And when Jesus did come on this first occasion, poor Thomas wasn't there. Do we wonder that his poor heart was filled with unbelief?

Because really that's what it is. And we need to be so careful. I feel that it's right to say that there is a sense in which Thomas was left to dictate to his Lord.

What does he say? The other disciples said unto him, this is in verse 25, the other disciples therefore said unto him, we have seen the Lord, but he didn't believe them.

You see, unbelief raged in his heart. He didn't believe what his brethren said. I need help to make this clear, I feel.

They said we have seen the Lord. And they were glad we have plainly told this. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.

[ 26 : 52 ] And dear friends, isn't it this that gladdens our hearts? I can assure you that it gladdens my heart whenever I see the Lord as I stand here to preach or anywhere else.

But it's the only thing that cheers my heart to see the Lord. Not with our mortal eyes have we beheld the Lord as Thomas did, as Mary did.

Now the only way that we shall see the Lord under the gospel dispensation is by faith. And oh how vital this is.



Faith is the gift of God. And yet it's to be prayed for. I do not know how any of you feel, but oh how I lack this precious gift, this gift of faith.

Now that is the only way that we shall see the Lord. You see the contrast? Mary waited around the tomb, she waited to see whether the Lord would come.

[ 28 : 01 ] When Jesus came to his disciples on the first occasion, Thomas wasn't there. We're not told why he wasn't there. But I'm sure it's right to say that he missed, you see, he was not favoured, he wasn't there to receive this blessing.

And when he heard about it from his brethren, he didn't believe them. His poor heart was full of unbelief. And this is what Thomas said, except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

God's love. Well, to me this is very searching, and it needs to be spoken, I feel.

Dear friends, we need to be so careful what we ask of the Lord. We need to be kept from dictating to the Lord. Lord. You will never receive blessing in a right way if we are left to dictate to the Lord.

And this is what Thomas was doing. Now, I know that the Lord was merciful to him. I know that the Lord favoured him. But what would it mean for us today in this chapel this evening?

[ 29 : 34 ] Well, it would mean this, that we wouldn't believe. Only if Jesus came into this chapel and we could see him, and that we could, that I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

Can you see the contrast between Mary and Thomas? And yet, if we know anything of our own heart, I believe there are times when we are favoured to be like Mary.

There are times when we are just like Thomas. But the Lord loved them both. He blessed them both. But here then, now, for a few more moments, we have dear Mary.

Peter and John had gone to their own home. heart weeping that Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping.

What a contrast to Thomas. She stood without at the sepulchre weeping. Friends, this is the way to blessing.

[ 30 : 51 ] This is the way to blessing. It is to weep before him. Do we know what heart weeping is? It is something that we so need and it is something that so withheld. But we need it. Why did Mary weep?

She said, they have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him. Do you feel like that tonight? Have they taken away your Lord? Has your Lord withdrawn his presence and his blessing in your soul?

And you feel to be left alive. You hear the lion roar. The devil has come in like a flood. Your own wicked heart has risen up in rebellion against him.

And yet every door is shut but one and that is mercy's door. And friends, the door of mercy is still open for you. And so we find then that Mary was rewarded.

[ 31 : 58 ] She had this blessed vision and literally saw, I believe, two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain.

You see, as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulcher. Friends, it will not only be that we shall weep but we shall stoop down.

Now that is the way to blessing. He brought down their heart with labour, they fell down, there was none to help, we shall stoop down. The more we stooped down the dear woman, she had to stoop down, you see, to look into the sepulcher.



That speaks of humbling grace. That speaks of us being brought into the dust. And that is the place of blessing. It is to sit at the feet of Jesus.

But how rewarded she was. These heavenly messengers, 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 it.

[ 33 : 14 ] And when she had thus said, she turned herself back. You see how near she was now to that blessing that was to be hers.

She was very near to it, you see. And I trust there are those of us here tonight, if we are waiting around the sepulcher, to see his sovereign power, to say, we're waiting for Jesus.

Oh, if you're found waiting for Jesus, you'll not be disappointed. He may not come until he came as he did with Jacob at the breaking of the day.

But friends, he did come to Jacob, and he will come to you, if you're waiting for him. And so this wondrous word is recorded, and when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

How did she know that it was Jesus? How can we know that it is Jesus? Friends, how can we know that Jesus is here this evening? we can only if he speaks to our soul this evening through his precious word, and then we shall see him, then we shall know him to be here.

[ 34 : 35 ] It is the Holy Spirit's divine work to take of the things of Jesus, to show them to poor sinners, to reveal them to poor sinners. Oh, it's to hear his voice, it's to hear him speak to us.

Jesus saith unto her, woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? You see how he tests the faith that he had given to her.

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.

Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Now that is the way in which the Lord blessed her.

Have we known something of this blessing? And then we come again to Thomas. You see, we have read to you that Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

[ 35 : 48 ] The other disciples therefore said unto him, we have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

I believe it would be right to say that not many have been favoured with a vision of faith to see his wounded hands, his wounded feet, and his wounded side.

Not many. Friends, the Lord is a sovereign in these things. If any of you have had a glimpse of Christ upon Calvary, it has been given to you by the Spirit.

it. But let us look at it another way. How may we believe? How may we know that Jesus is our Jesus?

It is as he speaks his word into our heart. That is the way, for the most part, that the Lord favours his people in believing.

[ 37 : 05 ] Christ is revealed to their heart by the Holy Spirit as their Lord and their Saviour and their God. Now, as the word is preached, what do we read in the epistle of Paul to the Hebrews?

The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. How can we receive blessing then?

It's like this. The word is preached, the Holy Spirit takes the word and writes it in a poor sinner's heart. The word enters.



Faith is given to receive the word, to take hold of the word. And when we know and feel that we have seen the Lord, Jesus speaking in his word, and I must leave it, the time is gone.

But I must just notice this in closing. What do we read in verse 26? And after eight days again his disciples were within.

[ 38 : 19 ] Now, as I understand this, it means that they didn't see Jesus from one Lord's Day to another. From one first day of the week to the next first day of the week.

if you work it out, I believe it means this. And after eight days again his disciples were within. Friends, the Lord blesses his house.

He blesses the provision of his house. He has given us this one day in seven whereby we may meet together for worship. But then I must just notice this.

Thomas was with them. And Thomas with them. You see, he was here. And Thomas with them. Now, the Lord knew that Thomas was going to be there.

And friends, the Lord knows that you're going to be here tonight. I hope there may be those that will receive a portion for their soul. But oh, if you view it rightly, the Lord brought you here tonight.

[ 39 : 28 ] You're in this chapel because the Lord brought you here. And Jesus knew that Thomas was going to be there. If we think of what it is recorded, and after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them.

Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas. Friends, the Lord knew what Thomas had said.

He wasn't there on the last Lord's day, but the Lord knew what Thomas had said. And dear friends, the Lord knows what we say.

He knows what we have said. And yet the Lord favoured him. Oh, the mercy of God was to sinners.

And how he favours Thomas. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands. And reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing.

[ 40 : 46 ] And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord, and my God. The dear man's heart was broken. The Lord favoured him.

The Lord is so merciful. In spite of all our sin, our shame, the Lord is a sovereign in when he blesses, and how he blesses.

Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Conclude our service by singing hymn 228.

[ 41 : 59 ] Faith owes its birth to sovereign grace, and lives beneath the throne, where grace maintains her dwelling place, and reigns supreme alone, 228.

Amen. wah rhyme.

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