

HER FAITH — — HIS POWER

WOMEN WHO TRUSTED GOD
AND CHANGED HISTORY



Mary Magdalene

The Empty Tomb

Mary Magdalene had watched the two men, Joseph and Nicodemus, bury Jesus in Joseph's family tomb. And now, after the required Sabbath, she and some of the other women returned to the tomb. They hoped they could do a better job of preparing Jesus' body for burial. After all, it was done by men in a rush, and that never goes well.

When she arrived at the tomb early that morning, she was startled to find the stone rolled back and the tomb empty. An angel sat nearby and said, "Do not be afraid. He is not here. He has risen." He then said, "Go and tell Peter and the others." So Mary ran to tell the disciples.

Peter and John followed her back to the tomb. When they entered the empty tomb, they realized that Jesus had risen from the dead just as he had promised. So they ran back to tell the other disciples the good news. But Mary lingered there all alone, looking into the empty tomb and weeping.

Suddenly a man appeared. Thinking he was the gardener, she cried out, "Where have they taken my Lord?" But when she turned toward the man, she heard the most beautiful word she had ever heard. She heard her name. "Mary," Jesus said to her. She recognized that voice calling her, and she fell to her knees before her risen Savior.

What's in a Name?

Imagine that scene. Mary Magdalene had faithfully followed her beloved rabbi, only to watch him die a barbaric death. Now, returning to the tomb, she was shaken with even deeper grief. His body had disappeared. But it only took one word from the risen Jesus to turn her overwhelming sorrow into immeasurable joy - her name. "Mary."

In the Bible, calling our name is perhaps the most powerful way God connects with us. In Genesis, God established His covenant with Abram by first calling him by name and then changing that name to Abraham. God called Moses by name from the burning bush. "Saul, Saul," Jesus called out to Paul on the road to Damascus.

Mary Magdalene came from the Galilean fishing village of Magdala. She was an early follower and supporter of Jesus, having been freed from demon possession. Highlighting her importance to the ministry, all four gospels name Mary as first among the women followers, and she is mentioned more often than many of the apostles.

We Are Called by Name

Mary Magdalene was a typical woman in a culture that disdained women. But God chose her for the essential role of telling the disciples. Then Jesus chose her to be the first person he would reveal himself to after the resurrection. Mary shows us three traits that can help us answer God's call.

Leadership – Mary was tasked with boldly telling the cowering disciples. They believed her and followed her because she had proven to be a trustworthy leader. Who are you being called to lead today?

Faith – Mary's determination to worship Jesus regardless of dangerous circumstances drove her to the tomb. How can your faith overcome the fear in your circumstances today?

Identity – Jesus called Mary by name because he loved her. Today, God calls you and me into a deeper, more intimate, and eternal relationship through Jesus. How are you answering His call today?

As a follower of Jesus, I know that one day Jesus will personally greet me by name in Heaven. He has promised I will spend eternity with him, not because of anything I have done, but because of what he did for me on the cross and in the tomb. I pray that's true for you, too.



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