

**Joy is Coming Soon (Mary Magdalene)**

**God's Promise:** "Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning."

**My Promise:** I will praise God before my prayer is answered.

I first encountered Mary Magdalene as a real woman when I was introduced to the 1973 movie, Jesus Christ Superstar. Before that, she was just a Biblical character to this 18 year old, who was not raised in the church.

Many years later, I realized that we are all Mary Magdalenes, saved by Jesus.

Come with me, use your holy imagination. Imagine that you and I are she.

It wasn't long ago that I sang these words:

***I don't know how to love him,  
What to do, how to move him,  
I've been changed, yes really changed,  
in these past few days  
When I've seen myself, I seem like someone else.***

***I don't know how to take this.  
I don't see why he moves me.  
He's a man.  
He's just a man, and I've known so many men before, in very many ways, He's  
just one more.***

***Should I bring him down? Should I scream and shout?  
Should I speak of love? Let my feelings out?  
I never thought I'd come to this.  
What's it all about?***

***Yet, If he said he loved me - I'd be lost; I'd be frightened.  
I couldn't cope, just couldn't cope. I'd turn my head, I'd back away.  
I wouldn't want to know.  
He scares me so. I want him so, I love him so...***

In your book of Unshakable Hope, I, Mary Magdalene, am the weeping willow. Here is some history for you:

Before I knew Jesus, I was a prisoner of seven afflictions, not mentioned, but perhaps it was depression, loneliness, shame, fear, let it be enough to say, that I was completely consumed with troubles. But then something happened.

Jesus stepped into my world.

He spoke and the demons fled. For the first time in a long time, the oppressive forces were gone, banished, evicted.

It was then I knew of love for my Master, for all that he had done for me. I think I showed my love for Jesus by never deserting Him. The Bible says I was one of the followers who “were contributing from their own resources to support Jesus and his disciples”

This means: Wherever Jesus went, I followed. I heard him teach. I saw him perform miracles. I helped pay expenses. I helped prepare his meals. I was always near Christ.

I loved him so much, I was even there to watch Him die.

On Friday, I watched Jesus die. When they pounded the nails in his hands, I heard the hammer. When they pierced his side with a spear, I saw the blood.

Even watching Him die, in His hour of crisis. I wanted to be loyal to the end. When they lowered his body from the cross, I was there to help prepare it for burial.

Seeing him on that cross, I recalled my words: **I don't know how to love him, What to do, how to move him, I've been changed, yes really changed, in these past few days when I've seen myself, I seem like someone else.**

On Saturday I observed a sad Sabbath. They say: Weeping can last through the night, I say longer. Just ask the widow in the cemetery or the mother with a sick child. The man who lost his job can tell you. Weeping may last through the night, and the next night, and the next. I wept for my Jesus.

When Sunday came, I went early to the tomb to finish the work I had begun on Friday while it was still dark. I had no other motive than to wash the remaining clots of blood from his beard and kiss him goodbye.

When I arrived at the tomb, the bad news became worse. I “saw that the stone had been taken away”. Assuming that grave robbers had taken the body, I hurried back down the trail until I found Peter and John. I told them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb.

Peter and John ran to the grave site. John was faster, but Peter was bolder. Peter stepped inside. John followed him. Peter saw the empty slab and stared. But John saw the empty slab and believed.

The evidence all came together for him, the resurrection prophecies, the removed stone, the linen wrappings, the head cloth folded and neatly placed.

John did the math. No one took Jesus' body. No one robbed the grave. Jesus rose from the dead. John looked and believed. **Easter had its first celebration.**

Your Bible recounts, "But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping" **I never thought I'd come to this.** My face was awash with tears. My shoulders heaved with sobs. I felt all alone, more alone than I ever have felt. It was just me, my despair, and a vacant tomb.

As I wept I stooped down and looked into the tomb. I saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to me, "Woman, why are you weeping?"

I mistook the angels for men. It's not hard to imagine, it is still dark outside, even darker in the tomb. My eyes were tear filled. I had no reason to think angels would be in the tomb. This day was too dark to expect the presence of angels.

"They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him". **He scares me so. I want him so, I love him so...**

My world had official hit rock bottom. My master had been murdered. His body buried in a borrowed grave. His tomb robbed. His body stolen. Now two strangers were sitting on the slab where his body had been laid. My sorrow intermingled with anger. I don't know how to take this.

- Have you ever had a moment like this?
- A moment in which bad news became worse?
- In which sadness wrapped around you like a fog?
- A time you went looking for God, and you couldn't find him?

Then, maybe my story, Mary Magdalene's story, is your story. If so, you're going to love what happened next. In the midst of my darkest moment, the **Son** came out. Not the bright ball of light, but rather, the Son of God.

Imagine, just imagine, face to face with Jesus, and you heard the wonderful words of Jesus declaring His love for you, how would you feel? Would you be frightened standing before Jesus, can you dare to stand in the light of his love? **Yet, If he said he loved me - I'd be lost; I'd be frightened. I couldn't cope, just couldn't cope.** Who

me, Jesus loves me? **Would I turn my head, would I back away**, or would I enjoy that pure truthful moment of love? **Yes, He scares me so. I want Jesus so. I love Him so....**

Would you fall at the feet of Jesus if you saw him? Would you throw your arms around His shoulders and hold him close? I held my beloved teacher. And Jesus let me do so. Even if the gesture lasted for only a moment, Jesus allowed it.

How wonderful that the resurrected Lord was not too holy, too divine, too supernatural to be touched. I **want Jesus so. I love Him so....**

This moment serves a sacred role in our daily belief in the Easter story. It reminds us that Jesus is the conquering King and the Good Shepherd. He has power over death. But He also has a soft spot for the Mary Magdalenes of the world. This regal hero is relentlessly tender.

Weeping comes in the night, but wait...Joy does come. Watch for it. Do what the People of Promise do. Keep coming to Jesus. Even though the trail is dark. Even though the sun seems to sleep. Even though everyone else is silent, walk to Jesus. I did this. I came looking for a dead Jesus, not a living one. But at least I came. And because I came to Him, He met me.

And you? You'll be tempted to give up and walk away. But don't. Even when you don't feel like it, keep walking the trail to the empty tomb. Open your Bible. Meditate on scripture. Sing hymns. Talk to other believers. Place yourself in a position to be found by Jesus, and listen carefully. And give praise to God, before your prayer is answered.

Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning in, says the psalmist King David. Weeping comes to all of us. Believe me, heartaches leave us with tear streaked faces and heavy hearts. Yes, weeping comes. But so does joy. Darkness comes, but so does the morning. Watch for it. Expect it as you would the morning sunrise or the evening twilight. Sadness comes, but so does hope. Sorrow may have the night, but it cannot have our lives. I entrust my complete being, life and even death, to the Son of God.

Revelation 21:4 says something to remember, The prophecies are fulfilled: He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning no more, crying no more, pain no more, for the first things have gone away.

Just praise your God, knowing your prayers will be answered.

And Joy came to me, when I saw my arisen Jesus.

And it will come to you as well, my friend.

Shalom.

