

Intimate Authority: Holy Week Meditations, 5

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Weeping and lingering were the earmarks of Mary's authority. These are the signs of holy intimacy; tears of gratitude spilt while abiding in His love, and tears of grief over the loss of love.

Mary Magdalene witnessed that loss at Calvary. God entrusted her, along with Jesus' mother and a couple other women, to abide with Jesus as He was led to the Cross. They had followed Him from Galilee to Golgotha 'to care for His needs.' (Matt. 27:57) Unlike the others, these women went the distance with Jesus.

Mary was among the few who did not abandon Him. She lingered, she waited; we can assume that she made every effort to console Him. Yet in the end, her efforts were futile. Imagine the frustration; she could do nothing to stave off His suffering. To behold Him hemorrhaging, His wounds fanning out like fissures upon His crimson body, and she powerless! Before His tormentors and His torment, she could only weep.

Perhaps a parent witnessing the agonizing death of its child, or a spouse attending to the passing of a lifetime partner can begin to grasp Mary's suffering.

The difference? Jesus was her Savior. She believed He was 'I AM.' She staked her life on it. She could say authoritatively with the Psalmist: 'His unfailing love is better than life' (PS 63:3)—better than the old misbegotten one—'His Mercy has given me the only life worth living!'

Everything He had become hers; in turn she had surrendered her life to Him. He had become her life. When the temple and earth cracked at His death, so did her foundation. Her life was built on His, and He died.

Meditating on John 15: 1-8, I thought of Mary: He was the vine, she the little branch. He delivered her from her old life and its demons; He pruned her. He filled her with holy love, made her clean through the many Words of life He spoke to her. She had become a fruitful expression of divine love. She knew that 'apart from Him she could do nothing.' (Jn 15: 5) Then He died.

You can say that she knew He was going to die and that she had faith for resurrection. Maybe she did. But nothing could have prepared her for his shocking end and the only natural conclusion one

can draw: He is gone.

Mary Magdalene fulfilled Jesus' words in John 12 when He prophesied His death, and ours, at Calvary: 'Unless a kernel of wheat dies, it remains alone...Whoever serves Me must follow Me; for where I am, My servant also will be.' (Jn 12: 24,26)

Mary went to Calvary with Jesus, weeping and lingering there. When He died, she died too. Mary knew that the servant is not greater than the Master.