

Intimate Authority: Holy Week Meditations, 6

This is the sixth post of my Holy Week Meditations for 2012. Please [click here for the archive list](#) of posts as they become available.

—

Intimate Authority: Holy Week Meditations, 6

Mary Magdalene wept and lingered at the Cross. The Man who had become her life died. His death rocked the earth, split the temple, and broke her heart. The tears of repentance and gratitude with which she had washed His feet became a flood of grief. She watered His nail-split feet. Apart from Him, she could do nothing. She had nothing; His life was hers. She filled the void with tears.

He had founded a new life in her. Now grief grounded her, kept her near Him. When Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus transferred Jesus' body to a tomb, she followed Him there. Did the myrrh and aloes with which they embalmed Him remind her of the perfume with which she had so boldly baptized Him unto His death a few days earlier?

Lingering gives one time to remember, to allow the life that has passed to speak once more. Perhaps Mary recalled His words:

'I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy. A woman giving birth has pain, but when the baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a baby has been born into the world. Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again...' (Jn 16: 20-22)

She wept and lingered at the empty tomb. She remembered. Deeper than her grief was her trust in the One who promised to return. How? When? Who can know? Grief kept her from racing away, from returning to the old life, from despair. Grief grounded her and freed her to linger. The Spirit broods over those who wait and remember and weep. Sometimes hope can be conceived only in broken, still ground.

‘Even in darkness, light shines for the upright.’ (PS 112:4)

Perhaps Mary recalled these words:

‘I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His Word, I put my hope. More than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchman wait for the morning.’ (PS 130: 5, 6)

‘Who have I but You? Earth has nothing I desire but You. My flesh and heart may fail, but You are the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.’ (PS 73: 25, 26)

The other disciples went home, confused, disoriented, worn out. Mary Magdalene waited. She lingered and wept at the tomb for hours, hours became a day then another. She was poured out, like when she first washed His feet with her tears, or when He cleansed her with a mighty deliverance, or when she broke open the perfume on His head. She remembered Him being poured out on the Cross, the flood of blood and water. He gave everything to her. She remembered.

She was His—where else would she go? She waited alone at the empty tomb, an empty vessel whose hope lay only in a few words. But those words were His. She recounted them and they sustained her. Trust sweetened her grief. She waited.