



Ramah's Voice

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Something About Mary: Helping Post-Abortive Women Understand the Love of Jesus

by Sydna A. Massé

“How could Jesus love me?” is a common question from post-abortive women who have just faced the reality of their past “choice.” Low self-esteem is a common denominator in these hearts. They feel unlovable – unforgivable – and lost. A majority became sexually active in a search for the missing love of their father. After the abortion, many do not believe that they are worthy of anyone’s love – let alone Christ’s unconditional love. They are afraid that should friends or family discover their secret, they would be rejected! In working with a woman at this stage of healing, I’ve found the gentle Biblical example of Mary Magdalene can help them understand just how much Jesus loves them.

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An Ignoble Woman

There are many noble women in Scriptures. It is easy to focus on them and attempt to emulate their incredible examples. Yet my personal favorite is Mary Magdalene. Why do I like her so much? Because of the great healing that God did in her life. She is described as “out of whom went seven dev-

ils.” (Luke 8:2) Like Mary, Jesus stepped into my life and pulled me from the miry clay of my sin and removed many devils from my heart. He restored and blessed me with a ministry to post-abortive individuals. Mary Magdalene is proof positive that God can use a sinner.

While the New Testament doesn’t give the name of the woman caught in adultery (Matthew 8:1-11), many scholars believe it was Mary Magdalene. They also think Mary Magdalene was the sinful woman who anointed the feet of Jesus in Luke 7. For the sake of this writing, let’s assume these scholars are correct. Regardless, one incredible thing about Mary was the way that she ministered to Jesus.

Caught in the Act

John 8:3 relays the story of the adulterous woman. Try to picture the scene that day when she was “caught in the act” by a crowd of angry citizens. What must she have felt as she was pushed and shoved through the streets? Her heart must have known that her death was imminent. Maybe she wanted to die. Surely her actions could have been more discrete? Certainly she was at the end of her rope and probably didn’t care much what happened to her. Doesn’t that sound a lot like the women who come to your post-abortion groups or pregnancy centers?

The next thing she knows is that she is standing in front of Jesus. Had she heard

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stories about Him? Did she know by looking at Him that He was the Son of God? I wonder how He looked at her that day. He knew her guilt and realized the judgmental spirit of the crowd. When asked what to do with her, He responded, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." Then He stooped down and wrote on the ground.

The woman's jaw must have hit the sand when she heard His verdict. Imagine her shock as she saw the crowds go away one by one, finally leaving her alone with Jesus. Jesus stood up and spoke to her directly. "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" He asked. "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you ... Go now and leave your life of sin."

From that moment on, her life was never the same. Her life had been devoid of the forgiveness and love that flowed from Jesus that day. Perhaps she had lost her virginity to rape and had been cast out as "unclean." Without anyone to care for her, she had found employment in the oldest profession. Finding a nice young man was impossible because men only married virgins. I believe that Jesus knew all about her past and took pity on her life. He took a moment to give her direction – go and sin no more.

He (Jesus) took a moment to give her direction – go and sin no more.

Forgiven Much

While Jesus offered her forgiveness and a clean slate, the Pharisees continued to judge her. A prime example of this judgment is the conversation a Pharisee had with himself as he watched the woman anoint Jesus' feet. (Luke 7: 36-50). Picture this man entertaining Christ and feeling "all pumped up" by having a famous person in his house. Enter a sinful woman who washes Jesus' feet with her tears and dries them with her hair. I'll bet the Pharisee was angry she had the audacity to come into his house.

Judgmentally, he thought, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is – that she is a sinner." (Luke 7:39). Simon's body language must have been very clear and Jesus easily read his mind. He took a moment to address this pompous soul with a parable. In essence, He relayed a tale of two men who owed money – one of them was forgiven a greater amount. "Now which of them will love him more?" Jesus asked. "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt cancelled," Simon responded. From that point, Jesus drew the woman into the conversation. Gently, He shared that "her many sins have been forgiven – for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little, loves little." (Luke 8: 45).

While I'm sure that the Pharisee wasn't moved by the example, she heard every word. The tears that cleaned his feet must have flowed freely and her heart stirred with incredible love. Jesus was right. She had the capacity to love deeply because of the incredible forgiveness and love personally bestowed upon her. His smile must have been a balm to her soul.

Beholding Him

Now picture Mary Magdalene at the foot of Jesus' cross – watching her beloved Savior die with overwhelming pain in her heart. Even in death, she had trouble leaving His side. On Easter morning, she got up and went to His tomb. Mary was one of the first to discover His body wasn't there. She was distraught thinking that His body had been stolen. Sheer panic enveloped her as she ran to tell the disciples.

After the disciples verified her story, they left Mary alone at the tomb, crying. John 20:18 relays that as she bent over to look into the tomb, she saw two angels who asked her why she was weeping. After she told them it was because her Lord had been taken away, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there. She thought He was a gardener until Jesus said her name. Of all the people in the world, Jesus chose Mary Magdalene to be the first to see Him in resurrected form. Clearly, He loved her.

As I share the story of Jesus' love towards this sinful woman, many cry aloud as they begin to realize the depth of Christ's love for them.

How they will bless you!

To Jesus, there was something special about Mary. Because of her sin, she adored and ministered to Him in a unique way. Mary Magdalene was part of the team that cared for His every physical need (Matt 27:61). She strengthened Him in her own way so that He could minister to others. Every leader needs such a person on their team.

Post-abortive women take great inspiration from Mary Magdalene. Many identify with Mary Magdalene. They believe they deserve to be stoned. In helping them learn more about Jesus' love and forgiveness – His ultimate sacrifice on the cross for all their sins – I have been allowed the great blessing of helping them find His love. Many have dedicated their lives to helping me in the ministry of reaching other wounded hearts. On hard days, they are the ones who send an encouraging e-mail or card. Sometimes I feel like they have blessed me far more than I ever ministered to them.

The next time you meet a sinful woman, remember Mary Magdalene and the blessing that she was to a Jewish carpenter named Jesus.

How to Impart the Love of Jesus Christ to Today's Sinful Women

- **Encourage them to read their Bibles** — Nothing is more inspirational than reading about Jesus healing the blind, ministering to the oppressed and loving the sinful. Create a daily reading plan that includes one chapter in the New Testament, one Psalm and one in Proverbs each day. If they agree to do this for 30 days, the results will be amazing!
- **Involve them in a Post-Abortion Bible Study** – When women meet others who share their pain, God's ministering spirit is enhanced and the healing spreads. The best thing you can do is to help them to deal with their pain.
- **Teach them to Hear God's Voice** – Many new Christians don't understand that the Holy Spirit lives in them and His voice can steer them through the trials of life. The best thing you can do is to help them differentiate between Satan's accusations and God's encouragement. Share the character of God and His love for them.
- **Don't be a Pharisee** – Post-abortive women will listen to every word you say – waiting for condemnation. Temper every word and be very careful not to say anything she could perceive as judgmental. In all ways, show her love and respect. Keep in mind that she will overhear your conversations and be blessed when you speak well of her to others.
- **Dispel the stoning myth** – If you are not post-abortive, you can be an incredible window to the Christian community that says you are there to help and not to judge. But for the grace of God, many of you could also have found your way into an abortion clinic. God can use you to be His arms of love to these women. How incredible they feel when they realize you know their darkest secret and love them anyway!

Remember that each sinful woman could be a gift that God has sent to minister to your needs!





The Hero Inside of You!

Depending on their ages, my sons have made their way through different heroes from Barney to the Power Rangers and now Michael Jordan. Heroes come in all shapes and sizes with different levels of fortitude. Lately several PAS individuals who read my book have given me this title. It is in these critical times when I am sure to acknowledge that the real hero lies inside of me – Jesus Christ!

It's essential to never take credit for the Holy Spirit's work through us. I've seen ministries end because of possessiveness and control issues in terms of God's accomplishments. On the other hand, many can be intimidated by ministry and even fearful. In both cases, this work has nothing to do with human beings! God has given us His Holy Spirit to do that work and all we need to be is obedient. It is an imperative element of our service that all glory is given to the Lord. If we take credit for His accomplishments, the anointing could disappear.

God knows that we need encouragement from time to time. He sends special folks our way with a reassurance that they appreciate the way we have allowed the Lord to minister through us. II Peter 1:21 states, "*for prophecy never had its origins in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*" Isn't it wonderful to be carried along by the God of the universe?

We have a light that this wounded world needs to see (Matt 5:14) – a hero inside of us that they need to experience. The post-abortive need courage to face their pain and grief. You can help them take that first step and point them in the direction of God's amazing grace. Next time you receive applause for your accomplishments, be sure to point towards Heaven and clap along!

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From the Word of God:

Stand Firm!

"But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings...."

II Thessalonians 1: 13-15a (NIV)