

Tell My Brethren

by H.J. Vine

Jesus' love for His brethren is demonstrated through His resurrection and ascension, securing a new life, relationship, and inheritance for those who believe in Him.

Scripture: John 10:27, John 12:24, John 17:14, John 20:15, John 20:17, Romans 1:4, Romans 8:29, Hebrews 2:12

Topics: "Resurrection Power", "Christian Discipleship"

Description

H.J. Vine preaches on the profound encounter between Mary Magdalene and Jesus at the tomb, where Mary, mistaking Him for the gardener, is amazed to find her risen Lord. Jesus, in His resurrection, reveals Himself as the Son of God in power, calling Mary by name and referring to His followers as 'My brethren,' showing His deep love and care for them. These 'brethren' are not of the world but born of God, chosen by the Father and closely following Jesus, despite their human failures and misunderstandings.

Transcript

John 20:15, 17

"She supposing Him to be the gardener." It was the mistake of one who loved the Lord with an ardent affection. There was no doubt that Mary was deeply attached to Jesus, and coming at early morn to the tomb in which He had lain and finding it empty, she eagerly sought for His precious body, so that it might be properly and reverently cared for.

Mary had good cause to be devoted to her Lord! Had He not delivered her from the thralldom of seven wicked spirits? In His service therefore she engaged; and when He went from city to city, and from village to village, with the twelve spreading the glad tidings, she, along with the wife of King Herod's steward, and other ladies, sustained the financial needs, ministering "to Him of their substance." And now, far beyond the expectations of her eager heart, she had found Him again--not dead, but alive--her risen Lord. The One she had mistaken for the gardener was JESUS HIMSELF risen from among the dead! He was alive, to die no more! Not the gardener, but the Lord of life and glory.

There He stood speaking with her, the risen Man!--the Son of God in resurrection! That spear-rent side, those pierced hands and feet plainly told that He was a real Man still; but He was beyond all question "this same Jesus." He had raised up others from death during His life on earth, and had by this proved that He was Son of God, but now His own resurrection pre-eminently marked Him out as "Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4). This was He who called her

by name--"Mary," and to whom she responded with affection and reverence, saying, "Rabboni!" And, on that glad day of victory and triumph, His thoughts were at once engaged in regard to those He called His brethren. Who could these favoured ones be? Who could have such a place in His love at such a time? Who could be of such value in His eyes that on the very first day of His resurrection, the first day of the week, He so thinks of them?

He had just now returned from the great conflict, when, through death, He had broken Satan's power, from the scenes of suffering and rejection and crucifixion by man; from the bearing of our sins in His own body on the tree; from the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of Himself; from the three hours of darkness; from the forsaking of God; from doing the stupendous work which glorified God and secured eternal redemption for us; from sustaining the just claims of God's holy throne and gaining eternal salvation for all those who believe; from that awful time of blood-shedding and death; from the cross and the grave! How much then must He have loved those He was thinking of, those He speaks of to Mary as "My brethren"! Who were they?

They were not the Jews who retained Moses' seat and the place of Jehovah's name! They were not the Pharisees who vaunted their orthodoxy! They were not the Saducees who boasted in their sceptical and critical acumen and scholarship! They were not the Greeks or the Romans or any other special nation. Jesus twice designated them in His intercession to His Father as "not of the world even as I am not of the world" (John 17:14, 16). He Himself had been rejected by Israel, and, though the world was made by Him, "the world knew Him not" (1:10). These, however, received Him and He gave them the right to take up a new place and relationship with God, not now of the children of Israel or any other people, but "the children of God" (1:12). This, we are told, is the portion of those "who believe on His name"; and any earthly distinction or otherwise connected with their birth into this world is superseded by the fact that such are "born of God" (1:13). Our Lord Jesus Christ also said, "I know them, and they follow Me, and I give them life eternal, and they shall never perish, and no one shall seize them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one can seize them out of the hand of My Father. I and My Father are one" (John 10:27-30, N.Tr.). They are also spoken of as "His own," and as those whom the Father had given to Him "out of the world" (17:6).

But what of their walk and ways? Well, speaking mainly, they followed Jesus and followed Him closely. They "continued" with Him. Truly, they sometimes failed, but who does not? It is to be noted, John does not designate himself or the others as apostles. They are simply Andrew, Peter, John, that disciple whom Jesus loved, the disciples; and then "those who believe . . . through their word," "other sheep," and "one flock, one Shepherd" (10:16, N.Tr.). Yes, they failed to fully enter into the truth which He unfolded. They were slow to lay hold of the revelation He had come to make. Often they quite misunderstood Him. Under Satan's special onslaught Peter denied Him, though his faith failed not; and, when the Shepherd was smitten upon the cross, like sheep they were all scattered. Still His love for them was quenchless and eternal; they were His first thought on this resurrection morning, they and the message that He would send them; and, finding in Mary of Magdala a suitable messenger, He entrusts her with His great resurrection message to them. May we say it with the utmost reverence, He was eager that they should know what it was that filled His heart. In Hebrews 2:12 all those who are sanctified by His work upon the cross are called His brethren. They are one with the Sanctifier, "for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren."

These are the favoured ones. These are the objects of the risen Saviour's love. To them He sends the new message, instructing Mary to tell it to "My brethren!" He had been alone amidst the sorrows,

sufferings, forsakenness and death of the cross, but He is to be no longer alone in risen life. "The corn of wheat" (John 12:24) had fallen into the ground and died, and now risen, it bears much fruit of its own nature, life and order. New life, risen life, is ours in the risen Son of God. A new relationship is ours with His Father and God. A new inheritance is also secured for us in Him as His co-heirs. And a new love--new to us--the eternal love of the Father for the Son becomes ours too (John 17:23-24). He spoke also of His ascension to Mary, bidding her not to touch Him, for He was not now to be known in the old relationships of life, but His ascending to His Father as Man would secure a new place for His brethren, where eventually we shall be with Him according to eternal purpose, and He shall shine as "the Firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29).

What then is the new resurrection message which Mary is honoured to carry to the disciples? Jesus said to her, "Go to My brethren and say unto them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God." His Father theirs! His God theirs! His ascension to His Father and God involving that His place with Him in glory was theirs too, for they were brought in Him into the same relationship, though they were not yet in glorified bodies. What a message! Nothing like it had ever fallen upon the ears of man before. Little wonder that they were found together the same evening of that first resurrection day; the first day of the week. And Jesus came into their midst speaking to them the "peace" He had secured by His finished work at Calvary; and showing them His hands and His side. JOY also was imparted to their adoring hearts as they beheld the Lord!

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