

# It Depends on How You Know Him

by Richard E. Bieber

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*To experience the power of Jesus' resurrection in our lives, we must prepare the way by taking care of unfinished business with God, asking the Lord to make himself known, and giving thanks to God for the blessings we already have.*

**Scripture:** John 14:21, John 20:16, Acts 9:3, Philippians 3:10, Colossians 3:17

**Topics:** "Personal Encounter", "Spiritual Transformation"

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## Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches about the transformative encounters of Mary Magdalene and Saul of Tarsus with Jesus, emphasizing the importance of knowing Jesus as a personal, living Lord who is alive from the dead. He highlights the significance of obeying Jesus' specific instructions and the changes that occur within and around us when we connect with Him. Bieber encourages believers to prepare for a personal encounter with the risen Lord by taking care of unfinished business with God, asking for a deeper revelation of Jesus, and cultivating a heart of gratitude.

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## Transcript

Mary Magdalene was a changed woman after Jesus delivered her from those seven devils. So changed, that she began to follow him. She couldn't thank him enough for her healing.

But the change that made the eternal difference in Mary's life was not when Jesus delivered her from those demons. The change that transformed Mary Magdalene forever,

....that ignited her heart with a flame which hasn't gone out in all these centuries,

....took place outside the tomb as dawn was breaking.

"Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?"

"Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away."

"Mary."

"Rabboni!"

"Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

Mary Magdalene went and said to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord."

It's one thing to know Jesus as a figure of history.

It's quite a different thing to know Jesus alive from the dead as you personal, living Lord.

Saul of Tarsus knew Jesus as a figure of history. Saul had seen Jesus from a distance, and did not like what he saw. In fact he despised Jesus of Nazareth.

Then came the day when Saul met Jesus face-to-face, alive from the dead.

Saul's eyes went blind.

His body shook like a leaf in the wind.

His heart melted.

"Lord, what do you want me to do?"

And Saul of Tarsus was changed forever into Paul the Apostle.

It's not enough to know Jesus as a figure of history. If knowing Jesus is going to do you any good, you have to know him as Mary Magdalene did, as Saul of Tarsus did: alive from the dead as your personal, living Lord.

You may not see him in a vision. You may not hear an audible voice, but you can connect personally with Jesus---alive from the dead---and keep connecting with him for the rest of your life.

Notice that when Mary met Jesus in this new way, he told her to do something: "Go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

When Saul of Tarsus met Jesus in this way, Saul too was told to do something: "Rise and enter the city, and you will be told what to do."

When you meet Jesus alive from the dead he always comes up with some specific thing he wants you to do. And as you do this thing, changes begin to take place in your life. Changes within you. Changes around you.

You may be surprised at what the Master tells you to do when you meet him in this way. It could be something quite simple like...

"Love you wife."

"Love your husband."

"Reconcile with your son...your daughter."

"Reach out to that brother who's drifting away."

"Loosen your grip on that money."

He will speak, and you will hear.

The whole purpose of the Bible, the reason for our being gathered into the Body of Christ, is to make it possible for each of us to know Jesus, alive from the dead, in the power of his resurrection. To know Jesus not merely as a figure of history, but as our personal, living Lord---the way Mary Magdalene came to know him, the way Saul of Tarsus came to know him.

But how? How is it possible?

We start with these words of Jesus, spoken to his followers of all time who are still languishing on the other side of the resurrection. He says:

"I will not leave you desolate. I will come to you."

Jesus said this to his disciples in the upper room the night he was betrayed.

He says it to you as you read these words.

"I will come to you alive from the dead."

"I will visit you in the power of my resurrection."

"And I will tell you what I want you to do."

But when, Lord? When will you come to me and make yourself known to me in the power of your resurrection?"

The risen Lord always operates on his own timetable, never on ours. He comes when he decides to come. He chooses the time and the place. But the Lord Jesus keeps his promise to every man and woman who is serious about following him: "I will not leave you desolate. I will come to you."

There will be people reading these words who have already met the risen Lord in this way. And there will be people reading these words who have not yet experienced this. But all of us, whether we have or haven't, need to get to the place, and stay in the place where Jesus can continually fulfill his promise:

"I will not leave you desolate. I will come to you."

Here are three things we can do that will prepare the way:

1. Take care of any unfinished business with God.
2. Ask the Lord to make himself known to you in this way.
3. Start giving thanks for the blessings you already have.

1. Take care of any unfinished business with God.

If there is something you already know the heavenly Father wants you to do, something that's been bugging you for a while now....you know it's the right thing to do....the good thing....and you fully intend to do it. You just haven't gotten around to it yet. Make up your mind that you won't put it off any longer. You're going to do it.

That phone call.

That letter.

That check you want to send to someone who badly needs help.

That gift to an agency that feeds the hungry.

That apology.

That word of appreciation.

That expression of love.

You know that this action will please the Father.

So don't waste another day. Take care of it.

2. Ask the Lord to make himself known to you in the power of his resurrection.

Even if you have been following the Lord Jesus all your life, you know that there can be more to your relationship with him than you now have. Listen to the apostle Paul, writing after years of fruitful service:

"...that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead."

Philippians 3:10-11

Paul knows Jesus as few of us ever have, but he still wants to know him better---in the power of his resurrection, in the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming like him in his death. Hence, our prayer too can be, "Lord, I want to know you alive from the dead as my living Lord---not just as a figure of history. Come to me, as you promised, and make yourself known to me in the power of your resurrection. Open my eyes to see what you want me to see. Open my ears to hear your voice."

3. Start giving thanks to God for the blessings you already have.

There is no better way to open our hearts to the Spirit of God than to start thanking him. Before our Lord Jesus fed the five thousand, he took the bread, lifted it toward heaven, and gave thanks. He took those two little fish, and instead of complaining about how useless they were for the feeding of this crowd, he said, "Thank you, Father, for these fish!" And the very atmosphere of thanks brought the life of the kingdom into that tiny feast and expanded it until every one was satisfied.

The night our Lord was betrayed, he gathered his disciples in that upper room. And before he said, "Take and eat, this is my body, which is given for you," he first said, "Thank you, Father for this bread." And before he said, "Take and drink, this is the New Covenant in my blood, shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins," he first said, "Thank you, Father for this wine."

Thanksgiving toward his Father was the atmosphere of our Master's life. "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou has hidden these things from the wise and understanding, and revealed them to babes. Yea, Father, for such was thy gracious will."

He was always thanking the Father. And so should we. Get up in the morning and give thanks. Sit down to a meal, and give thanks. Look out the window and give thanks. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and

into his courts with praise. Be thankful unto him and bless his name....

And while you are thanking God.....

And while you are inviting the Lord to come to you afresh....

And while you are taking care of all unfinished business with the Father.....

Things will begin happening in the unseen world that will prepare the way for you to experience what Mary Magdalene experienced that day.

The Lord Jesus, risen from the dead, alive with a life that overflows from him like a river of living water, will come to you,

make himself known to you,

speak to your heart with words of life,

tell you what it is that he wants you to do,

and give you the power to do it.

I will not leave you desolate. I will come to you.

Believe it, and you will see it.

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