

The First Believer

by Teresa Conlon

Teresa Conlon's sermon explores the profound journey of Mary Magdalene from despair to faith as the first believer in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Duration: 58:40

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5-6, Matthew 11:28, John 20:1-18, Acts 2:38, Hebrews 10:4

Topics: "Easter Message", "Discipleship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the events of the first Easter morning as described in John chapter 20. He emphasizes that Jesus was committed to teaching his disciples about himself and his kingdom, even when they didn't fully understand. The speaker encourages the audience to have an honest heart and allow Jesus to reveal himself and his ways to them. He highlights the significance of Jesus breaking bread, symbolizing his brokenness for humanity, and how this act opened the disciples' eyes to who he truly was. The speaker also mentions the power of Jesus' word in bringing freedom and life, as demonstrated through various miracles.

Transcript

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However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission, existing copyright laws apply. I'd like to just pray and then maybe if you would just turn with me to John chapter 20, John chapter 20. It's not surprising that on Easter we will be looking at the first Easter morning in John chapter 20.

Now I'm going to pray. Father, I come to you in Jesus' name. Lord, we come to you in your precious name.

And I thank you, Lord, that you will come now and walk among us. And that, Lord, you will speak something so vital and pure of yourself. Lord, we ask you now to touch us.

And, Lord, would you speak to us through this word. Lord, make it a living word. Lord, I ask for those that do not know you, that, Lord, you would touch hearts and let there be a surrender to your love, to your crucified love.

Lord, I pray for those that are struggling. And I pray, Lord, for those that come hurting and with pain. I thank you, Lord, that in your presence there is healing and fullness of joy.

Lord, only by your spirit. This cannot be worked up by man or any words a man or woman could say. But, Lord, where the spirit of the Lord is, you bring life and you bring all that we need.

So, Lord, we ask you to come now and richly bless this word with your spirit teaching us. And we thank you for it in Jesus' precious name. Amen and amen.

I entitled the title of this message. It's called The First Believer. The First Believer.

And I wanted to look at the life Easter morning of Mary Magdalene in John 20. And to piece together the sequence of events that first Easter morning, that resurrection morning. You have to really read the four gospels.

Because every gospel tells a piece or a section of the events of the unfolding of that early morning. And if you read the four gospels, we would see that Mary Magdalene and other women go to the grave of Jesus early in the morning. And they had prepared spices Friday night.

The next day was Sabbath. They weren't allowed to travel or to do any work like that. So early Sunday morning, they go to the grave to prepare what they feel to the body of Jesus Christ.

And when they get there, they are told by angels, men in white, in the gospel of Luke, he is not here. He has risen and go back. They tell them and tell the disciples.

And so they go back to where the disciples were and they give them that news. And then we see that in starting in John chapter 20, that Peter, it says. When Peter and John went running to the tomb on the on the news that the women brought them.

And it says, verse four. So they ran both together. And the other disciple did outrun Peter and came first to the sepulcher.

And he's stooping down and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying. Yet he went, when he not in. Then come a Simon Peter following him and went into the sepulcher and see if the linen clothes lie and the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

And so the women follow the men back and they see Peter and John go in and they see that the body is not there. And then verse nine says, for as yet they knew not the scripture that he must rise from the dead. And we see here in verse 10, it says the disciples went away again unto their home.

And now starting in verse 11 is where Mary Magdalene is now left alone in the garden. And she has received or heard the word from the angels. But you know, the disciples come, they look in, they see an empty tomb.

And all of a sudden her reality or what really must be the truth comes crashing in on her. And it says in verse 11, but Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping. And as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulcher and see if two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain.

And let me read one more. And they say unto her, woman, why weepest thou? And she saith unto them, because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. It kind of struck me that this was angels speaking to her and she doesn't seem at all amazed that angels are the ones giving her this information one more time.

Whether it is due to her extreme grief, or maybe it's the second time an angel has spoken to her, whatever it is, what is really in her heart is I have come to minister to Jesus, to his body. And when I get here, they have taken him away and I don't know where they have laid him. And as I read these words, I could hear the pain in this woman.

And I could hear her confusion and almost the worst 48 hours of her life she has just experienced. And now all the confusion and what's happening at this empty tomb is only intensifying what she's gone through the last 48 hours. You know, many of you know her story.

This is a woman from whom seven devils were cast out. And she had been allowed to follow Jesus. She was one of the chosen, one of that band of women and men that followed Christ.

And she ministered to him. And she had gone with him through his journey through Galileans and Samaria and Judea. And she had seen miracle upon miracle.

And she had seen in Jesus, when so little was put into his hand, how he could feed a multitude. And she could see when he would spit on the ground and just from his own spit and dirt and that mud, but apply it to blind eyes and how they were opened. This woman where she saw demons came under the authority of his word that he could speak into the deepest, blackest part of a man's soul and bring freedom and life.

She could see waves and wind come by the power of his word. She saw everywhere she looked, everything. There seemed to be not one area of life as she knew it, whether it be in the heart of man or the elements around her that was not under the authority and control of this man at his will.

But beloved, I think nothing compared, though, in her mind to being loved and accepted and forgiven by him. She who had been so vile was now so loved. She who had been, I, we, you just know someone with seven devils, how the society would so put that one out, cast them aside, see the nothing but how vile and dirty and how they wanted nothing apart.

And when people looked at her, they thank God they weren't her. And people would judge and people would have all kinds of reactions to her, but none of it would ever have been what how he reacted to her. It's like he looked down and when he saw her.

I was able to reach into the deepest part of her hell, the lowest, slimiest part of her pit. And nothing that was of hell in her could withstand the light and the power and the love that he brought to her, her mind and her soul and her spirit and how he raised her up and made her clean, made her in her right mind. When he looked at her, he fully accepted her.

He fully loved her. And it didn't matter what one person on the face of the earth thought about her or felt about her in his eyes. She knew she was complete.

She was loved. She was cleansed. She was forgiven.

She was made whole. He could look right through her, see everything there was to see, and it did not keep him from stretching forth his hand and saying, I choose you. I want you.

I love you. You are my chosen one. This is the Jesus she followed.

And yet she knew something else this first early morning when she watched Jesus die on the cross. Her experience that Sunday morning was that hope to her mind could be crucified, that love could be taken from her. That faith could be killed.

Beloved, everything that she longed for, a new heart, a new life, a new start could be buried and the good could be overcome by evil and everything that meant life to her for some strange, unknowable reason could be taken from her. When Jesus died on that cross, when she stood there, knowing that in her experience and in the experience of so many, without a doubt, he was the most holiest man they had ever encountered, that he was the one so God possessed, that he was a prophet, surely in word and deed that no man spoke like this man. And yet how a people Israel called by God, his chosen ones could have a messenger with such a clear and bright, shining message that so transformed the lives of those that opened their heart to him, that had their hearing touched.

And yet here it was this holy man crucified, counted as forsaken, counted as a God hater, counted as a blasphemer, counted as one against the authority of the religious system in Israel. Now, this man. Who had been accused of so much, and yet her experience had been so different, stood at the bottom of his cross and watched him die a horrifying death.

And beloved. When Jesus died. I believe there was something of anything that was life and faith and hope in her died with him because he who had seemed so God possessed, suffered and died like a man.

And so she has come to do what she feels she can do. Is that since they've taken him and killed him now, she wants to go, she wants to take that body and she wants to perform the last rites as as something, something that she can do for him and verse 14 and 15. It says when she said, I know not where they have laid him.

And when she had said she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing and knew not that it was Jesus. And Jesus said unto her woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? And she supposing him to be the gardener said unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where has thou laid him? You know, the scripture is telling us that she looked right at Jesus, but she did not know it was Jesus. A face that she had known so well, she was now restrained from seeing.

She was not allowed to see and to recognize him. And she says, where have you borne him? Where have you carried him? And borne is to bear or carry or take up or endure. Where have you carried him? Where have you taken him? He did.

He bear and he carried. He took me up. And he did that for me.

He was that for me. And now I want to be that for him. You see, you have borne him somewhere, but that's how what he did for my life.

He endured me. But then he reached down and he changed me and he carried me and he bore me when no one else would bear with me. And now someone has come and they've taken him.

If you've taken him away, I want to take him away. I want to bear. I want to.

What he's done for me, I want to do for him. And that last line of verse 15 so touches me. And she says, and I will take him away.

I will take him away. It's just a dead body. I want to take him.

And it just said to me. I'm trying to give back what he gave me. He took me up.

I'll take him up. And beloved, it was the very best and most tenderest of intentions. But really, what would she do with a dead body? She would dignify it with spices and give it a proper burial.

But beloved, something very devastating would be allowed to happen that it happened in the lives of many people who say they do want to know Jesus like she knew him before the cross. She would say, I want to do something special for someone very special to me. I want to take the body of Jesus and and I want to have it, take, carry it and bury it.

But beloved, at the core of that action. Would be that I have to take my faith and my God out of harm's way. I have to take.

My faith that has now been shattered when I saw him die. And who I thought might have been. My God, and I have to take him out of harm's way and I will be good to him.

I will give him a proper burial. And I will bury him. But beloved, what dies when you have to guard God's grave? She knew or felt she knew who this man was.

And yet when he died. And something in her died that she says, I have to take care of him now and I'm going to find a grave and I'll put him one and whoever took him away, he will never be allowed to be taken away again. And I will go and I will give him a grave and I will guard it and I will guard my God's grave.

I will take him away. And beloved, so many people live here. They are guarding a grave.

You see, they want something of Jesus. They know something of Jesus. They have been drawn by his name and they have tried religion.

You have tried something of Christ, but it has not worked out. There has been deep disappointments. There have been things in your life and you could wonder, God, how can this be you? You know, I want to I have a heart for you and I want the things of your kingdom.

But I know nothing but repeated frustration and failure. And God, there are things in my life that happen that don't make sense to me. If you're alive, I followed you with a sincere heart and God, you were real to me for several moments.

You were more real to me. And I could have told people, I know God lives. I know he's alive.

And yet with this heart for him, you have stood at the foot of a cross in your life. And that's all it's been is a cross, no resurrection in it, just a cross. And something has died.

And there's almost a fear to admit it. There's almost afraid to say this is really what's going on at the bottom of my heart. There could be a pretense of religion.

There could be a show. You could attend church. You could be counted one of the faithful.

But really, your faith is something you have to guard and your God is something you have to guard because put to the test, you feel your faith and your God would not come through. There are those that say, I have tried him and it has only left me with such fear and such questions. There has been a cross.

There has been pain and misunderstanding, and I'm now afraid of what it means to fully trust, fully declare one more time, God, I want to be made willing to believe you again. And with no resurrection in our theology, with no resurrection in our experience, no new life, we could end up, many of us, like Mary Magdalene, with a lot of religion, a lot of knowledge about God, a testimony, a little bit of a testimony. But underneath it all is the anxiety and the doubt and the fear.

Underneath it all is repeated failure at trying to serve and please a God that seems impossible to please. That seems, if he could just show me what he wants and what is to be my next step. But everywhere I turn, it seems to be a place of more pain and questions this faith that I have.

But beloved, verse 16 comes. And Jesus said unto her, the Jesus she couldn't see the Jesus that had been standing before her all the while, a Jesus that had been withholding from her eyes, a Jesus that could not reveal himself until she had come to the bottom and until she had come to a point where she could hear something. Beloved, we can be in our pain, our misery, our fear and our doubt, and we still can't hear from God all the while saying, God, I need a word from you.

We can be so wrapped up in trying to pursue God, but it's all in our own understanding that when God's trying to break through and finally reveal himself as standing before us all the while, we've been saying, no, all I see is a gardener. I need God and God in his time knows when he can reveal himself. And here is this woman now.

Willing to take him away, willing to give him a proper bear, willing to somehow give back to him because she he has given so much to her and this is how she sees religion. You see, God, now you've given to me. Now I've got to give something back to you and God, you're going to give more to me.

Now I've got to give something back to you. This is how I please you. This is how it works.

But she came to the end of it. And all of a sudden in her desire to take him away and take a dead body away, God in his mercy said, no, you are not that you do not the keeper of my grave. It's going to be a new relationship and a new understanding.

And it says here in verse 16, Jesus said unto her, Mary, and she turned herself. Because at the right time in the perfect timing of the Lord, when he knows the exact amount of pain and pressure and doubt and fear and failure and despair at the right time, beloved, at the right time, some are crying out even now. Oh, God, you know, why won't you answer me? Because he's saying at the right time, I need one word to move with a mountain.

I need one word and a full revelation will come to you and I one word, one time his way. It's worth the way it's worth the way. Because there's something when God says one word, he says, Mary, and she turned herself.

Because at the sound of a voice at the sound of her name, she turned herself because she recognized the voice. Nobody said her name like Jesus did. Hallelujah.

Nobody could say it with such love and such tenderness, with such care, with such fullness in it. She could hear the longing in it. She could hear her God in it.

She heard herself known in it. She heard herself loved in it. He said her name and she turned herself, the scripture said, and she recognized him.

And she said, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Beloved, what happened in that moment? I'll tell you something. She didn't have the words and she didn't have the theology down.

She didn't have the doctrine down. She couldn't have told you all the theology behind it. But in a split moment, she knew he lives, he lives and I don't have to be the keeper of his grave.

It's not up to me to bear him. He bears me still. And in my doubt and in my understanding, my lack of understanding, when I thought it was the end of all things, he stands before me and it's the beginning of all things.

Because death couldn't take him. All of that cross couldn't take him. All that I thought was the end of my confusion and my pain.

I can hear you live. You are greater than death. You arose from the grave.

You are my God. And I could hear it in her. Beloved, what a moment.

What a moment. We thought we were undone without you, Jesus. We thought for sure we were next for the cross.

We thought we were going to be a band of disbanded rebels. Everybody, the laughingstock of the nation. And we ourselves would sit night after night saying, where did we miss? Didn't we see the dead raised? Didn't we see the eyes open? Didn't we see him walk on water? What happened? What happened? But no, he stands before us on the third day.

And all of a sudden, the testimony of the angels, it made sense. All of a sudden, the scripture opens up and beloved, I believe that in that moment when she would read scripture, it would all become new. It would all become clear to her that it behooved.

It was a must that the Christ must suffer, that he must die on a cross and he must be risen on the third day. And that which Jesus had been preaching to them over and over and that they couldn't hear were now fully understood when they saw him risen from the dead, that Christ, the Messiah had to suffer. That there had to be an atonement for sin, because in that incredible moment when he suffers and he atoned for sin, all those that would come to him in faith, Jesus said that now I'm going to separate you from my sin, from your sin, those that repent and say, Lord, we have our lips and our mouths have said we want you, but our hearts have been far from you.

And God, we are now smitten and we see what kind of people we are. But Lord, if you have mercy on us, God, give us a heart for you. And they began to cry out.

The scripture tells us that not just repentance, but remission of sin would be come to them and there would be the putting away of sin and the deliverance of the sinner from his sin, that the power of sin and the penalty of sin would be broken over the life of whosoever would come to Jesus and that God said, because I separate you from your sin, I can now come dwell in you and I will be in you and I will radically

transform you. And it was a new relationship. It was a new covering because the blood of the son of God had been shed, not the blood of goats and bulls that could only satisfy as a temporary covering.

But Christ says, when you come to me, I give you my covering. It is a perfect covering. It is a righteous covering.

And you can come to me and I will receive you all the days of your life. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

God says, when you come to me, the same spirit that raised me from the dead, I will put on you and you will be able to raise from your places of death and your places of sin. That's how you'll know you're mine because the same spirit that raised me up, I give to you and we are in Christ are given a new mind. We don't want the old things.

We don't want to think the old way. We have a new nature and a new appetite because the same spirit, a Holy spirit is raising us up out of the places of death, out of the places of strongholds of sin, because that's how we show the world he's alive. His spirit is in us.

Hallelujah. Now, an interesting thing happens here in verse 17, Jesus said unto her, touch me, not touch me, not, you know, in our own understanding, a very natural reaction would be to grab him and never let him go. The natural thing would be the, Oh, the joy that would break over such.

When you go from the pits of despair to the heights of elation, you just want to throw yourself into this good news. That's Jesus that now you have an understanding in your soul. He is your God and he cannot fail us.

And the love in our heart for him would just reach out and want to grab him and touch him. And Jesus says to her, touch me, not, you know, I have heard it explained and I believe it's, it's an excellent explanation of what this means of touch me, not that when Christ resurrected, he said, don't touch me not for. I am not yet ascended to my father.

And it was explained that there is now a new relationship in the sense that Mary Magdalene and every other believer in the new Testament now had to know him by faith that they would not know Jesus in the flesh anymore. That they used to know him before the cross. They knew what he looked like, what his voice sounded like.

They knew his laugh. They knew his mannerisms. They knew things about him in the flesh.

They knew him in the flesh, but now that Mary Magdalene was going to be the first believer that had to start to know him in another dimension, not in the flesh, but she had to learn to understand him and grasp him by her faith that the eyes of her faith, that her faith now had to reach out. And she was not allowed to touch a physical body because now you are going to know me through faith. You're going to know me by faith.

You don't know me in a physical realm anymore. That has passed away. And now I'm going to be known by you and every other believer through their eyes of faith.

And that's how you're going to know me. That's how you're going to open yourself and know that I am with you. It is with faith is now how you touch me.

You embrace me through your faith. And that's very valid. And that's, she is a pattern for how we today know Jesus.

He said, blessed are you when Thomas, the disciple said, unless I put my hands in his hands, the scar in his hands, his feet, I will never believe. This is in his great mercy appeared to that man, his disciple, and said, here, feel touch. But he said, are blessed are those that don't have to do this.

Blessed are those that in hearing my word preached to them, I will become not as real, but more real to them. Because when I enter you by the spirit, when you know me with your mind, with your heart, with your soul, by your faith, you know me better than through just the touch of a flesh. Thomas, if you just only want to know me by the touch of my hand, there's going to be a day that hand will be withdrawn.

Then what will you do? But those that will know me by the spirit. As living in their heart and their minds, I will never leave them. I will never forsake them.

There'll never be a time. They say that I am not strongly supporting them and being their God. And when I seem veiled to you, and when I seem as a gardener to you and not as your God, know that by faith, my word, I cannot lie to you that I am there in your midst.

I am with you in the times of your deepest disappointment in the times of your deepest discouragement. When you don't understand what is going on and how I'm dealing in your life. Know that I am there and beloved.

We are going to know him in those times by faith. And he will be as more real to us than if we had seen him in the spirit. Yes, it did signal a new type of relationship.

But in looking up that word, touch me not. I saw a new meaning. You see that word word there.

If you look it up, and if you have that kind of Bible, look it up. Today, touch means touching for the purpose of manipulating. Touch me not.

And that word touch means touching for the purpose of manipulating or to exert a modifying influence. You see, beloved, when we truly know what kind of salvation we have. Where Christ says that if you come to me in repentance and I forgive your sin, I put the positive, the Holy Spirit is proof that my word is good to you because you'll change.

There'll be power in you. You will have a new nature and a new mind. You will have something in you that's divine.

That's my life in you. And when you sin, if you confess your sin, I'll forgive your sin. That the sin question was settled at the cross.

The question is now, will you believe me? Do you believe me? Do you believe me? You're totally forgiven. Do you believe me? I put your past behind me and I don't remember your sin anymore. If you're going to talk to me about your sin, you'll have to remind me about them.

I don't remember them. And when that gets into our spirit. Jesus knew that the salvation he was offering to these people that come to Jesus by faith because of the cross and now the work of the Holy Spirit.

He knew that still beloved, though the power of sin and the penalty of sin has been broken in our lives, the presence of sin is still there and there will be a corruption want to come into our relationship with Christ because I have this incredible salvation and there will be something in the heart of every believer when it's grasped, when it finally gets through in the condemnation and the guilt and the sin and we've been brought into a new life and I have a new life in Christ. There can be another corruption present. That will say, God, it now can be all this freedom.

I have this, this, this wonderful life I have in you. I can still run the show. Because you love me, because I'm forgiven, because that's the God you are.

There can be when we come to him now, Jesus was saying here is the sign of my believer that there is going to be a reckoning almost every day of your life of saying, Jesus, not my will, but thine, if my life is to show through you. Because, beloved, when we have this freedom in Christ, it can be manipulated. When we have this freedom in Christ, he is going to say that there is something in our heart that we don't want to have to pray a daily prayer, Lord, I will not mind.

That, Lord, I want to be able to take this incredible salvation, but I don't want to have. The core, a selfish core, the core of my own understanding, the core of how I want now this walk to go, I don't want that touched. But Jesus said that if you will deny yourself, that means my will, not your will.

That's what that means. People run out and say, well, I won't have a candy bar that's holy or I'll deny myself this or that. But in its basis form, deny yourself means, Lord, I choose your will over my will every time you raise the issue.

You know, if we hear this outside of this glorious salvation, it sounds more like works again. Oh, God. What do you want? But we forget we've been given a new nature and there's something in us that wants what he wants.

And in that new nature is power. But, beloved, we're still given a choice. That's what makes our love to him something he treasures.

And God is saying, don't manipulate. He says your battle will be to surrender to my timing for your life. Your battle will be a surrender to my ways and to my counsel and to my purpose.

But go tell the brethren, he says in verse 17 and say to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my father and your father and to my God and to your God. Tell my brethren that I ascend, that I am continually higher than your own understanding, than the obstacles of your fear or your pride or your selfishness. The manipulation, beloved, when we manipulate, when we are trying to say, God, if I do this, then you'll do that.

Or if we're trying to say we don't understand, you know, the human heart, as we know, the scripture says is deceitful. And there are some obvious signs of manipulation. But there are subtle things of manipulation.

And Jesus is telling us in John 20, he says, you cannot manipulate me. You cannot. You cannot manipulate me.

But you can deceive yourself into some things. And in that deceiving, you're going to find myself revealed to you as a gardener, not as God. I'm going to seem far from you because that's how I'm going to get your attention.

That you're going to say you're mine, but you're not going to hear my voice because you're manipulating and you have another plan in another way. There's something going on. There's another motive of why you're, why the service? Why this? Why that? And beloved, in his incredible love, God puts us in exactly where we need to be so we can hear his voice.

We are exactly with the people we need to be with if we are in Christ. We are exactly in the situation we need to be in if we are in Christ. Because beloved, when we are in Christ, he places us where we need to be because the steps of a good man are ordered.

And in Christ, we are automatically in the place that we need to be if we have a sincere heart. And where any other motive, where there is a manipulation, where we're not understanding, where we say, God, I want you, but why the silence? Why the wall? Why am I hitting a brick wall? Why do I not seem to understand you in this way, in this place? Beloved, because God is saying, I want your attention. He says, you can't touch me to manipulate me.

You can't come to me in your prayer, in your works, in your fastings, in your, in your good deeds. He says, you come to me because you have, you have so much to learn. And I have to teach it to you as a little child.

You see, when Jesus arose, I can guarantee you something. There were many, when they found out Christ arose, they'd say, yes. Now the kingdom of Israel be restored.

Because they thought that's what Jesus was about when he first walked the earth. There were many that gathered around. Even the disciples said to him, God is now the time that Israel be restored to her former glory.

Because that's what Messiah is come for. Messiah came to bring us back to the glorious kingdom of David and Solomon, where we are the greatest nation on the earth. And we are the chosen people favored of God.

And when Messiah comes, we'll get it all restored back again. And when he rose from the grave and walked among them, you can be sure that many said now is the hour for Israel to be restored. Now this earthly kingdom will be set up and will be the greatest people on the face of the earth.

And that theology can get into us. Where we forget that, God, you have not called me and saved me to establish my earthly kingdom. It's about your kingdom.

It's not about establishing my reputation, it's your reputation. And it's easy for us to look back there and see, I hope they get it. It's not so easy for us to see when God's saying, here you go again, you're taking my glory and salvation to build your own earthly kingdom, your own reputation, your own ways of being known.

God says, you can't manipulate me because I love you too much. I am not going to let you continue in that way. Your vision of me has to be so much greater that you will bend your knee because I am your God.

And you will accept my kingdom and my agenda in everything. And beloved, when we say, God, teach me these things. I have so much to learn about you, Jesus.

How your kingdom works, how you are able to go to the core and center of my heart and release me for every area of bondage and darkness as I go your way. That Lord, everything I've ever learned from this world and from my own understanding, you have to go and separate that which is true and not true. And I need to be relearned and retrained.

And beloved, so many times we do not realize to the degree that we come to our Jesus. And there's another motive and there's other issues. And there's something going on all the while saying, God.

I want you. Jesus says, touch me not. Do not touch me.

Do not manipulate me. I'm going to expose every area that you have this motive and this reason for coming to me to build your own kingdom. I'm going to expose it.

When Jesus revealed himself that night to the men on the road to a mass, Jesus walked with them for a long time and they didn't know it was him either. And once again, Jesus was showing his disciples, now you must know me by faith. And they walked with him.

And as Jesus began to talk to them, their hearts began to burn. And the scripture says they invited this unknown man in with them to eat. And as Jesus sat with them and they didn't know who it was, they were talking, who was sharing, who was teaching, who was revealing to them scripture.

They didn't know who it was, but yet Jesus was faithful to them. He was committed to teaching them about him and his kingdom, even then they didn't understand who the teacher was at the moment. Beloved, there we can be in situations in time, but it is Jesus behind it all, teaching and revealing him and his word and his ways to us.

And if we have an honest heart, our hearts will burn. And we'll begin to know, God, when I'm running up against that wall, you're going after a motive. There's an area of unsurrender in my heart.

There's an area where I still am manipulating something. God, you've come that I may be liberated from this darkness and this oppression. And God, I want your kingdom fully in my life.

Jesus, I want people to see you in me. And beloved, it says that when Jesus took and broke bread, their eyes were open. When he broke bread, their eyes were opened.

And it's such a picture of how Jesus said, I was broken for you. He says that when you come to me, your will is going to be broken. This is how the kingdom of God advances.

This is how the manipulation breaks, because he's beloved. He's going to take what is us, what is the human thing, and in his hands, we're going to become his broken bread. And that our own will and our own understanding, every time put in his hand is going to be broken.

It's going to be changed. It's going to be broken like he was for us. But beloved, our spirits are not broken.

Our spirits are not broken. But if we will not be broken, we'll have to keep going around that. We will not advance in God till that dealing is done.

We will not move forward from God's issue till God says we move forward. And therefore, many of us, God has his hands on us, and we are resisting the breaking. We are resisting the breaking.

We're fearful. And we want to manipulate our way out of a situation, out of the people that we're supposed to, that we're associating with. We're looking for a way out.

We feel that if we stay in this situation, we'll be overcome with fear and failure. God says, no, I'm breaking your will. I'm breaking your will.

You know, a horse, I may have shared this, I'm going to close with this, but a horse, his will has to be broken before it can be trained to do its job. A horse's will has to be broken, has to learn to accept a bridle in its mouth and a rider on its back. And when the master says stop, it's got to learn to stop and go.

It needs to go. Then it can be put in the field. Then it can be sent out to the purpose that it was bred for.

But till that will is broken, it is useless in the field. And beloved, there's a calling on our lives, but till we submit and surrender those areas that need to be broken by him. And Jesus is behind it all.

We may not see him in it. We may not understand how this could be you and your dealing in my life. I tell you as surely as Mary Magdalene was standing in the presence of Jesus.

So are we in those moments. And when he can finally break those areas in our lives that we may say your will, not mine. I'll tell you the purposes and plan of God move forward in our lives, but not till then.

And beloved, it is a glorious day. When finally we can be led out into the work and the plan, because what has been broken in us has been our own self-dependence and our own understandings and our own pride and our own stubbornness and our own fears and our own rebellions. That we can say, God, lead me.

And I don't understand how and I don't understand where. But as you show me in your word, as you confirm to me, it is you lead on. And it doesn't matter where.

Beloved, that's when the abundant life begins. It's not fun in boot camp. But the abundant life, because every day we can wake up when our will is broken.

God, what are you going to ask me to do today that I may obey you in it? But if the fight is still on, is that you speaking? Is that really you wanting me to do that? That's a hard place to be. Because you never win in a fight with God. And we don't move on.

He says, touch me not. Do not come to me. Do not come with a pretense.

All the while manipulating. You've got to let me do that. I don't manipulate for evil.

I've come. I restore you. I once heard a speaker say, God, you've got to heal me, then kill me.

And sometimes that seems like the process. But Jesus' words when he revealed himself to Mary Magdalene. I've been here in your deepest despair.

But now I tell you, as you come forward in my life and my freedom. Every day there's got to be the agreement, not the manipulation. But I will give you the grace and the power.

Every time you need to say, Lord Jesus, not my will, but your will. And I will see you move in my life in such glory and sweetness and power. The power of being loved, forgiven, cleansed, and used.

And I thank that first believer. That's such an important message for us today. If we can hear her and the Holy Spirit in it.

Will you stand with me? For some here today, you may never have surrendered to the love of Jesus Christ. His love is a love that breaks through, changes our life. If today that you would say, Lord, I felt that burning.

I feel that drawing to you. We ask as the musicians play, if you would come forward. We would like to pray for you because God knows your name.

He has drawn you here. He will put his hand upon you. And if we confess your sin and repent, he comes into our lives.

He changes us and gives us a new life. And he gives us the power to change. There's some here today that you're saying, God, I need that power to stop the manipulating.

I need that power to be able to look inward in every area. You say I'm building another kingdom other than yours in my life. I want the power, God, to be made willing to do whatever change is necessary.

For some, you're in the valley of decision. It's very fearful to pray, Lord, your will, not mine. And this, I have no strength to walk that walk that said, God, I'm hearing you that you promised me.

That your life in me will be the power to pray it. And then your life in me will carry me and bear me through the roughest part of the road where I can only declare I could not have done it, but for you, but God, you did it. We come through with a faith because we are doing what we are not capable of doing.

Beloved, there are some here today. It's not by accident that you're here. God wants you to come and put something at this altar and believe him for the strength, believe him for the courage, believe him for the desire, believe him for the change of heart and mind.

He will never fail us. I have come to an altar like this so many times, only knowing death in my life, never the resurrection. Only knowing the failure, never the power, only knowing the tears and never the victory.

But little by little, God proved himself. He says, I have the way I am the way I know what I'm doing in your life. I'm taking you through the center of a selfish heart, and I'm freeing you from your own understanding and your own stubborn will and pride.

Because I love you and I will use you. For those that have come to the altar for salvation, I'd like to pray with you in a minute. But first, I would like to deal with those that have come to the altar, because you know that God is asking you to lay down something, that you may fully accept what he is doing in your life, where he wants to lead you.

Beloved Mary Magdalene had to be willing to lay down that concept of Jesus. She had that dead concept. She thought he was dead.

That had to be laid down so that the real Jesus could be made resurrect in her heart. That the real Jesus who lives and reigns forever could be established in her heart. And beloved, we can surrender to a God like that, who reigns our lives forever, rules our hearts forever with love.

And beloved, we're going to come. And many of us here, you know, there is... I want you to know, there really is, in a Christian's life, a daily surrender. It's not a one-time prayer.

But it is a daily surrender on many issues. But the victory comes and the freedom comes. And every time we say yes, it gets easier to say yes.

And for those that have come to lay something down that says, God, I'm stopped to manipulate in my questions and the silence from you. And where I'm hitting that wall. Lord, if you need to speak to me, I'm laying down now.

I surrender, Lord, my stubbornness and my selfishness and my pride and my... And all that is a barrier. And Lord, I just pray, Lord, for all those that say, God, give me a heart now to cry, your will not mine be done. That Lord, I have to trust you now, even for the desire to pray this prayer.

And then Lord, I have to trust you to make it a reality. That Lord, you know my flesh. I cannot.

But you are a God who cannot fail. And when I surrender this to you, Lord, you will be God to me. And you will resurrect me up.

Lord, it will be your divine power. I will know victory and I will know freedom. Because it will be your life in me, taking me through to the resurrection and the power.

And Lord, we thank you. We lay down our own understanding and our own sin nature. The presence of sin in our heart and our lives and our mind.

And Lord, we thank you that we have power, resurrection power of Christ in us. Lord, to put down everything not of you and to accept your resurrection life in its place. Lord, I thank you.

You're patient with us. Lord, you are not frustrated with us. You are not fed up with us.

Lord, you're finally speaking again. That you're going to take us by the hand and lead us through the hardest and darkest places. But you will never let us go.

And you bring us through to victory. Because Lord, that's why you died. To give your children victory and life.

Now Lord, we accept it with open arms. We lay down everything else. And we accept, oh God, your deliverance.

Done your way, your time. Lord, now I pray for a heart of peace. And a heart, Lord, that is confident in you.

That Jesus, your time, your way. That God, you will bring us through. That you'll give us grace to say, not my will.

You will give us the grace and the power to say, not my will. But Lord, we will cling on to you. And Lord, we will see your will be done.

And we will say with such a fervent heart, this is Jesus, not me. And Lord, many will see your glory in our lives because of it. And we give you the praise and the glory.

And Lord, and thank you. Lord, those that have prayed that prayer. I would just want you now just to raise your hands as an act of faith.

And just receive now this transaction of his will in exchange for our will. We do it by faith, Lord. You see the heart.

You see, I thank you, Lord. That when we turn towards you and hear your name, life, resurrection, life flows. Hallelujah.

We praise you, Lord, for this. We thank you for this. We thank you for this transaction in our lives.

We believe it, Lord. Hallelujah. For those that are for the first time saying, I want to come and give my life to Jesus Christ.

I want to lay down my sin. I want to accept his total forgiveness of sin. I want that new life, his life flowing in me.

That'll give me a power to live a new life. And I receive a new heart and a new mind for many of you that are here. And that's your prayer.

Would you raise your hand? Those that are praying that prayer for the first time. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Now, those that have their hands raised, Jesus is receiving you. When we come to him, and I would just ask you to pray this prayer after me. Lord Jesus, I come to you.

I ask you to forgive me. And I ask you to cleanse me and forgive me. I ask you to give me a new life in you.

I ask you to give me a faith in you. That it will be your power in me that will cause my life to change. I surrender my life and I take your life in exchange.

Thank you, Jesus, for loving me, accepting me, and forgiving me. I give you my life in Jesus' precious name. Amen and amen.

Hallelujah. If you've just prayed that prayer or you are a brand new believer here, we have New Believers classes every Friday night starting at seven o'clock. If you come, we will give you a Bible.

You will meet teachers that will be able to explain things of God to you. They'll help you through questions you have and situations you're in. Every Friday night is a New Believers class.

We have a Bible there and a friend waiting for you. God bless you. There is another service at six o'clock.

And there is now a time of prayer starting shortly. We thank you. God bless you.

This is the conclusion of the message.

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