

April Teaching Theme: The Book of Malachi

讲员 Speaker: Pastor Peter Linghui Tian

题目 Topic: Easter Sunday

经文 Scripture: John 20:1-18

Monthly Theme: We are pausing our series through the book of Malachi to focus on the Resurrection story for Easter Sunday. We will finish up the book of Malachi next week.

四月 **April:** 瑪拉基書 **Malachi** (四旬期與復活節 **Lent/Resurrection**)

April 3rd – 為貪婪悔改 Repent of Your Greed (瑪拉基書 Malachi 3:6-12 - 爭議 5 Dispute 5) (四旬期 Lent)

April 10th – 倘若惡人興盛, 事奉神有甚麼益處? Why Serve God When the Wicked Prosper? (瑪拉基書 Malachi 3:13-18 - Dispute 6) (四旬期 Lent)

April 17th – 空墳墓 The Empty Tomb (John 20) (復活節主日 Easter Sunday)

April 24th – 上帝之日 The Day of the Lord (瑪拉基書終章 Malachi 4:1-6 - Conclusion)

Resources:

[Sermon Video](#)

[Sermon Slides](#)

Discussion Questions (Pastor William R. Horne)

- (1) Read John 20:1-18 together. What observations do you make, and what stands out to you? How would you summarize the passage?
- (2) What is significant about Mary Magdalene's resurrection experience compared to the others? What does this tell us about God? What does this tell us about her faith?
- (3) Share with your group anyways you have experienced "death" (literally or metaphorically) over the past two years. Grieve together.
- (4) Share with your group anyways you have experienced "resurrection" recently. In what ways have you seen God meet you in the midst of "death"? What hope does Jesus' resurrection give us?

Important Notes (Pastor William R. Horne):

Notes on Q2: Mary Magdalene is portrayed in all four Gospel accounts as one whose allegiance to Jesus did not change even when Jesus was killed. She is not following Jesus for some benefit or prosperity, but she follows him to the grave. To be a follower of a crucified, condemned criminal was a sure-fire way to be further marginalized in society.

- (1) **LUKE:** According to Luke, a Mary called Magdalene was one of a large group of women who provided for Jesus and the Twelve out of their means (Luke 8:2). The group included some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities. One of these was Mary, "from whom seven demons had gone out" (Luke 8:2; cf. Mark 16:9), an indication that because of her serious condition, an exorcism had been performed on her, most probably by Jesus himself. In the Lukan account, Mary is specifically identified

as one of those who told the apostles about the Easter day events, only to have the report fall on deaf ears (Luke 24:10–11; cf. Mark 16:9–11).

- (2) **MARK:** In the earlier, Markan narrative, the presence of Mary Magdalene at the crucifixion (Mark 15:40), the tomb (Mark 15:47), and the empty tomb (Mark 16:1) provide a link of continual witness to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. In this role, Mary is accompanied by Mary, the mother of James and Joses, and Salome (whose presence at the tomb is not specifically cited in Mark 15:47), but the role of Mary is preeminent since she is always cited in the first instance.
- (3) **MATTHEW:** Matthew's gospel closely follows the Markan account in identifying Mary Magdalene as one who observed the crucifixion (Matt 27:56), the burial (Matt 27:61), and the (empty) tomb which she had come out to see (Matt 28:1). Matthew, however, departs from the Markan story in citing the names and purpose of the women who accompanied Mary Magdalene. Matthew also significantly varies from Mark insofar as Matthew states that the women joyfully, albeit fearfully, ran from the empty tomb in order to tell the disciples the good news.
- (4) **JOHN:** Mary is abruptly introduced into the Johannine narrative—similar, in many respects, to the Matthean—at John 19:25, where she is portrayed as being at the cross in the company of the mother of Jesus and Mary, the wife of Clopas. The Fourth Gospel does not portray her as an observer of the burial, but it does include a significant narrative account of Mary's presence at the empty tomb. In John 20:1–2, an unaccompanied Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb, which she finds empty, and thereupon runs to tell Peter that “they have taken the Lord out of the tomb.”

Mary's solitary presence at the tomb is an example of Johannine dramatization, but the evangelist further exploits the tradition about her in an eight-verse narrative, where a scene is set at the tomb itself (John 20:11–18). The narrative, without parallel in the Synoptic Gospels, contains the only two NT passages in which Mary Magdalene is simply called “Mary” (John 20:11, 16). Although an apologetic motif is present in the narrative insofar as Mary, representing the disciples (John 20:2, 13; cf. v 15), expresses the view that Jesus' body had been taken away by someone else, the dominant theme of the narrative is the development of Mary's faith.

Initially, she had seen the empty tomb and had reacted in merely human fashion with tearful distress. Subsequently, she saw Jesus but did not understand who he was. The call of his voice allows her to recognize him but she believes him to be as he previously was, a teacher who could be physically embraced. Jesus then reveals that his resurrection implies his return to the Father. Commissioned to announce the meaning of the resurrection to the disciples, Mary makes the paschal proclamation: “I have seen the Lord.” Thus **Mary Magdalene typifies adequate faith in the resurrection of Jesus.**

Source: Collins, R. F. (1992). Mary (Person). In D. N. Freedman (Ed.), *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (Vol. 4, pp. 579–580). Doubleday.

Indeed, Mary Magdelene's faith is unique in many respects at the time of Jesus' death, but also important is God's use of her to be the first to proclaim (preach) the Good News of the Resurrection. She is a woman in a patriarchal culture and is marginalized in her religious experience (demonic experience). She is not a male spiritual leader or someone of noble status, but she is at the bottom of society and yet used by God to pronounce the coming of God's reign in Jesus. This is just like God, who uses the poor, lowly, and marginalized of the world to proclaim his reign as King. (Upside-Down, you might say :))