

## PERSONAL APPLICATION

- Pain can blind us to seeing Jesus in our lives, even when he is standing near. Who do you know that is currently experiencing pain in their life? What can you do this week to minister to their pain and perhaps open their eyes to Jesus?
- Jesus seemed to use questions very frequently to open up a conversation and to get people to open up their hearts and create an opportunity to reveal himself. Choose some good ‘opening questions’ and use them to open up a conversation this week.
- Who might Jesus be asking you to go and tell about the risen Saviour? Make a plan to invite them this week to church on Easter Sunday.

## PRAYER

- Think of all the people you know that are currently experiencing pain and pray for them. That God would ease their pain and reveal himself to them.
- Ask God for opportunities to interact with those who are in pain and for openings to minister the healing power of Jesus to them.
- Ask God to send you to people who might be open to hearing about him or to going with you to Connect Group or to church.

## NOTES

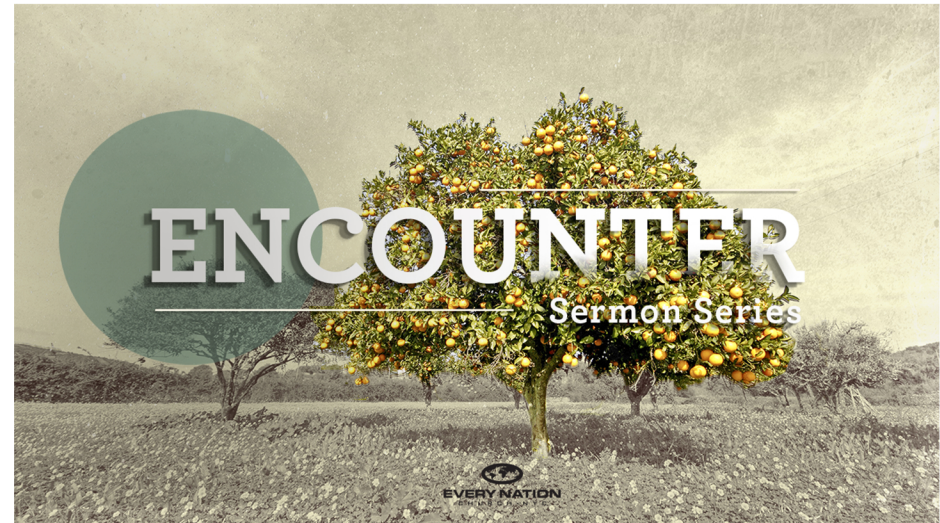
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## Week 2: Mary Magdalene

## CONNECT

- What have been the hardest ‘good-byes’ of your life?
- When was the last time you visited to a cemetery? How did you feel when you were there?

## WORD

*<sup>1</sup>Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. <sup>2</sup>So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!” <sup>3</sup>So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. <sup>4</sup>Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup>He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. <sup>6</sup>Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, <sup>7</sup>as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. <sup>8</sup>Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. <sup>9</sup>(They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) <sup>10</sup>Then the disciples went back to where they were staying. <sup>11</sup>Now Mary stood*

outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb<sup>12</sup> and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.<sup>13</sup> They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him."<sup>14</sup> At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.<sup>15</sup> He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").<sup>17</sup> Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"<sup>18</sup> Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her."

**John 20:1–18 (NIV)**

## THOUGHT

Mary Magdalene is one of the most intriguing figures in the Bible. We are first introduced to her in *Luke 8:2* as 'Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons came out.' But she is mentioned more times in the Bible than most of Jesus' disciples, and the early-church Father, Augustine called her the 'Apostle of Apostles.' Well-known NYC Pastor and Best-selling Author Tim Keller calls her 'the First Christian.' In this discussion we will explore her life and what made her such an important figure in the bible.

### 1. BLINDED BY A BROKEN-HEART

<sup>18</sup>"We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death<sup>19</sup> and will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!"

**Matthew 20:18–19 (NIV)**

Even though Jesus had told the disciples on numerous occasions exactly how he would die and then be resurrected on the third day, they still couldn't believe Jesus had come back from the dead. In fact, even when Jesus was standing right in front of her, Mary failed to see him. (see vs14-15)

How do you think Mary felt as she went to Jesus' tomb? Do you think her feelings may have contributed to her failure to recognize Jesus?

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### 2. JESUS AND THE BROKENHEARTED

<sup>18</sup>The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

**Psalms 34:18 (NIV)**

<sup>27</sup>Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

**John 14:27 (NIV)**

In verse 15 Jesus asks Mary, 'Why are you crying?' Jesus loves to come alongside the brokenhearted to discover the source of their brokenness so he can heal them. How do you respond to people in pain?

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### 3. JESUS REVEALED

<sup>23</sup>Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them."

**John 14:23 (NIV)**

<sup>9</sup>If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

**Romans 10:9 (NIV)**

Jesus' second question in verse 15 was also revealing, 'Who is it you are looking for?' Mary had been looking for a human, dead Jesus. It wasn't until Mary heard Jesus personally call her name in verse 16 that her eyes were opened and she saw and believed in the risen Jesus. Paul says that salvation comes when we believe in a resurrected Jesus and have a personal relationship with him. By that definition, Mary was the first Christian. In verse 17, Jesus immediately sends Mary off to share this good news with the disciples. What evidence do you have that Jesus is alive today? Have you shared your beliefs about Jesus with others?