



October 26, 2021

The Woman with the Issue of Blood & Mary Magdalene: “From Shame to Honor”

### **Jesus and the Woman with the Issue of Blood**

#### **Mark 5:24 – 43:**

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. <sup>25</sup> And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. <sup>26</sup> She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. <sup>27</sup> When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, <sup>28</sup> because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” <sup>29</sup> Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

<sup>30</sup> At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?”

<sup>31</sup> “You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’ ”

<sup>32</sup> But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. <sup>33</sup> Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. <sup>34</sup> He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

*(Parallel Passages: **Matthew 9:18 – 22** and **Luke 8:43 – 48**)*

### **Consider what the Law said:**

#### **Leviticus 15:25 – 30:**

“When a woman has a discharge of blood for many days at a time other than her monthly period or has a discharge that continues beyond her period, she will be unclean as long as she has the discharge, just as in the days of her period. <sup>26</sup> Any bed she lies on while her discharge continues will be unclean, as is her bed during her monthly period, and anything she sits on will be unclean, as during her period. <sup>27</sup> Anyone who touches them will be unclean; they must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening.

<sup>28</sup> “When she is cleansed from her discharge, she must count off seven days, and after that she will be ceremonially clean. <sup>29</sup> On the eighth day she must take two doves or two young pigeons and bring them to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting. <sup>30</sup> The priest is to sacrifice one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. In this way he will make atonement for her before the LORD for the uncleanness of her discharge.

This discharge did not make this woman sinful, only ceremonially unclean. It promoted hygiene in ancient Israel, but it was not regarded as anything inherently wrong. In the New Testament there is a new perspective:

### **Mark 7:1 – 9:**

The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus <sup>2</sup> and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. <sup>3</sup> (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. <sup>4</sup> When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)

<sup>5</sup> So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?”

<sup>6</sup> He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:

“These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. <sup>7</sup> They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.’ <sup>8</sup> You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.” <sup>9</sup> And he continued, “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!”

Notice that this unnamed woman had tried everything she could to be healed. She was desperate. She felt condemned and shamed because of something that she did not do nor could she fix it. She was living under this horrible cloud of guilt and shame for twelve years. Think of what her life had been like.

Notice that she came up behind Jesus and hoped not to be noticed at all. She just wanted to touch his garment and once she was healed, to go home finally free. **Luke 8:47** tells us:

“Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet.”

She wanted to go unnoticed. She just needed his power, his healing power, to rescue her from her pain and shame.

But Jesus knew! He felt power had gone out from him. After telling her whole story to him and everyone else there, he says, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

Now, she was free. Jesus freed her from more than the physical pain and suffering. He freed her from the shame she had known for so long.

### **Jesus and Mary Magdalene**

What you may have heard or seen about Mary Magdalene that is false:

- She was not a prostitute. There is no scripture which tells us that or even hints at it. She has been depicted that way for centuries. Even the Catholic Church rejected this characterization of Mary in 1969, but it continues to be perpetuated.
- She did not have a sexual relationship with Jesus. Movies have presented her this way i.e., “The Last Temptation of Christ”,
- She was not Jesus’ wife – a myth that some have believed.
- She was not a promiscuous woman.

None of these claims are supported by the biblical texts. She is named twelve times in Scripture and not one of them supports any of these claims.

She is called Mary Magdalene most likely because she was from Magdala, a thriving fishing town on the coast of Galilee.

Mostly what we know about Mary and her past from this passage in **Luke 8:1 – 3:**

After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; <sup>3</sup> Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

What does this short passage tell us about Mary Magdalene?

- She had been cured of seven demons,
- She traveled with Jesus and the disciples – along with Joanna, Susanna and many others. They followed him all the way to the cross:

Matthew 27:55: Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs.

- She supported Jesus and disciples with her money and means.

### **Mary at the Cross**

**John 19:25:**

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

You remember that John was the only disciple that went inside the high priest's courtyard for the mock trial:

**John 18:15 – 16:**

Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard, <sup>16</sup> but Peter had to wait outside at the door.

Mary Magdalene was NEAR the cross. She was no wimpy woman. But like the disciples, she still did not get it that Jesus promised to rise again. She went to the tomb expecting to find a body.

**Mark 16:1 – 8:**

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. <sup>2</sup>Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb <sup>3</sup>and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

<sup>4</sup> But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. <sup>5</sup> As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

<sup>6</sup> "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. <sup>7</sup> But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

<sup>8</sup> Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

**Matthew 28:1:**

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

### John 20:11 – 18:

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.

After giving her report that Jesus had risen, Mary Magdalene disappears from the New Testament. At some point she was given the title "**Apostle to the Apostles**", because she was the first person to see the risen Christ and the first to share the news of the resurrection with the disciples. **We would be hard-pressed to find a better role model in the Bible than Mary Magdalene.**

### Breaking the Power of Shame

#### Romans 5:1 - 5:

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup> Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup> perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup> And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

#### Hebrews 12:2:

...fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

We've looked at two women who were burdened with shame. But the wonderful thing is that both experienced God's power to break shame's hold over them and set them free. And this wonderful experience can also be ours.

You know, we all need a hiding place, but the problem is that shame can cause you to choose the wrong hiding place. The good news is God has provided a hiding place for you in Jesus Christ.

For the hemorrhaging woman and Mary Magdalene, **Jesus made their shame a showcase of his grace.**

He can and is willing to do the same thing for any of us—for you!

