

First To A Woman, Then To Men

The Resurrection:

John 20:15

Jesus left a love message for all his people hidden in an obscure phrase in John's Gospel. This phrase is "Thinking he was the gardener". Mary Magdalene stood outside the tomb crying. Jesus stood near her in a garden setting. When Jesus asked her why she was crying, she thought the gardener was speaking to her. I believe this is more than a mere mistake in identity. Pause for a moment, and think of other people Mary could have thought of. How about a grave digger, soldier, mourner, an apostle, or even a rabbi. The possibilities are endless. I believe this is a profound love message orchestrated by God, Jesus, who is involved in our lives in great detail. Jesus directed the scene to cause Mary to think He was a gardener. Even after Mary Magdalene brought Peter and John to the tomb, Jesus did not appear to them. Jesus waited out of sight for Peter and John to go home before coming face to face with Mary, by herself, the first human to witness Jesus risen. To understand the significance of this scene, we must go all the way back to Genesis.

The beginning:

Genesis 2:8

Jesus was the first gardener. He planted the Garden of Eden during creation week. There he planted trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. God created animals that were named by man. He placed man there to enjoy the bounty and work. Things were great with Adam and Eve completing the garden. God was delighted with the way things were and desired this garden to go on and on.

The Resurrection:

Perhaps Jesus was standing near the tomb, reminiscing about how things were and desiring to be back in the garden. Could it be, He wanted the Garden of Eden to continue because He influences Mary to think He was the gardener at His resurrection, just as He was at Eden.

If for only a moment, this message, John 20:15, a desire to be with us in the garden, cannot be overlooked. John did not overlook it. Mark 16:9 mentions Mary Magdalene witnessing Jesus first, but omits the garden. Can you imagine a time before the Gospels were written? After, Jesus had ascended into heaven, the Holy Spirit lit a fire in the hearts Jesus' followers. A time where the Gospels were

spoken and new people came to home meeting to learn more about this man Jesus. At some of these meetings Mary Magdalene must have been implored to tell her memory of her testimony again and again. John paid close attention to her story while some other apostles may have dozed off. He included the phrase, "Thinking he was the gardener", in his Gospel many years later. One Gospel, one phrase, one moment of profound love of a God to be with his people. One scene orchestrated to deliver a message, I love you, I missed you, and I am involved in your life. Eve was banished from the garden and God's presence, and Mary Magdalene in a garden is welcome to His presence. Even an angle blocked Eve from the garden, but angels welcomed Mary Magdalene at a garden.

Along the way from creation to the resurrection:

Isaiah 9:1 & 2

Let's consider this passage in Isaiah, 400 years before Christ's resurrection, and the fact that Mary Magdalene was born near Galilee & the Jordan. Mary Magdalene was distressed near the empty tomb. She was crying and her tears were splashing on the ground near Galilee & the Jordan. Gloom was all around her and the shadow of death covered the land as people walked in darkness. Then a great light shone as Jesus called her name, "Mary". The gloom was not upon her anymore. The gloom was not upon Eve, Mary, the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, or any other woman who believes in the Son of God's resurrection.

Isaiah 43:1

When Jesus calls you by name, He is claiming you as His. This means He created and formed you. You belong to Him. When Jesus calls out "Mary" in John 20:16, Mary turns and immediately recognizes Jesus. Jesus is Mary's savior. She is redeemed from the time of creation with no debt to pay. Mary, as all humans who believe that Jesus is the Son of God, our Savior, will be called by name and we will recognize our Savior's voice because He first recognized us.

Isaiah 55:1 to 3

It is all free. Back in the garden everything was free. No money was needed. Work was satisfying. At the resurrection, Jesus called Mary's name. She gave an ear to Jesus and recognized him. Her soul sprung to life as she recognized her Savior and she knew she would live forever because Jesus LIVES! Her eternal life was free.

It is complete:

Romans 5: 12 to 17

Our death, through sin, goes all the way back to Adam and Eve. We are all guilty and there was no hope except through a Savior. Just as in the time of the Garden of Eden, at the resurrection, the gift of righteousness reigned again, in the life of Mary Magdalene. All of us can be blessed with this same grace. Rejoice, the tomb is empty!

The Great Commission:

If we Christians are called to go spread the gospel to the ends of the earth, then Mary Magdalene was the first to go. Jesus told her to go tell the apostles He had risen. As she ran, can you imagine her stopping to catch her breath. Some one could have called, "Women is something wrong?" Can you hear her gasp, "He is risen, Jesus is risen!" A murmur would have started through Jerusalem. Then she continues to the apostles who would write the gospels that would be carried to the ends of the earth.

In Summary:

The scriptures give irrefutable evidence that the Garden of Eden, and Adam and Eve really existed. Eve was the first human to sin. Adam was the second. They were in a garden that God had made. Man had been separated from God. This couple hid from God. When God walked in the garden He called for Adam. Adam and Eve's sin caused separation from God and banishment from the garden of Eden. God had a plan of redemption. **How gracious of God to first call on a woman at the resurrection because Eve was the first human to sin.** As God called out Mary's name in the garden, at the resurrection, He proclaimed all women who answer His call redeemed, since the time of the garden of Eden. Then He told Mary Magdalene to go tell the apostles, who were hiding just as Adam hid in the Garden of Eden, that He had risen. Just as Jesus opens scripture, He opened our understanding of our redemption first to a woman then to men.

Thank You Lord,

Bob