



Leading People into a Growing
Relationship with Jesus Christ!

Antioch CELEBRATION Message: Mary Magdalene

Sermon Series: SECOND CHANCES – God, Grace and YOU

Dates: April 29-30, 2017

Start the Conversation

If Jesus were walking on the earth today, do you think he would want to spend time with you? Why or why not?

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Mary Magdalene is the second-most mentioned woman in the New Testament. Mary, the mother of Jesus is the first.

Soon afterward Jesus began a tour of the nearby towns and villages, preaching and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom of God. He took his twelve disciples with him, along with some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases. Among them were **Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons**; Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's business manager; Susanna; and many others who were contributing from their own resources to support Jesus and his disciples. **Luke 8:1-3 (NLT)**

What is probably the most memorable fact we know about Mary? She had seven demons. While the Bible does not specify the lifestyle Mary lived that invited the demons into her life, the Bible does show that once Jesus freed her, she stayed close to Jesus with the other highly committed disciples.

- Why do you think she stayed close to Jesus?
- Do you think she felt safe around Jesus?
- Are you allowing your past to cause DISTANCE and DISTRACTION between you and Jesus, or has Jesus given you the freedom to be CLOSE and CONFIDENT with him?

Be encouraged by this verse! Once the Holy Spirit lives in you, demons are no longer able to possess you. While they may cause difficulties on the outside, Jesus claims you as his own!

But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world. **1 John 4:4 (NLT)**

Why did Mary stay so close to Jesus? She wanted to stay close to the one who had power to protect her from the demons. As a result, she has the distinction of having been the first person to see Jesus resurrected from the dead!

After Jesus rose from the dead early on Sunday morning, the first person who saw him was Mary Magdalene, the woman from whom he had cast out seven demons. **Mark 16:9 (NLT)**

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Sometimes overwhelming feelings of guilt can invite us to judge ourselves as unworthy of God's love, care, and forgiveness. Please remember, you are not God—his judgments are holy and righteous. And he chooses to judge Jesus on the cross for your sins, an incredible substitute.

Consider two of the greatest "trophies" of God's grace, Mary Magdalene and the Apostle Paul. Both found real life, not in judging themselves, but in letting Jesus forgive and live with them. Are you embracing God's forgiveness and Jesus' powerful presence in your life?

Pastor John said,

One the biggest problems in your life and mine is that we think we have to solve all of our own problems.

Is that a struggle for you? How should you humble yourself before the Holy Spirit and your Life Group members and ask for help?

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Pastor John reminded us that "Hurt people, hurt people." How about this? **Forgiven people forgive people.** The focal point for our decisions must not be the person we are called to forgive. The focal point for our decision to forgive is Jesus!

Do you have trouble forgiving yourself? Consider that you need to follow Jesus' example in his attitude towards you. Remember, the basis for loving your neighbor is to love them "as yourself."

What is one attitude that Jesus has towards you that you should grow in? Patience? Kindness? Not keeping a record of wrongs? (for a great list, see 1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

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Mary Magdalene led the disciples to a realization that Jesus had risen from the dead. Refusing to be defined by her past, she let her focus on Jesus propel her into leadership. How did Jesus develop Mary into a fearless leader?

Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she gave them his message. **John 20:18 (NLT)**

Pray!

Thank God he uses forgiven people in extraordinary ways! Consider how he wants to use you!