

THURSDAY 21 April 2022 "Mary Remembers" (Luke 2:41-52)

Hello my "Walking with Jesus" friends,

Do you remember what one week ago today was? Yes, some call it Maundy Thursday because it's the evening Jesus spent with His disciples in the 'upper room', and then later in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus was arrested. Through that night Jesus was dragged from trial to trial and by morning sentenced to death for claiming to be Son of God! (Matt. 26:63-67)

We have no record of exactly where the disciples or Mary Magdalene or Mary Jesus' mother spent this Thursday one week later. We do know John the disciple stood at the cross of Jesus comforting both those women, and from the cross Jesus said to His mother, "**Here is your son.**" (John 19:26) And then looking at John, and with a gasp of air, Jesus said to him "**Here is your mother.**" (John 19:27) Jesus was asking John to care for His mother since none of her other children believed in Jesus. John was profoundly honored to do so, and John wrote: "**From that time on this disciple took her into his home.**" (John 19:27) *That tells me it is entirely probable Mary was spending this week under the watchful eye and care of John the disciple who had such a special friendship with Jesus.*

John and most of the disciples were from Galilee, not Jerusalem. Mary, of course, had her home in Nazareth. *They had come to overcrowded Jerusalem for Passover and it had turned out to be a catastrophic Passover they would never forget.* No Gospel writer tells us where they were staying while in Jerusalem. Perhaps because of the special friendship Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha had with Jesus, they invited John and Mary, Jesus' mother, to stay with them in Bethany. Bethany was only two miles or so over the Mount of Olives hills from Jerusalem. We do know the Sunday following Easter the disciples were all in Jerusalem again and Jesus met with them. (John 20:26) That tells me the close friends of Jesus spent this entire week in or near Jerusalem. Doing what? I presume waiting for HIM! *Waiting for the risen Jesus to meet with them and give them instructions about what to do next, how to spend the rest of their lives after this traumatic, historic Easter/Passover weekend.*

If Bethany is where John and Mary, Jesus' mother, spent these days immediately following that glorious Easter Sunday, what do you suppose the five of these special friends of Jesus spoke about? I would imagine they talked of little else, other than Jesus. Oh, I'm sure like others who had known Jesus or at least followed Him, they spoke of their memories of the things He said, the miracles He performed.

But for these five, there was so much more, and of course no one knew Jesus better than Mary!

I can only imagine the questions they asked Mary and the stories Mary told them... of Jesus as a toddler as she taught Him how to talk and walk; as a young boy running around Nazareth with other little boys, and as a teenager learning the carpentry trade. Perhaps they had asked Mary to start at the beginning, and so she told them of Gabriel's shocking visit, and her three months with Elizabeth who was miraculously pregnant in her old age. Of course, she would have explained how she first told Joseph and her own parents, and how they responded. She would have told them about the long trip Joseph and Mary took from Nazareth to Bethlehem for the census and finding no room to sleep that night, except a smelly animal stable. And then of course the shepherds who were the first to visit the newborn baby, and then sometime later the visit of the Magi from afar and their gifts. Hour after hour, story after story as only Mary the mother of Jesus could tell the stories.

Can you picture it? Can you see Martha often asking, '*Dear Mary, how about another cup of tea? Are you comfortable? Are we asking too many questions?*' And perhaps Lazarus and John often going outside to turn away the onlookers who have come to see Jesus' mother. I can see Martha's sister Mary sitting quietly at Mary's feet, as she did with Jesus, just listening and smiling, and often wiping a tear from her eye. Hour after hour, day and night, the stories. Because Jesus had been seen by several of them ALIVE on Easter Sunday, the stories were all the more rich! *The terrible grief of the crucifixion was being healed by the unbelievable, unimaginable reality that Jesus was alive and His broken body miraculously healed!* When they might see Him again, none of them knew, but for today, one week after that terrible Thursday and Friday, Mary His mother was content telling the stories of her very special love for her Son, Jesus.

Because this was Passover time, I imagine Mary reflected on that first time young Jesus startled she and her husband Joseph with a statement that caused them to remember He wasn't their son, He was God's Son, and He was not destined to be a carpenter like Joseph, but rather the Savior of the world. Luke records it for us. Jesus was 12 years old and came with Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem for Passover. Because of His age, it may have been at this Passover they brought Him to the priests in the Temple area and had the ceremony which celebrated a Jewish boy becoming a man. Today we often call it the Bar Mitzvah. Jesus would have read from the Torah Scroll with a man's prayer shawl over his head and shoulders, and both Joseph and the priest or Rabbi would have prayed over young Jesus thanking God that *He was now old enough to be held accountable to the wisdom of the Scriptures, both by God and by mankind.* The family had spent the week in Jerusalem of course and when it was time to head back to Nazareth Joseph and Mary had begun the journey with many other friends from Nazareth, assuming 12-year-old Jesus was with the group someplace. *After all He was a man now and responsible.* He knew they were leaving that day, and He knew the way, and He was now old enough they didn't need to make sure He was with them as they left Jerusalem.

But young Jesus did not leave Jerusalem that day and when the caravan stopped for the night Mary and Joseph could not find Jesus anywhere. They stayed the night where they were and returned the next day to Jerusalem to look for Him.

Luke records: **"After three days they found Him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard Him was amazed at His understanding..."** (Luke 2:46) Now friends don't miss something here. Jesus was only 12 years old, and on the Passover/Easter weekend when the Pharisees and teachers of the law condemned adult Jesus to death, He was about 30, 18 years separated those two Passovers. *That tells me a number of those who condemned Jesus to death were likely younger teachers discussing the Scriptures with 12-year-old Jesus that day in the Temple.* Ponder that a moment. Are there some old folks watching you as an adult who remember you when you were young?

As Mary told this story can you see the look on her face as she remembers the moment, she and Joseph found 12-year-old Jesus in the Temple with the scholars discussing the Jewish Scriptures? Can you hear Martha asking, "So Mary, when you finally found Him in the temple, what did you say to Him"? The record says: **"His mother said to Him, 'Son why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.' But Jesus answered, 'Why were you searching for Me? Didn't you know I had to be in My Father's house?'"** (Luke 2:48,49) Look at them, the friends of Jesus imagining this mother - Son conversation. Then Mary said, **'at that time, we did not understand what He meant.'** But then after a pause, I think Mary added *'But as I've done several times, I treasured that special moment in my heart and often asked God to help me understand... WHO is this boy of mine? How do I raise the Son of God? What is His purpose here among us? And now, of course, after THIS Passover weekend, I understand much more clearly. Oh, I long to see Him again and thank Him for the privilege I had to be His earthly mother. He is no longer my Son, He is now my Savior!'*

Those words are, of course, not recorded in Scripture, but they sure fit with all I know about Mary and her relationship with Jesus, don't you think? May I ask my friends, do you have memories of special times with Jesus, perhaps going all the way back to your childhood? Do you treasure them and ponder them? *And now today, a few days after Easter, how would you describe your relationship with risen Jesus?* And how do you thank Him for the memories in your life journey? Let's do that right now, let's thank Him... and here's song to help us.

Today's Scripture is Luke 2:41-52.