

## **Discipleship – Spring 2012 – Week beginning 22<sup>nd</sup> April**

### **Home group / study notes: The other biblical Marys**

*Do you ever get your Marys mixed up? If so you are not alone... this study looks at some of the other Marys, apart from the mother of Jesus. What can we take from them for our lives? Feel free to use as much or as little as you wish.*

First, a bit of detective work!

**Read** Jn 11:1-3 What do we learn about this Mary (of Bethany)? Look at 12:1-5. Mary anointed Jesus' feet.

**Read** Mark 14:3-5 (repeated in Matthew 26:6-9). Does it sound like the same occasion? The woman anointed Jesus' head.

**Read** Luke 7:36-38. Does it sound like the same occasion? But Luke sets the scene in Galilee – or at least the events before and after are there. This (unnamed) woman is a reformed sinner.

**Read** Luke 8:1-3 Enter Mary Magdalene... were the 'evil spirits and demons' connected in any way with the 'sinful woman' in the previous chapter? But if so, wouldn't Luke have referred to her as 'the one who had anointed Jesus'? This is the only mention of Mary Magdalene before the resurrection – just shows how crazy it is to write whole books surmising about the relationship between her, Jesus and the other disciples. But people outside the churches will have heard of these through the media (especially since the Da Vinci Code) – we need to know enough to be able gently to tell them they are all based on fiction or on apocryphal accounts written long after the other New Testament documents.

**Read** John 20:1 Definitely Mary Magdalene.

Some people identify Mary of Bethany with the 'sinful woman'; others Mary Magdalene with this woman; and still others, Mary Magdalene with Mary of Bethany.

*Enough! It is important to be honest about the Bible; there are things we would like to know that we are not told. In which case God wants us to take each recorded incident on its own merits and to allow him to speak to us through it. But for those who wish, how great it is that God encourages us to use our brains and research with confidence.*

What 'demons' (interpret as widely as you like) have you allowed Jesus to deal with? Or what 'sins' have been forgiven? Do they recur sometimes? If so, how do you manage them – anything you might share to help others? In what ways can we show our gratitude and devotion?

Oh dear, there are more Marys yet...

**Read** Mt 27:55-56. This Mary also occurs in the accounts of Mk 15:40-41 (of Galilee) and Luke 24:10, with Mary Magdalene.

**Read** John 19:24:25-26. Three Marys together; the 'Mary wife of Clopas' is presumably the same as 'Mary mother of James'.

Then, just to confuse further, there is 'Cleopas' in Luke 24:18... was it Mary and Cleopas on the Emmaus Road? But Cleopas is a different name from Clopas...

Have there ever been occasions when Jesus has been speaking to you (how?), your 'heart has burned', (Luke 24:32) but only afterwards did you realise it was God speaking? How did you then recognise him? Do you often discern Jesus in the 'breaking of bread' (Luke 24:35) – is Communion important to you? Or are meals? Could you write a short 'grace' which links Jesus with our meals today?

*And if you are keen, more Marys still... but before you do any further study make sure you spend some time in prayer, especially (perhaps silently) for those 'demons' not to recur. Each say one line of thanks for something.*

The other Marys occur in:

Acts 12:12 – mother of Mark, friend of Peter, relative of Barnabas, Christian home in Jerusalem. Interesting how so much interlinks.

Romans 16:6

Then of course there is Mary the mother of Jesus... but that would be another whole session...