

# When God Calls Your Name

Do you hear Him calling your name?

## **John 20:14-18**

Do you wonder how long Jesus must have been observing this scene with the disciples and Mary? Yet He chose to reveal Himself at this very moment.

The first person to whom Jesus revealed Himself after His resurrection (Mark 16:9) was not a prominent Jewish official or temple priest. She wasn't one of the 12 disciples He had mentored for the last 3 1/2 years. She was a woman! In that culture, women were not considered reliable witnesses in court. If He was going to pick a woman, why not Mary, His mother, or Mary of Bethany, who anointed Him with precious ointment just before His death?

After all, Mary Magdalene didn't have the best reputation in town. She was the one out of whom Jesus had cast seven demons (Luke 8:2). Common belief is that she had been a prostitute. Regardless, someone under the dominion of demons would not have had a spotless past. In spite of who we are or where we've been, Jesus sees our pain and hears our cries of desperation—spoken or unspoken.

Jesus had rescued Mary from a horrible life of sin. If anyone ought to have hope, she should! One thing is certain, her passionate love for Him drove her to keep searching even after an encounter with two angels. So she asked this man she thought was the gardener, "Where'd you put Him? Just tell me, and I'll go get Him!" How she planned to carry a lifeless man's body, we do not know. Maybe it was her persistence that qualified her for His revealed presence!

He first asks her the same question the angels in the empty tomb had asked, "Woman, why are you weeping?" He uses a title

of respect similar to madam or ma'am. Her sinful, demonic past wasn't His concern. Her tarnished history didn't really matter anymore. She mattered to the Master. Her broken heart touched His heart. Her uncontrollable tears and loud cries reached His ears. Her despair and hopelessness were about to end because the answer to His second question, "Who are you looking for?" was getting ready to call her by name.

Jesus, speaking earlier to the Pharisees, had said: "But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name, and he leads them out" (John 10:2-3). Satan is the thief and robber who comes into our lives to steal, kill and destroy, but Christ has come to give us eternal and abundant life. He is the Shepherd, who calls His sheep by name.

Notice how Mary's gloom turned to joy when the Lord spoke one word: "Mary!" The teary eyes of a downcast face may not have recognized Him, but her ears knew the voice of her Shepherd, her Deliverer, her risen Savior! She turned and addressed Him with a title of respect, "My great Teacher, Master!" I can only imagine how she must have fallen at His feet in worship and rejoicing. This prompted Jesus to give her a word of caution, instruction and hope: "Stop holding on to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father. But go to My brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God'" (John 20:17).

Jesus called them "brothers" for the first time. The ones hidden away in pity and fear, still reeling from their failure and guilt, were now His brothers. He had paid the price for their sin and shame. He was now calling them by a new name! Imagine how His words must have stirred Mary's heart. He was returning to His Father and her Father, His God and her God. The delivered demoniac is now a daughter of the King, a joint heir with Jesus Christ. She's got to run and tell somebody!

If you are hungering and thirsting for a manifestation of His Spirit and power in your life, He delights in communing with you and granting the desires of your heart. The level of your desperation will determine the level of His manifestation—the manifestation of His presence, His power, His provision, His peace, His all-sufficient grace for your life—even in the darkness!

**Kay Horner** *is the director of the Awakening America Alliance.*