

Why You Might Need to Be Reclaimed in Holy Spirit's Power

"I crossed the street to walk in the sunshine."

– Elizabeth Gilbert, *Eat, Pray, Love*

I was roughly 20 years old when the popular and "transforming" *Eat, Pray, Love* made its way to theaters. Now, don't hate me and stop reading this post if you loathe what I'm about to say—but I like really disliked the movie. I mean, I'm fairly certain I discovered the eye roll in that theater. I'm being cheeky of course, but that movie got under my skin. The whole concept of traveling around the world alone to discover yourself was just annoying.

However, now at the ripe old age of 28, I get it. I get what people are looking for. I understand why women need to discover themselves.

We go through those terribly awkward years in middle school, then the desperate years in high school, and by the time we get to college, our hearts are broken, our friendships are fractured and we have no idea what our favorite food is because we always go with what everyone recommends.

The chains of insecurity. The desperate need for affirmation and love. The trauma we experience throughout life. These things morph our personalities into some ungodly zombie who's walking around but dead on the inside. And now, we're not even attractive.

You're no longer exciting and unique when you try to be like everyone else and make everyone around you happy.

So we seem controlled and put together to the world, but on

the inside, we are dying of anxiety, depression, insecurity and self-hatred.

We Are Crippled

You see, Jesus was radical in the way He loved women. He liberated us from the moment he came to earth. In those days women had tough ways of living. They couldn't be around other people when they were on their period. They had strict ways of dressing. Sadly, in those days, they were seen as the weaker person rather than image bearers of the same mighty God as men.

But when Jesus came, he changed things. He loved women so radically that it has transformed us for eternity.

"Mary took a pint of very costly ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment" (John 12:3).

Mary's display of honor and devotion is impressive. And in a culture where this could have been seen as sexual behavior, the Bible records it as an incredible expression of love to Jesus. She was able to live life as a fully reclaimed disciple because of the love of Jesus. And ultimately her life was fearless and fully alive because of it.

No more rejection issues ...

No more insecurities ...

No more fear or anxiety ...

She was reclaimed and redeemed. How did she get there?

To understand how Mary got to this type of living, we have to look back and see where she started. We first see Mary lingering at the feet of Jesus in Luke 10

This caused agitation with Martha (Mary's sister). Scripture tells us that Martha complained of the workload, but Mary

continued to stay at the feet of Jesus. This tells me Mary was a natural individualist.

Countercultural

In that culture, the woman was supposed to be the one maintaining the home and cooking.

Bustling around a home was not Mary's natural tendency. In a culture where there were particular gender roles, can you imagine the shame she probably felt with not wanting to be that way?

I presume she didn't feel that shame here at Jesus' feet. She was able to rest; which is why I think she lingered.

But then, something terrible happens. Her brother gets sick (John 11).

The sisters try to get Jesus to come while he's sick because they believe in his healing power.

Jesus doesn't come. Lazarus dies.

Jesus shows up after Lazarus had been in the grave for four days. Imagine the stench.

He was dead. He wasn't in a state where he could have been resuscitated. No, he was already covered in the ceremonial drapings and ready to be buried. That type of dead.

Jesus heads to their town. Martha runs out to meet him as soon as she hears that he's near. Mary, on the other hand, doesn't move. She stayed in the house.

Isn't this interesting? Mary, who was found lingering and staying at the feet of Jesus, didn't go to him. Why? I can imagine because of the disappointment in Jesus. I too have felt that disappointment, the heartache of death. The pain of unanswered prayers.

After Jesus speaks with Martha, he calls and asks Mary to come. Mary goes to Jesus, and when she sees him, she falls to his feet and says, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

Jesus weeps when he sees Mary weeping. He cared for her and Lazarus. Our pain means something to Jesus.

Jesus raises Lazarus from the grave. Lazarus is brought back to life. "Then Mary took a pint of very costly ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair" (John 12:3a).

We can see that this is Mary's response to Jesus raising Lazarus from the grave.

We Are Mary

Let me explain:

When God created you, He created you to be a unique individual. He created you to have your own personality. Your own preferences. Your own talents and gifting. Your own unique traits.

And then you experience life. You experience rejection. Betrayal. Neglect. Abuse. Divorce. Insecurity ... to name a few.

The woman you were intended to be has been morphed by the experiences you've gone through.

Mary got to see a glimpse of her true self when she was in the presence of Jesus. She saw that she didn't want to be like everyone else, didn't want to uphold a façade. She wanted to live authentic to the life God had called her to live.

But it wasn't until Lazarus was brought back to life that she was able to live her reclaimed life fully.

God did not intend for Lazarus to die. He also did not intend for us to experience those traumatic moments.

Once Lazarus was raised from the grave, and Mary saw that Jesus could fully save, she was able to live as the full person that God had intended her to be.

She Was Reclaimed

This is real self-discovery.

Mary anointed Jesus with a very expensive perfume (a year's wages), pulled her hair down and wiped the oil up with it.

This displayed completed freedom. She was so secure. So confident. She could be countercultural and fully love Jesus with complete honor, devotion and humility.

Like Mary, do you feel obligated to live in the expectations or roles that have been placed on you? Do you feel ashamed by not conforming to those expectations? Don't live in that shame or constant striving. Instead, linger at Jesus' feet and embrace the freedom that He has offered to you.

This too can be the life you live, sister. Living a life fully alive. Fully free. Fully Redeemed. Completely reclaimed.

Today, my prayer for you is that you would see the life God intended you to live and begin to walk in it. That you would dream big again. That you would feel confident in your skin. That you would speak your mind.

Through Jesus, we can let our hair down and be the exact unique individual we were designed to be.

Take a step that way today. {eoa}

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