

The Festival of St. Mary Magdalene  
St. Luke 7:36-50  
July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024  
All Saints Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC  
Pawleys Island, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## She Is a Sinner

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

### **Sermon Text:**

“And one of the Pharisees desired Him that He would eat with him. And He entered into the Pharisee’s house, and sat down to meat. And behold, a woman who was in the city, a sinner; and when she knew that He was sitting at meat in the Pharisee’s house, she brought an alabaster cruse of ointment, and standing behind at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee that had bidden Him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, ‘This Man, if He were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him, that she is a sinner.’”

### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

My dear friends, today we celebrate the Festival of Saint Mary Magdalene. Some might suppose that Magdalene is a last name, but it is not. This is why you may often hear me refer to our Lord + Jesus as “Jesus, *the* Christ.” So as not to give the impression that “Christ” is our Lord’s last name. Our Lord + Jesus is also referred to by another name: Jesus of Nazareth. This is similar to the saint who we celebrate today. St. Mary Magdalene is from Magdalene, or more accurately, Magdala, a fishing community on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. Her city is listed so that we may distinguish her from the other Marys of the New Testament.

St. Mary Magdalene is associated with three different accounts of Marys in the New Testament. The Eastern Church only associates her with two of those accounts, so that some may be confused. She is certainly associated with the New Testament readings of the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord. She was there at His cross and witnessed both His death and the place of His burial. She was also one of the first women to see our Lord + Jesus alive after His resurrection from the dead. In these readings she is named as St. Mary Magdalene so that there can be confusion about to which Mary is being referred. This Mary Magdalene we are told had seven demons cast from her by the Lord + Jesus.

She is also associated by the Western Church to be the Mary which we hear about during Monday of Holy Week. There Mary, in the home of Simon the leper, and where she, her sister Martha, and her brother Lazarus were invited to dinner, took an alabaster flask of very expensive spikenard and anointed our Lord + Jesus. From these Scripture readings we learn that she is the sister of Martha and Lazarus. This means that she was there at the resurrection of her brother and confessed her belief in

the resurrection of the dead to our Lord + Jesus. This means she is also the sister of Martha who listened intently to the words of our Lord + Jesus, while Martha busied herself with the task of a host.

The third association of a Mary in the New Testament to St. Mary Magdalene is this anonymous woman we meet in today's Gospel reading from the Evangelist St. Luke. Our Lord + Jesus had been invited to sit down to meat with a Pharisee named Simon. Whether this is the same Simon the leper from the Gospel of St. John is unclear. But it is likely. While they were in the house this anonymous woman, who has been associated by the Western Church as St. Mary Magdalene wet our Lord's feet with her tears and dried them with her hair and anointed them with ointment from an alabaster flask. This was probably in thanksgiving for our Lord having healed her of her demon possession by seven demons. She was thankful that she had been freed from the bonds of the devil.

Simon, the Pharisee, witnessing this casts doubt upon the Lord + Jesus, saying, "This Man, if He were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him, that she is a sinner." We are not told which sins Simon associated with this woman. However, from our scriptural knowledge of who St. Mary Magdalene was, we know that she was associated with prostitution. It would be inappropriate for someone who is a prostitute to touch anyone in this fashion, let alone the Lord + Jesus.

But our Lord knows something that Simon does not. He sees this woman's repentance. Her tears and her anointing are outward signs of this. Simon had not learned to recognize such outward signs as pointing to her repentance. He only saw the acts that were attributed to this woman. Our Lord knows her repentance and guides Simon, the Pharisee, to see this truth as well. This woman, whose sins are many, was sorry for her sins, and wished to live a life pleasing to the Lord God. She also knew from Whom this forgiveness could be obtained. It could be granted from the gracious mercy of the Lord + Jesus. + Jesus of Nazareth could grant the remission of sins to St. Mary of Magdala. It is therefore right and proper that she offers tears of thanksgiving and repentance to the One Who had granted her a forgiveness that no one else could.

In our confessions we teach that we observe the Festivals of the Saints because they are an example of faith and life as true Christians. St. Mary Magdalene serves as an example to us of faith in the Lord + Jesus. She trusted in the Lord + Jesus to grant her forgiveness, and she found it in Him. We too have this opportunity to be granted remission of our sins from the Lord + Jesus. He won forgiveness of sins by His innocent suffering and death upon the tree of the holy cross. That forgiveness that He won for us is bestowed upon us through our anointing of water and the Word in Holy Baptism. Our sins are washed away through this anointing of water and the Word so that we are no longer counted as sinners, but are a New Creation in the Lord Christ + Jesus. Our sins which are many are washed away by the blood of the Lamb of God, Who poured out for us His Blood to win for us the remission of our sins.

We are reminded of this washing of water and the Word whenever we hear the words of Absolution from the pastor. Standing in the stead of the Christ, the minister pronounces to all of us who with humble hearts confess our sins, and seek with the help of the Holy Ghost to be granted to live a righteous life, the forgiveness of our sins. He absolves us of our sins which we confess before Him by the command and in the stead of the Lord + Jesus. The minister reminds us that we have been baptized, and that our sins, which are many, have been washed away by the Blood of the Lamb of God.

And it is our Lord's Blood, along with our Lord's Body, which we also drink and eat under the wine and bread for the remission of our sins. At this altar we receive our Lord's true and substantial Body and Blood under the bread and wine for the remission of our sins. We remember and proclaim His death until He comes. To remember and proclaim His death does just mean remembering the historical events of His suffering, crucifixion, death, and resurrection. It also means that we trust and

believe in these things. We place our faith in what these historical events grant us. We remember and proclaim that by our Lord's sacrifice we have not only forgiveness of our sins, but also eternal life and salvation. When we eat and drink our Lord's Body and Blood, we believe that the bread and wine which we eat and drink actually do offer what they promise: forgiveness of sins.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us celebrate and give thanks to Saint Mary Magdalene today. For she gives us an example of repentance and thanksgiving for that repentance to the Lord + Jesus. Let us follow her example and humbly confess our sins, live in repentance, and give thanks to the Lord + Jesus that He has forgiven not only St. Mary of Magdalene's sins, which were many, but has also forgiven the many sins and trespasses that we have been burdened with all our lives. May the Lord God Almighty grant us all who humbly confess our sins and seek after righteousness with the help of the Holy Ghost forgiveness, life, and salvation. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*