

**Mary Magdalene's TED Talk: Wisdom from the Church's First Preacher**  
**Sunday, July 23, 2023, 10:00 a.m.**  
**All Saints Church, Pasadena**  
**The Rev. Mark Chase**

Well Good Morning Beloved, it is good to see you all here this morning. On this 100 degree day, you continue to prove your devotion to Jesus...by the way...remember when we were all complaining about how much it was raining this winter, and how cold it was..I can't believe the audacity, people were really complaining about that...hi, it's me, i'm people...Now Before we get started just look at your neighbor and say "neighbor, the sun may be shining bright, but not as bright as your smile...."

I want to entitle this message "Mary Magdalene's TED Talk: The wisdom of the Church's first preacher".... Now today is Mary Magdalene's feast day, which is just a special day in the church calendar where we celebrate, and feast on the life and wisdom of a saint and ancestor. Which for us, begs the question....How do you live a life, that leaves others something to feast on!?! How do you live a life, that brings people to the table, and leaves them full, of wisdom, encouragement, and spiritual nourishment...how do you live a life that you yourself, can feast on, and draw strength and spiritual nourishment from, how do we, live lives, that leave legacies that future generations will say thank you for, long after we're gone...How do you live a life, worthy of a feast.....ahhhh Mary Magdalene in her TED talk speaks to us from this text today...that's a lot of T's...and she and says I'm so glad you asked....

The first thing we see from this story, of the Church's first preacher.....about how to live a life worthy of a feast...Is that, You/ is that we... need to journey to the place of our pain, to the place where our tears are the strongest. In the Indigernous First Nations TranslationTo this Text, Mary Magdalene's name is translated as "Strong Tears"...We have to journey, to the place of our strong tears...To the place where our fears are the deepest. We have to sit at the tomb. At the place where our hopes, dreams, and desires lay desolate. We have to make space for our grief and pay attention to it. Beloved, We have to travel to our tombs, even in the midst of a society that places myriad things at our disposal to help us travel past them!

Ahhhh i know it's hot today so imma say that one more time, we have to travel to our tombs, even in the midst of a society, that places myriad things at our disposal to help us travel past them.....ahhh cmon especially in this nation that marries capitalism and consumerism better than any other on earth, as Bell Hooks reminds us in her work "all about Love she says " Our cultural emphasis, on endless consumption, deflects our attention...We are endlessly bombarded by messages telling us that our every need can be satisfied by material increase...and As Artist Barbara Kruger points out, a life motto for our society could easily be, I shop therefore, I am..." Beloved we have myriad things at our disposal, that help us travel past our tombs and not to them...

Let me make it plain...Some of us if we're honest.... we use Dodger Dogs to dodge our pain, ahhhh don't raise your hands just yet i know we just had some last week and they were

delicious... or we run from our hurt and run to see Lebron James, for some of it's Wines and Spirits, to silence the groans and whines from our Spirit, You see what I did there, I used wine and spirit simultaneously as double entendres....For some us it's Instagram, Twitter, and now Threads, and of course Facebook, to help us not Face the ugly chapters in our own book, for some of us, it's video games, that unlike our own lives we get to restart, again and again, for some of us we even consume activism, facing down the system and the machine, with passion and furor, just as long as facing the machine, keeps us from facing, the mirror....and beloved, none of the aforementioned things are "bad" in and of themselves, just as long as they don't serve to keep us hidden, from ourselves....

This morning....Heed the wisdom of Mary Magdalene as she says, pay attention to the pain. Sojourn to the place of grief and be present to the places that hurt...To borrow from the rich tradition of our Jewish Siblings, some of us, in order to live a life that we can feast on, need to sit Shiva, with our own selves...beloved, the only reason we have this story, is because Mary, while the men were hiding, dared to sojourn to the tomb, and make space for her grief...Now The Good News is this morning, look at your neighbor and say neighbor, "there is some Good News in this morbid first point", I know some of ya'll are like cmon Chase it's too hot to be this sad right away...But The Good News is...when we find the pain and follow it, we'll find Jesus is also there waiting for us.

So Mary's TED talk asks the question...Where is your pain this morning, where are your tears? What is leaving you trembling and anxious? How do you need Jesus to show up there? Now the other piece of Good News, that Christina Cleveland reminds us of in her book **God is a Black Woman is that** we are in relationship with a God who "cherishes our human need and doesn't despise it." So When we get to the tomb, we'll find that the God who's been waiting for us, is exactly that, The God who's been waiting for us...Heed the wisdom of The Church's first preacher, the only reason we have this story, is because she dared first, to go to the Tomb. While the men were hiding and scattered, while it was still dark and she didn't have all the answers, this woman went to the Tomb, she walked a lonely road. I wonder, how long did it take her to get there from where she was, or did she never leave? Either way, the effort, the courage it took, to go to the Tomb, is wisdom for us all.

We gotta go to the places of pain....We gotta go there, look at your neighbor and say "We gotta go there." And collectively, as a community, and as a nation, we have to go there. This is a Nation that consistently runs past its Tombs. The very Tombs that IT created, and filled with the bodies of Enslaved African Peoples and Indigenous Peoples, and Latinx Peoples, and AAPI peoples, and Queer peoples, and Trans people, and disabled people, and any other peoples, whose sheer existence, stood and stands in the way of White Supremacy's agenda...We live, in a nation of repressed grief, pain and trauma, a nation, that when it comes to its original sin of enslavement of African people's, and the genocide of Indigenous people's, just to name a couple things, Consistently refuses to go there. But here the wisdom of the Church's first preacher, and the first point in her TED Talk, We gotta go there....and when we get there, we'll find that The God who's been waiting for us, is the God who's been waiting for us...this TED Talk started off in the deep end, so let's honor that and just take a deep breath....

Second point of Mary Magdalene's TED Talk...Believe yourself, even if you're not the kind of person society says ought to be believed. Imma say that one more time because we need it...because I need it...Believe yourself...even if you're not the kind of person society says ought to be believed...The year, was 1851, The place, was Akron Ohio, and it was there at the women's rights convention that abolitionist and feminist Sojourner Truth would give one of the most famous speeches in all of American history "Ain't I, a woman", Truth fought valiantly to abolish slavery and to have her humanity and womanhood honored by white feminists.

Fighting a battle on two fronts Truth went on to say in her speech "If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone (insert sarcasm), these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now that these women are asking to do it, the men better let them." Ahhhhhh cmon church that's the voice of a woman, a black woman, who believes herself, even if she is someone that an anti-black and patriarchal society says ought not to be believed!!! Ahhhh in order to live a life worthy of a feast, in order to live a life that leaves a legacy, sometimes the first person you gotta believe in...is YOU...sometimes the first person who has to donate to the vision, is you...sometimes the first person who has to click the subscribe button, is the subscriber, in the mirror, sometimes the first person who has to buy the campaign slogan, is the campaign candidate..sometimes the first person, who has to believe you're right for the job..is the person applying for the job...Look at your neighbor and say neighbor..."Do you believe You?"

You see, Mary Magdalene believed in some Jesus, and Mary Magdalene believed in herself to know that she ought to be, wherever Jesus was, she believed that she belonged, with all the male apostles, so much so that she becomes known as the disciple TO, the Disciples, as my dear friend Chris Yi Suh reminded us last year when she preached about Mary Magdalene, she reminded us that Mary "refused victimhood as an identity. She refused to be the sum total of the male gaze, but she ministers alongside Jesus, helps fund Jesus ministry, and has a Gospel attributed to her alongside the time period of John's, though hers gets pushed to the side because....wait for it, patriarchy."

Chris Yi Suh, goes on to say that "Mary, refused to be silenced, and reveals to us, that our worthiness, is not tied to our social status." You gotta believe yourself. In my sanctified imagination, I wonder if that's why Jesus chooses Mary Magdalene to appear to first...as a sign, That we ought to believe, beyond the boxes, that we ought believe, beyond the stigma, that we ought to believe, beyond the oppressive and marginalizing roles that society doles out for us, Jesus says to Mary Magdalene, Mary, I believe in you, so much so, that in this brand new movie called the resurrection, you're going to get a glimpse at the first trailer, and I know talking about belief in this way is uncomfortable..as the church we talk a lot about having a belief in Jesus, and not nearly as much about the belief that Jesus has IN US....ahhh cmon i know it's hot and we ready to go on vacation, but do you know that Jesus believes in YOU....that's the whole story of the disciples spiritual formation with Jesus, he believes them into their becoming, all the while assuring them, of their radical belonging...that's the whole story of the kingdom of heaven, Jesus believing us into our becoming, all the while assuring us of our radical belonging,

or as Reverend Susan Russell said in her sermon a few weeks ago ““The kingdom of heaven, is like whatever story it is, that’s gonna get through to you, that God’s love, is for absolutely everyone, is absolutely limitless, and that beloved community, includes, absolutely everyone.” Jesus believes, in you....

Now, I’m about to move on to end this thing, I’m rounding 3rd believe it or not, but Mary Magdalene’s story and TED talk has me wondering, I wonder...if we who say we believe Jesus, believe women, as much as the Jesus we believe in did....If we believe Jesus, then we ought to start believing women...full stop...

Now, to end Mary Magdalene’s TED talk, I picture her holding a sign that says, “Ask me about the resurrection...” And then of course we might say “Okay, was it really Jesus, are you absolutely sure, did it really happen like that...” Now I believe Mary would say yes, and me personally I would say yes alongside Mary, but that ain’t what I’m here to convince you of...because I think Mary Magdalene has a better question for us...I think instead of asking us, do you believe in the resurrection, I picture Mary asking us, do we live like it?

For what good is it, to doctrinally or intellectually believe in the resurrection, but you don’t be-living like you actually believe it. ahhhhI’m so glad I’m a preacher and not an English teacher. Because imma say that again, what good is it to doctrinally or intellectually be-lieve in the resurrection, but you don’t you be-living like you actually be-lieve. And to be-living, like you actually believe, is to be-loving.....because my friends, that’s where this whole story is going, towards love, Mary Magdalene, through her time spent with Jesus, and personal testimony of what Jesus had done for her, and her ministry with Jesus, grew to love her some Jesus, and grew to walk in the same love that Jesus walked, that’s where this is all going, towards the God whose perfect love, casts out all fear, because as the Reverend Dr. Sally Howard reminds us “The God of our fears is the God we created, not the God who created us...”

So friends, the better question, is not simply, do you think Jesus is alive or dead, the better question, is do we walk in the love that Jesus walked in, and commanded us to walk, and if ya’ll don’t believe me, hear the words of Jesus who said, “A new commandment I give you, believe in the resurrection, here’s how the world will know that you are mine, that you believe in the resurrection...” That’s exactly what Jesus said, if you replace belief in the resurrection with love. And like I said, I personally believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus, I believe that he spent all day Friday, in the tomb, and all day Saturday, in the tomb, but eaaaarrlly Sunday morning, he got up, with all power in his hands....But you know what, there’s a lot of people who “believe” that right along with me, who believe in the resurrected Jesus, but who don’t believe in the way of love that the resurrected Jesus believed in, and I’m not interested in that, and Mary Magdalene ain’t interested in that, so the best question is not simply, do you think Jesus is alive or dead, that’s too easy, the best question is, do you love? Because as 1: John 3 reminds us, Anyone who does not love, remains in death anyway...So what good, is it, if up here, you believe, in an empty tomb, if in here, exists an EMPTY HEART!!!! The Gospel of Jesus says, The tomb is empty, that your heart might be FULL....And that that fullness, would overflow onto your neighbor...That’s the way of Jesus, if you want to believe something, believe that!

Today beloved, may we heed the wisdom, of the church's first preacher...and live a life that gives the world something to feast on...

Amen.