



## EASTERTIDE 2021

“To Have Without Holding”

John 20 : 11-18

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*“Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”*

Mary Magdalene, a woman of means, probably not the prostitute of tradition (Lk 7)

Set free from seven demons (Lk 8: 1-3)

Mary’s “I will take Him away”

A literal physical impossibility

Metaphorically suggests control, holding on, keeping, managing Jesus’ body

Jesus’ **saying** her name breaks the spell

A different appearance, the same voice she had heard so often

The sheep know the Shepherd’s voice: John 10:1-5

Mary identifies Jesus as “Rabboni” (Teacher)

A term of great respect

Her term for Him

The etymology of the first person possessive pronoun “my”

Do not touch/cling to me

Jesus is not saying “don’t hug me”

Parallel the women in Matthew 28:9 who seized his feet

He will be touched by Thomas in 20:27

Survey using a tool like Blue Letter Bible

Touch to heal, to wound, to arouse: touch so as to shape, leave one’s mark

The root word of the verb means to kindle, light on fire

Jesus is addressing something deeper

Mary’s love wants to hold on to Jesus, to keep Him, as love is wont to do

No one can have Jesus on their terms, conform him to their image

When we love, we often touch to control (with good motive)

And parents of children, this is necessary for a time

But true love touches to impart good (see Mark 5:30), not to take unto itself  
Epitomized by the hemorrhaging woman  
God does not touch to control but rather to set free  
Compare Holy Spirit possession versus demonic possession  
This is something Marly Magdalene would have known from the inside out  
Mary must love Jesus as Jesus has loved her  
Coming to God is a free act of our surrender, never a forced submission  
When we come to God we must come letting God be God

“For I have not yet ascended”

There is no ascension in the book of John (only in Matthew and Luke/Acts)  
This is his ascension theology, the completion of His hour of glory  
John is saying that Jesus is moving to a new phase in His redemptive mission  
Poetically Jesus is moving from gardner to governor  
From the Lamb of God to the Lion of Judah  
From the Man of Sorrows to the Bright Morning Star  
From the donkey rider to the white horse rider  
From the Suffering Servant to the reigning King  
From “Rabboni” to “the Lord”

“My Father and Your Father, My God and Your God”

Here we have assurance as Jesus moves from physical to invisible  
As He now mediates from the right hand of God  
The reconciliation He has secured is secure  
The Father of Jesus is also the Father of Mary  
The God that Jesus revealed is the Covenant God of Mary  
Jesus can still call the disciples (who ran away) *His brothers*  
Jesus changing phase doesn't change the core relationships in place

Having Without Holding

With this assurance from Jesus, Mary can let go of her need to hold on  
Parents hold their children, children do not hold on to parents  
Instead of holding on to God like a desperate man dragged behind a horse  
The ascended Jesus invites us to be held in the arms of God  
When he holds us we have God without needing to hold Him

Which allows us to behold His face, His face as it is

Which allows us to hear Him call our name in just the way that we can hear it