



God Now

John 20:15 NIV

"Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

What Are You Expecting of God Now?

When I was ten, I had an experience with God that I will never forget. It was in a Sunday morning Bible class for children and the teacher was talking about heaven and hell. I had never given either much consideration; I wasn't a theologian of any sort and rarely gave any real time to considering God. That morning though I was paying rapt attention to the discussion and I for once confronted my mortality. I became certain there was heaven and hell, that it mattered what we did on earth before we died and that God decided for us how things would go after we died. Unquestionably I wanted heaven for me and rejected altogether going to hell. Thoughts of my eternal destiny burned in my head as I entered the worship service and sat in a pew with my mom and brother and baby sister. I can't say it was just there that I met God and felt the force of His personality but it was in the sanctuary of Pacific Avenue Baptist Church that I knew God had come to me.

It is such a difficult subject to broach in some circles, this matter of Christ meeting with us in a supernatural way. Some just think this is laughable, a ridiculous proposition while others are certain it happens and don't question the possibility. It is tough to prove this happens; I know it happened with me and perhaps it has happened with you. Suddenly without warning you are overwhelmed by the presence of the Lord and although you cannot explain how you know this, it is certainly the case. Maybe you were young like me when it first took place; it could be you have had numerous times when the Lord approached you and showed you something or gave you something to do or not do. Many of us live out Christianity in the past. It is something that happened a while back and since then it is a sort of rolling in neutral spiritually. Maybe it has been a while since you were certain God had something to say to you or show you. The question before us is rather simple. "What are you expecting of God now?"

One of my favorite people in the New Testament is the little known Mary Magdalene. To say she had a checkered past would be an understatement. **After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out;** (Luke 8:1-2 NIV) What it must have been like for her to have lived with seven demons patrolling her mind we cannot say but it must have been terrible. I once knew a woman who was controlled by a demon that often threw her into seizures and it wasn't until it was removed from her that she began to have peace. Prior, she had been in constant torment. To have the demons

removed must have been the highlight of her life, both psychologically as well as spiritually. What could ever rise above that day as one when she knew God personally and experienced Him in her life? After that, she and several women traveled with Jesus and the disciples and helped with the day-to-day responsibilities of providing for such a large group.

But then it all fell apart when Jesus was arrested and then crucified. Her hopes of being with Jesus for years and growing increasingly close to Him were dashed along with those of all the others. She had no way of preparing herself for such complete devastation. The hero of her life, the one who had set her free from all the terrifying chaos of demons oppression was gone and she was alone in a world of people also alone and in shambles. Mary Magdalene did the best she could. She stood with Jesus' mother Mary as they watched Jesus die on the Cross. Two days later she and some other women went to the grave site to bring spices to anoint Jesus' body. The day before, they sat beside the tomb grieving their loss of Him. Easter Sunday brought to Mary Magdalene a whole new way of seeing Jesus. The stone was rolled away and without warning Jesus came to her alive and well. The scars were there but the life was back because the Father had raised Him from the dead. **When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons.** (Mark 16:9 NIV)

It was of course a joyous moment when Mary Magdalene discovered Jesus was alive. **Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher).** (John 20:16 NIV) Mary had experienced her supernatural moment already. It was one of astonishing impact on her. And then when Jesus died, she most likely knew nothing like that could ever happen again, nothing compared to have the seven demons removed from her. It is like that for many Christians. You get used to your moment with God in the past...maybe even in the distant past and the power of it begins to fade. For Mary Magdalene, the great joy of that day when she first met Jesus had become a memory of better days, of better faith and hope. But then something happened that made the past come into the present. The supernatural God was today! Here! Now! **Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"** (John 20:17 NIV)

There is something about "Go" that is scattered throughout the Bible. God's people are often told to "go" and that is what they have to do. There is no hedging on God's part or equivocation. It is just "go" and that is all you are told. Abraham was to go up Mt. Moriah. Moses was to go back to Egypt. Jacob was to go home to where his brother Esau awaited him. David was to go and fight Goliath. Peter was to go away from his fishing business and Paul was to go to Damascus. The list goes on and on and many are given orders to go without any promise of what to expect. It is just "go". For nearly all, it is a "go now". What are we to make of this? In the past you had a meeting with Christ, an experience, a happy moment and it has been a while since then. You have changed. Circumstances are different. Perhaps even God seems to be not the same. You have gone a long time between supernatural moments and spiritually you may be tired, worn down. But now it happens. God meets you!

Perhaps you aren't sure it really is Christ, just like Mary Magdalene thought for a moment it was a gardener talking to her. You aren't sure what to make of it, this moment with God. It is just a hint of Him, a whisper, a quiet greeting. Yet you know He has said it. Christ has a "go" for you...a "go" you can't deny. I don't know what your go is, what it is directing, but it is a great day, when Christ has something for you, something just for you and the funny thing about it is that the real supernatural part of it won't begin until you start on what He directs. It may not be logical, this "go". It might not be rational. It is real though and you will never have joy like the joy you gain when you let Christ lead you into His new adventure for you! The endless power of Christ is yours ...He will give you His strength to do whatever He commands. It is God now. What will you do about it?