



+ This week at Magdalen Road we continued our series in the seven final sayings of Jesus considering John 19v25-27 as Jesus, from the cross, gives John to his mother, Mary, and gives Mary to his friend John. We began by asking the foundational question - why did John bother to include this?

We initially noted 2 broad - big picture reasons:

1. it's a beautiful simple eyewitness detail from a man who was there (and who's life would have been transformed by this). Here we see a widowed woman being cared for by her dying son.
2. it links in with John's initial sign at the Wedding in Cana (John 2) - there, as he's asked to replenish the wine by Mary, Jesus' 'time' had not yet come - here it had. This final sign will also result in abundance and blessing - just as the first had. We've come full circle.

We then noted (rather like the Tardis) as we open the door on these verses, it looks bigger on the inside - huge amounts lie behind it. We specifically focussed in on 2 aspects:

1. Jesus Fulfils the Law

We noted that He fulfils the law here as he honours and provides for Mary as his mum (see the 5th Commandment), but also as a widow. Here we zoomed in on the fact that God, through the law given that reflects him and his heart, cares for the outcast. We noted Lev 23v22 and saw the gleaning principle being enacted through the book of Ruth. We also noted Deuteronomy 10v18-19 that God specifically cares for the widow. We were both encouraged by this, but also challenged as we recognised what God is like and the kind of people we might rub shoulders with each day. It matters that Jesus fully keeps and fulfils the Law because his perfect obedience means he can be the pure sacrificial Lamb who did not need to die - his righteousness is then credited to us

2. Jesus Founds the Church

We were struck by Jesus' extraordinary kindness as in the midst of his pain and suffering he still gives Mary and John what they both need (in contrast to me!).

We also saw that from this point on in John's writings, something new has happened as he gathers a new family unit around the cross. As John and Mary are given to each other, so this is paralleled over the page in John 20v17-18. There as the risen Jesus meets Mary Magdalene he calls her to go to his 'brothers' (first called that here) and refers to them having the same Father. John develops this then in his letter 1 John - 12 times he addresses the church as brothers and sisters and sees a touchstone for authenticity as whether we love one another as brothers and sisters or not.

We were reminded of the "parable" of the man in the flood who turns down help from a truck, a boat and a helicopter because he's waiting for God to show up and help. However often (as here) God uses people to be his hands and feet. We might be the people waiting for help from God (and missing his means of help in others), or we might be the people who are needing to offer help to others as God's hands. Regardless, we are put into a new family as Jesus dies.

Here are some questions to get the ball rolling...

Feel free to adapt or write your own...

Why do you think John includes this small account? What does it teach us about Jesus? What does it add or reaffirm about Jesus' character?

In what ways do we see that Jesus keeps and fulfils the law as he honours her as both his mum and as a widow?

Look up the Leviticus and Deuteronomy passages above. What do we see if God's heart for the helpless? Why does he care in this way?

Why does it matter that Jesus keeps and fulfils the law? Why does it matter to us?

Do you agree that here we are Jesus founding the church? How is it a glimpse of the creation of a new family unit?

Look up John 20v17-18 and then scan over 1 John. How does it work out that the church is referred to as 'brothers and sisters'? What imperatives / challenges / encouragements does John give to the brothers and sisters whom he is writing to?

"The Lord often uses other people to show his kindness to us"...

- Where have you experienced the Lord working in his kindness through others into your life?

- How is this idea both a challenge and an encouragement?