

Christ Church Clifton Sermon Notes & Questions



Series: Watch and pray
Passage: Matt 27v55,56, Mark 15v40-47, Luke 23v47-56, John 19v25-27,
Preacher: Janet Lee **Date of Sermon:** March 28th 2021

The women at the cross

New series watch and pray those waiting at foot of the cross, journey from Garden of gethsemane watch and pray last week, to the cross and onto next Sunday resurrection! Today women at foot of cross, lots of women, we know at least 4 of their names but not names of centurion or criminals, we remember their utter devotion today. Mary x3 and Salome,

Each gospel has a bit to say about women at foot of the cross, Luke often writes about women but every gospel mentions that little group at the cross watching. Who were these women? What did they do what can we learn from them? Let's move onto Good Friday, Jesus on the cross dying, but who was there too? Matt 27v55

⁵⁵ **Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs.** ⁵⁶ **Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph,^[or Joses] and the mother of Zebedee's sons.**

Missing from Matthews list is Jesus mother, Virgin Mary. Look at other lists, 4 women named Maryx3 and Salome

1. Mary- his mother *John 19v25* ²⁵ *Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.*
2. Mary Clopas,- mother of James and Joses/Joseph
3. Mary Magdalene –(delivered from 7 demons)
4. Salome, -his aunt, mother Mary's sister and mother of Zebedee, with sons James and John.

Matt 27 55 **Many women were there, watching from a distance**

Many women others just watching, and praying, Who was there, but why there? Because utterly devoted to Jesus, because those forgiven much love much. Luke 7v47

⁴⁵ *You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in.* ⁴⁶ *You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil.* ⁴⁷ *Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.* ⁴⁸ *Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."*

The woman who pour perfume from alabaster jar on Jesus feet and wept and dried his feet with her hair, told she is a sinner possibly Mary Magdalene. She has sinned a lot but is forgiven she loved him much, expressed that love with perfume and tears, how much do we love Jesus? Those who know just how much they are forgiven for love lots, utter devotion to Jesus. Never mind her past, she is now thankful and grateful to Jesus, however much you have sinned you can be forgiven nothing separates us from God's love, more aware of sin more aware of grace poured out.

What did women do to show their devotion?

- They stood there
- Supported him practically
- Did what they could, spices
- Witnesses to his burial

They stood there Mark 15:40,41 They watched, waited prayed, they stood in solidarity with Jesus. Watched from a distance, inferior too lowly for Romans to bother arresting, watched from distance as safety and convention. They

were powerless, lowly so they stayed and watched Jesus die in pain. Where were the men? Disciples had fled, deserted Jesus. The pain of a mother seeing child ill or suffer, the pain of seeing a friend in trouble, they stood, solidarity with Jesus. He looked down from cross and saw them no words needed just knowing they were there brought comfort and relief, yet Jesus thought of them his widowed mother, asking John to look after her John 19:26-27 The power of standing alongside someone, sometimes nothing you can do but be there, Job's comforters for first week they said nothing,(better before they started talking) People dying or sick just being in same room brings comfort, also identify with Jesus they were not ashamed to stand by Jesus cross, identify themselves with Jesus, would we stand up for Jesus? Stand alongside to the end? Happy to identify ourselves with him?

They supported him practically Luke 8v1-3, Background in Luke 8, Jesus was itinerant moving from place to place, proclaiming the kingdom of God and demonstrating it by healings and deliverance. How did he manage with no income? He was supported by followers, those with worldly wealth, Joanna's husband Chuza worked for Herod as household manager, Luke mentions 3 by name, Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Susanna and many others. Jesus ministered among the poor but was able to thanks to gifts of the better off, same today wealthier give more to support the church, keep it going, richer parishes like ours support poorer parishes like Lawrence Weston and Avonmouth through our parish share. review your giving. How do we support Jesus work practically with our finances? They supported him, showed devotion by helping practically with money.

They did what they could Luke 23v55,56 All in context of women seen as inferior, lowly class citizens, without power. They couldn't be part of Twelve, but followed him used their money to support him in his ministry. When they realized after he died no time to anoint his body as custom they went home and prepared spices The women were powerless, they could not ask Pilate for the body, all bodies of criminals were property of Roman government, but as a favour to wealthy man Joseph of Arimathea Pilate released Jesus' body to him, but he had less than 3 hours from death, to sunset when Sabbath began, from time of death to going to Pilate, to getting permission to burial in tomb, no time to anoint Jesus so simply wrapped him in linen shroud and buried him in a rock tomb. But the women prepared spices and perfumes, they cost money, prepared to give for sake of Jesus. Women could not help with getting or burying body but little they could do help with embalming process. When circumstances prevent us from doing anything, is there anything small we can do to help? Even with constraints of society, convention, powerlessness the women did what they could. What can I do to help when I feel powerless like women? How can I show my devotion in small ways? So women stood, supported, did what they could and finally were witnesses

They were witnesses Mark 15v46,47. Their practical thinking meant they watched closely which tomb the body was put in hurriedly on Friday evening so they would know where it was when came again on Sunday, important details, witnesses of which was right tomb. Accusations- went to wrong tomb, that was why it was empty, but Bible is clear, they saw which tomb it was.

They also therefore were first there on Sunday, witnesses to resurrection. In Jewish law only men could be witnesses but God chose women to be there first, Mary Magdalene was there at sunrise weeping by the tomb, forgiven much loved much. Not the 12 men disciples but the women first to see empty tomb and meet with Jesus mistaken gardener. The women simply saw and told others what they saw. How can we respond? Show utter devotion?

To watch and pray

To support him practically

To do what we can

To be a witness

So much to learn from women at the cross, their utter devotion, do we show same devotion? Sometimes do nothing, watch and pray be there in God's presence, sometimes help needed financially, practical help, use our money to support God's work, to do what we can in any situation to help even if powerless and helpless, anything small to do? Finally be witnesses, see, tell others what you have seen and experienced about Jesus.

All flowed from relationship with Jesus, who forgave much loved much.

Questions for study:

Optional starter Think of examples of women today in the news, some trapped by circumstances.

1. Read all 4 gospels, Matt 27v55,56, Mark 15v40-47, Luke 23v47-56, John 19v25-27 and make your own composite list of who is named as being there at the cross. (3 Marys and Salome) who is not named? (other criminals, centurion)
2. What you know about Mary Magdalene? Why do those who are forgiven much, love much? See Luke 7v36-50 and Luke 8v2.
3. Discuss why the women stood there, what comfort did it bring? Where were the men? When are the times in your life when all you can do is stand with Jesus. Would you stand with him to the very end?
4. See Luke 8v1-3, how did the women help practically? What can we do today that is similar?
5. See Luke 23v55,56 what is the little the women could do? when we are constrained by convention and circumstances give examples of what we can do to help, however small.
6. See Mark 15v46,47 what is the significance of the women seeing where the body was buried? How can we be witnesses too?
7. The women showed utter devotion to Jesus. Discuss all the ways we can show that same devotion as they did, what hinders and what helps us in our devotions?
8. Pray for current situations across the world women today find themselves in, eg Nazanin Zaghari Ratcliffe in Iran, or women concerned about safety in the streets etc,