



Lesson 7

Making It Real

Read: Mark 2:1-12

Imagine you find yourself outside of the house where Jesus is teaching. You can't get inside because of the crowd. You ask a woman nearby: "what is going on?"

She replies: "inside is the rabbi Jesus – everyone wants to hear Him."

"My name is Mary and I am from Magdala. The rabbi, Jesus is the son of a tradesman from Nazareth. He has no credentials or status, no army or weapons, no nobility or wealth. He travels from village to village with a dozen of His friends, plus a substantial number of supportive women, teaching deep truths to the peasants of Galilee."

"Look around – many of us are poor, unemployed and some are homeless. Some are disabled and many are women, like me. Few of us can afford an education but being uneducated doesn't mean we are stupid."

You ask her: "Is He starting a new religion?"

“I think Rabbi Jesus is doing something far more dangerous than starting a new religion. He says He is announcing a new kingdom.”

“So He is a rebel?”

“No – His kingdom is not like the regimes of this world that take up daggers, swords and spears.” Mary says. “He heals the sick, teaches the unschooled and inspires the downtrodden with hope.”

“According to Rabbi Jesus – the kingdom of God is not here or there – it is located here.” Mary points to her chest. “It exists in us and among us.”

Mary goes on: “it does not come crashing in like an army. It grows slowly, quietly, under the surface, like the roots of a tree, like yeast in dough, like seeds in soil. Our faith waters the seed and makes it grow. When people trust, it is true, they act upon it and it becomes true. Our faith unlocks its potential. Our faith makes it real. Rabbi Jesus is leading an uprising but it is an uprising of peace.”

You say: “you seem to have a lot of faith. Do you ever have doubts?”

Mary laughs and admits she sometimes thinks His message is a crazy dream but then I ask myself, what other message could possibly change the world? In the world we think that a little more hate can conquer hate; a little more revenge can end revenge; a little more pride can overcome pride: a little more war can cure war; a little more gold can cure greed or a little more division can create cohesion.

Mary then asks you: “Are you beginning to believe in Him? Do you trust Him?”

The question – do you trust Him is not the same as do you believe He existed or do you believe certain doctrines about Him.

It is a question about commitment, about confidence. For Jesus, the call to trust Him was closely linked to the call to follow Him.

If we truly trust Him, we will follow Him on the road, imitate Him, learn from His example, live by His way.

You get closer to the doorway and hear Jesus say – “Your faith has healed you.” Mary whispers: “Faith is where it all begins. When you believe, you make it real. You change this....she points to her head...and this....she points to her heart and you change all this...she gestures to indicate the whole world.

Read: 1 John 1:1 – 2:6

Do you have trust in Jesus as the Son of God? Sadly, many today just want to focus on Jesus – the healer and teacher – not Jesus – the Son of God and Saviour of the world. There is no way to accept one and not the other.

Either Jesus was just a man who did good things – thus He never rose from the dead OR Jesus was God’s Son, come to earth to reveal God the Father to us and sacrifice His life for OUR sins and was resurrected.

We may think we are “good” people – but we are all sinners.

Each person’s response to the crucifixion is crucial, Every individual must decide whether they are willing to accept Jesus’ sacrifice for their sins, to die to living for themselves and embrace the lordship of Christ over their lives.

We hear the words – a challenge, a life-changing invitation.

Do we dare to step out and follow Jesus, to make the road by walking, to risk everything on an uprising of peace, an uprising of generosity, an uprising of forgiveness, an uprising of love?

If we believe, we will make it real.

Engage:

What one thought or idea from today's lesson especially intrigued, provoked, disturbed or challenged you?

Think of one of your biggest decisions – how you reached it, how it felt before and after making the choice.

How do you respond to the idea that FAITH MAKES IT REAL?

Activate:

This week, consider beginning each day with the words – I BELIEVE. If you would like, add the words – HELP MY UNBELIEF. Echo them throughout the day when they arise in your heart.

Meditate: Sit in silence with Jesus' words – your faith has made you well. What in you feels like it is being made well? End the silence with a simple prayer.