

From the Rector

There has been a church on the site of our current building from about 1090, with the present church building dating back to around the 14th Century. The first recorded Rector was William de Sutham in 1353 and a list of all the Rectors since then is on a Brass plaque on the left hand side at the front of the church. I’m not sure when the church was first dedicated to St Mary, but it is the most common dedication in the Church of England with 2368 churches named after the Mother of Jesus. There are five other Marys are mentioned in the New Testament, including Mary Magdalene, who is remembered this month in the church’s calendar. Only 226 churches are dedicated to her, but what can we learn from this Mary’s story?

***We don’t have to be defined by our past:***

When Jesus encountered Mary, He cast seven demons out of her (Luke 8:2). As a result, her life was transformed, and she became a follower of Jesus. Her life as a disciple was no longer defined by the person she had been before. Like Mary, we don’t have to let our past without Christ dictate how we see ourselves today.

***Make Jesus the centre of our world:***

Along with some of the women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases (Luke 8:1-3), Mary followed Jesus and His disciples and supported them in ministry. She was there at the cross (Matthew 27:55-56) and one of the first to the tomb on the Sunday (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1 and John 20:1-18). Like Mary, we are called to serve Jesus as dedicated disciples.

***Jesus uses the weakest people for His purposes:***

Mary is a great example of Paul’s words: *‘But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.’*(1 Corinthians 1:27). At a time when women were regarded as second-class citizens with no real autonomy, Jesus had a special compassion and care for women. Alongside Mary, the women’s witness to the resurrection was taken seriously. We shouldn’t be quick to dismiss the things that don’t agree with our expectations, as Jesus doesn’t always do what we expect! He delights in working out His plans through unlikely people and in surprising ways. He did this through Mary, and if we allow Him, He can do it through us!

Don’t ever think that God cannot use your life to achieve His purposes. Through Mary Magdalene, the most unlikely candidate, God worked wonders to His praise and glory.

What plans does God have to work through your life? Why not ask Him and then wait for the answer.

With many blessings

Fr David