The Six Marys

Witness Lee

LIVING STREAM MINISTRY

THE SIX MARYS

by Witness Lee

ISBN: 978-0-7363-0710-9

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:35; Matt. 26:6-8; John 19:25; 20:1, 16-17; Luke 8:1-3; John 11:1, 5; Acts 1:13-14; 12:12; Rom. 16:1-3, 6, 12-13; Phil. 4:2-3a

In God's administration of His economy, a very important position is assigned to the women. After man was created, what happened to man was very much related to the woman. By this we can see that whether or not God can have His way today in His purpose depends very much upon what the sisters will do. If the women, or the sisters, will function properly, God will have a success; otherwise, there will surely be a failure or a loss. After the fall of man, God came in, not to do something through the man but to do something through the woman. The subtle serpent, the enemy of God, came in through the woman. Therefore, God chose to defeat the enemy also through woman—through the same channel by which he came. In Genesis 3 the serpent came in through the woman, and in the same chapter God promised that this woman would bring forth a seed who would bruise the head of the serpent (v. 15). Thus, the fall occurred through the woman, and the deliverance was promised also through the woman. This shows us the importance of the sisters' position in the Bible.

The first account in the New Testament concerning a direct relationship with the Lord is related to a woman—Mary. The story of the life of the Lord Jesus begins with this woman. Of course, we know that this is the fulfillment of the promise given in Genesis 3:15. In Genesis God promised that the woman would bring forth a seed who would destroy the damaging serpent. This promise is fulfilled at the very beginning of the New Testament.

Mary the mother of the Lord Jesus is not the only Mary mentioned in the New Testament. Do you realize that there are at least six Marys mentioned in

the New Testament? The first Mary is the mother of the Lord Jesus, and the second Mary is the sister of Lazarus. The third Mary is Mary the Magdalene, out from whom seven demons were cast out. While the Lord Jesus was dying on the cross, a few sisters were standing there with Him. Besides Mary the Lord's mother, there were two other Marys. One was Mary the Magdalene, and the Gospel of John tells us that the other Mary was the wife of Clopas (19:25). This fourth Mary, with the other sisters, saw the death of Christ. On the morning of the resurrection, Mary the Magdalene went to the tomb. The Gospel of John mentions only that Mary the Magdalene went there, but the other Gospels tell us that there was another Mary (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:10). This other Mary was the first Mary, the Lord's mother (Matt. 13:55). The fifth Mary was the mother of John Mark. In Acts 12:12, after Peter was released from prison, he went to Mary's home, where many saints were gathered together praying. The sixth Mary is in Romans 16:6. Here Paul says to greet the Mary who labored much for the church.

These six Marys are very meaningful. One Mary gave birth to the Lord Jesus; another loved the Lord Jesus and followed Him, ministering to Him; two other Marys saw the Lord's death and prepared something for His burial, to anoint His body. They saw the resurrection and also received the vision of the ascension of Christ. Another Mary was related to the church, praying all the time. Finally, a Mary was laboring over so many in the church life. In the New Testament there are not so many Peters or Johns, but there are so many Marys. This simply means that to fulfill God's purpose and accomplish His economy, there is a great need for the sisters. In a sense, the sisters are more important for the accomplishment of God's economy than the brothers.

The little family at Bethany spoken of in John 12:1-9 is a type of the church. That family was composed of one brother and two sisters. This means that it consisted of one-third brothers and two-thirds sisters. A strong, normal, proper church should have one-third brothers and two-thirds sisters. In the church life we need more sisters.

We need to see the position of the sisters in the record of the New Testament. The first position of the sisters is related to the birth of the Lord. What is the purpose of the Lord's birth? It is to bring the Lord into the human race. All the sisters must realize that their position in the church is to bring forth Christ to people. Whatever you do must bring forth Christ. You have to pray that the Spirit will come upon you and that the power of the Most High

will overshadow you so that you can bring forth Christ. If you are serving in a service group, you must bring forth Christ. If you visit the saints or have fellowship with the sisters, you must bring forth Christ to them. It is not just a matter of working for the Lord; it is a matter of bringing forth Christ.

According to the Gospels, the Marys were the ones who loved the Lord and followed Him. They ministered to the Lord out of their possessions. Sisters, this is your position. Your position is first to bring forth Christ to people and then to love the Lord Jesus. Can you tell the Lord that you love Him more than your family and your children? We have to realize that the sisters represent the loving ones. You need to love the Lord Jesus, to follow Him, and to minister to Him. One day when I was reading Luke 8:3, I was happy when I saw that among those ministering sisters, one was the wife of a high officer of Herod. Surely she had a high position and many material things. Yet she did not love other things; she loved the Lord. She not only loved the Lord but also followed Him and ministered what she had to the Lord and to the disciples. No matter what your position is, you have to follow the Lord, love the Lord, and minister something that you have to the Lord.

The New Testament also shows us that among so many Marys, some stood by the cross watching and observing the Lord Jesus when He was being crucified. They saw the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. All the sisters have to see such a portrait of the crucified Lord Jesus. In other words, the sisters have to take a position that experiences the death of Christ.

Furthermore, you need to do something that makes the burial of the Lord Jesus so sweet. It must be that whenever you mention the name of the Lord Jesus, people can sense something so sweet. If you do not have such a love, although you may mention His name in the same way, there will be no sweetness. There is a big difference. In the New Testament there is no position assigned to the sisters for taking the lead or doing a big work or being a great speaker. Rather, the position that has been assigned to the sisters is to love Him, to follow Him, to minister to Him, to experience His death, and to make Him so sweet to everyone. He was the rejected One, the condemned One, the crucified One, yet to you He is the lovable One. Your portion is to experience the death of the Lord Jesus and to make the rejected Jesus so sweet to everyone.

Moreover, the sisters must discover something of the resurrection and be first to know the Lord's ascension (John 20:11-18). The Lord's resurrection was not discovered first by Peter but by Mary. The brothers received the revelation from a sister. Mary saw the empty tomb and went to tell Peter. She did not teach Peter, but she did pass on the revelation. In the church we do not need the sisters to teach, but we do need the sisters to see the revelation and to discover some of the things related to the Lord's resurrection life.

I am hoping that in the coming days many sisters could stand up in the meetings, testifying, "Hallelujah! This morning I saw the empty tomb! I saw something new of the resurrected Christ!" This would not be a kind of teaching but a heavenly report. I would love to hear such a report. To me the best meeting is not a kind of teaching meeting but a meeting full of divine reports. I would love to hear such a sweet and divine report out of the mouths of all the sisters. The same report out of the mouths of the brothers would not be so sweet. But such a report concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus out of the mouths of the little sisters would be sweet to everyone. The sisters saw the resurrection first.

After the four Gospels we come to the stage of the church. In Acts there were no sisters taking the lead in the church, but they were praying. When the twelve were praying for ten days before the time of Pentecost, the sisters also were there. In Acts 12 the prayer meeting was even in a sister's home. It does not say that Peter went to Andrew's home where so many were praying but that he went to Mary's home. All the sisters in the church have to learn to pray. If you see a problem, do not talk about it and do not gossip about it—pray. If Peter is thrown into prison, do not talk—pray! You have to be so involved in the prayer and so burdened in the prayer that even after your prayer has been answered, you would continue to pray. If you expect your local church to be strong, you must be praying sisters. You must not be gossiping and talking sisters but praying sisters. We need the sisters to pray. Whenever you see that the church needs something, whenever you see some shortcomings, whenever you see something lacking in the church, do not spread any rumors—pray. Stop the rumors by praying; even kill the rumors by praying. You must pray and pray and pray until Peter comes back. Pray to such an extent that even after the prayers are answered, you are still praying. This is so healthy. I do know that many of you pray, but I hope that more of you will learn to pray, and that those who pray already will pray more.

Romans 16 mentions so many laboring and ministering sisters, the first of whom is Phoebe. We need many Phoebes in the church. Phoebe was a deaconess in the church in Cenchrea. We need many sisters who will minister in the churches, serving to such an extent they are called deaconesses.

In verse 3 we read, “Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus.” In principle, the Bible usually mentions the man before the woman, but here is an exception. Paul does not say, “Greet Aquila and Prisca,” but, “Greet Prisca and Aquila.” It must be because Prisca was a very special sister.

Verse 12 says, “Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa...Greet Persis...who has labored much in the Lord.” In verse 13 there is the mother of Rufus. Rufus’s mother was also the mother of the apostle Paul. Do you know what this means? This means that the mother of Rufus was always taking care of the apostle Paul as her own son. She was continually nourishing, cherishing, and caring for this single brother, the apostle Paul. She was actually the mother of Rufus, yet Paul said she was also his mother because she took care of him.

By putting all these verses together, we can see that there is no hint that a position was assigned to the sisters to take the lead, to do a great work, or to teach. There was no such position assigned to the sisters. Rather, the sisters should bring the Lord Jesus to people by the principle of incarnation, love Him, follow Him, minister to Him, experience His death, make Him so sweet and lovely to all the people, see His resurrected life, know the ascension, and then in the church always bear the burden of prayer and labor.

Philippians 4:2-3 says, “I exhort Euodias, and I exhort Syntyche, to think the same thing in the Lord. Yes, I ask you also, genuine yokefellow, assist them, since they contended with me in the gospel, as well as with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.” Euodias and Syntyche were two wonderful, lovely, even spiritual sisters, but there was a problem between them. They were not thinking the same thing. They were good sisters: they were spiritual, contending with Paul in the gospel, yet they were not thinking the same thing. This was of great concern to the apostle Paul. In such a short letter as Philippians, he mentioned these two names. Not only did Paul have this experience, but I also have had this experience. Although the sisters may have discovered the resurrection, I have discovered something concerning the sisters. The biggest problem for the sisters in the church life is that they are not thinking the same thing. It is very easy for the

sisters not to be of one mind. Because of this, many of the divisions in Christianity were caused by the sisters. They have often been the source of division. This is a very serious matter. On the one hand, the sisters are greatly needed. Without the sisters the church is barren. But although the sisters are greatly needed and very useful, it is also very difficult for them to be of one mind.

You must realize that if you are not thinking the same thing, it means that you are staying in your mind. The way for you to be of one mind is not to try to change your mind but to turn yourself from your troublesome mind to your spirit. If you turn to your spirit, you will be of one mind with others. Then you will tell your poor, ugly mind that you just hate it. You will not hate another sister's mind, but you will hate your own mind. I am afraid that all the sisters appreciate their mind too much.

When Eve was questioned by the serpent, she was the first to exercise her mind. When Adam fell, he did not exercise his mind that much; he just followed his wife. The Bible tells us that Eve, after eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, passed it on to Adam, and he ate. The same principle applies in the church life today. Perhaps a sister says that she just cannot go along with that brother who is an elder. She eats of the fruit of the tree of knowledge during the day, and when her husband comes home, she gives him some of the fruit. Soon he also has a problem with the elder. Many of the husbands are good followers, following the mind of the wives. One of the biggest problems in the church life is the dissenting minds among the sisters.

For the sake of the church life, both the sisters and the brothers must learn to experience the principle of incarnation. We must learn to bring forth the Lord Jesus in a practical and living way to other people. We also have to experience the real death of Christ. We must see it, watch over it, and experience it. After this, we need to discover and experience the resurrection life of Christ. Finally, we must all experience the ascension of Christ. If all the sisters can be like this, the Lord will have the way to carry out His economy. This is the goal that the Lord is working toward. He is desiring to have a group of people represented by the sisters who can bring forth Christ, who can enjoy His death and resurrection, and who can serve in a proper way in the church life. The way to reach the goal is for all the sisters to be Marys and Phoebes.

One further word: All the sisters must learn to say, “I don’t mind; I just don’t mind.” If the sisters would learn to say, “I don’t mind,” it would be wonderful. This means that they would never make an issue of anything. If the sisters take the attitude that they do not mind and would not make an issue of anything, the church will be at peace. There will be the real oneness to express Christ in the principle of incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and even descension. This will be of much benefit to the church. Learn to say, “I don’t mind, and I don’t want to make an issue.” No matter what you hear, no matter what others do to you, do not make an issue of it. If you will practice this, the Lord will bless and build up the church life.