

Deep Dive

This is a resource for you to go deeper into what we talked about in today's session. We encourage you to read and reflect on this material!

Our Characters: Shabbat and Finding Peace

- **Mary Magdalene** experienced Jesus's rescuing power in her life. But being freed from her demons didn't automatically remove her difficult circumstances. She probably still had painful memories, relationships that were strained or broken, and more. But also, she had Jesus. No wonder she ended up becoming one of His devoted followers, exchanging the roof over her head for a tent, and familiar life for a whole new kind of wilderness wandering. She had found the kind of rest that only comes from communing with the Creator, and she wasn't about to lose His presence.
- **Nicodemus** had built a decent life for himself. But while good behavior, success, and money have the power to make life easier, they don't satisfy the soul. Adherence to the Sabbath as God commanded was a good thing, but only if it resulted in gratefulness for and worship of the Creator. While Nicodemus's Shabbat gatherings would've been the most ritually respectful according to the Old Testament - rituals and rules have the potential to distract from proper observance of God's presence.
- **Matthew** had found a way to benefit from the Roman occupation, and as a result, he likely wasn't invited to many Shabbat dinners. Perhaps for a time he was able to ignore the loneliness that came with being a tax collector. But striving after personal gain leads us away from our Creator - away from any hope we have of experiencing true rest and peace.
- **Simon** might've been among those most ready for God to intervene in Israel's difficult circumstances. Overwhelmed by financial hardship, he likely struggled with impatience - maybe even his faith. Perhaps he wondered when God would relieve Israel's suffering and restore their

freedom. Perhaps he wondered if God still cared about His chosen people at all. Shabbat remembrances could have been painful and confusing for him.

- In any case, **Mary** is again the example we should aspire to follow. She wasn't striving to obey a commandment to earn God's favor; she knew she'd already received His gracious and undeserved favor. Instead, she was eager to set aside time to remember her Creator, the One who knew her by name - to enter into His presence and celebrate what He'd done and what He would do. Compared to Nicodemus's Shabbat dinner, Mary's was humble and imperfect, but far more glorious.

Going Deeper With Your Family

Read these verses with family or friends and then discuss the following question:

- Luke 12:7
- Romans 5:8
- Romans 8:28
- Matthew 11:28-30
- Revelation 21:4

Which of these verses brings you feelings of rest, peace, and hope? Why?