

Devotion, Week of August 24, 2025

Rev. Jeanne Simpson

We Presbyterian Women are getting ready to start out new Bible study for this year. It is called "Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ," and it was written by the Rev. Dr. Rhashell Hunter, who has served churches, the General Assembly, and two seminaries in her career with the PC(USA). Her Daddy was also a preacher. Debbie Durden mentioned this past Sunday that the first lesson of this study is about Mary Magdalene, and there is a misunderstanding about her name. It has been presumed for years, and I always believed, that "Magdalene" just meant that she was from the town of Magdala. But there is no such town. Instead, it likely is a nickname. The word means "tower" or "great." So she was called Mary the Great, or Mary the Tower, as in tower of strength. Cool! She has been mixed up with other Marys for years, and her healing by Jesus has also been misconstrued.

In a PW retreat some years ago, the leader asked us what we thought Mary Magdalene's seven demons were that Jesus healed her of. We all came up with "too uppity!" She was assertive, always speaking up and sticking with Jesus, even when the other disciples didn't, and there's even a gospel titled "The Gospel of Mary" where Peter complains about Jesus favoring her over the other disciples! She certainly is a fascinating character, and I hope all of you women will join us for the PW Bible Study this year. There are other characters in the Bible we will also study, and I can't wait to read Rev. Hunter's take on them. I don't know about you, but I need some lessons in resilience and a reminder that in the midst of the negativity that surrounds us "out there," we can find joy in Jesus in our hearts and in our worship and study time together.

So get ready for some good Bible study this fall, and ladies, encourage the men around you to read the lesson too!

Jeanne