**Another Lesson from Mary, the Mother of Jesus** by Rick Liggin

In a recent issue of this paper, there was an article entitled, “The Blessed Mary…a Lord’s Supper Talk.” The article pointed us to Mary, the mother of Jesus, as a woman worthy of our admiration and praise, because of her unflinching faith as she quietly endured the heartbreaking event of her own child’s wrongful and brutal execution on a Roman cross. Mary was, indeed, an amazing woman.

As I read that article, I remembered another occasion in the life of Mary that moves me to admire her even more. Do you remember the time Luke tells us about *after* the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus when the apostles were staying in an upper room in Jerusalem waiting for the promised coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:12-14)? You might remember that the apostles were not alone at that time; with them was a gathering of “about one hundred and twenty persons” (1:15). And guess who was one of those one hundred and twenty people? Luke specifically lets us know that *Mary* was there (1:14)!

Now, stop and notice that on this occasion Mary was with the very men who, just a little over a month earlier, had denied her son Jesus and fled like cowards when the soldiers came to arrest Him! And notice that not only was she present with these men, but she evidently accepted their leadership, including that of the man who had denied her son three times in one night with cursing and swearing (Mk. 14:66ff). When the day of Pentecost came and the church was finally established in Jerusalem, it included many of the same folks who had personally cried out for the blood of her son (Acts 2:23).

Wow! What a forgiving spirit this godly woman, Mary, manifested! You just have to appreciate her and want to imitate her!

Some Christians today refuse to be a part of a local church because of what someone in that local church did to them (usually something quite insignificant by comparison); and often, it was something that happened *way* in the past. But here, Mary was a part of a church made up of the very people who had rejected and brutally executed her son; and she followed the leadership of the specific men who had so badly failed her son! Ooh! Aren’t we a bit embarrassed now about the silly grudges we sometimes hold and the wrongs we often refuse to forgive!

Evidently, Mary was like the first martyr, Stephen, who had learned from Jesus to say, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing” (Lk. 23:34)! She was there at the cross when Jesus said those words! She learned forgiveness from Him!

The story of the cross is all about forgiveness! At the cross, provision was made for our sins to be forgiven! There we witness the forgiving spirit of Christ and the forgiving spirit of our merciful God! Like Mary, we must learn to be forgiving! All offenses committed against us, all hurts we have endured, all the grudges we want to hold tenaciously to—all of these pale in view of the cross of Christ! We must never forget that the unforgiving spirit is unforgivable (cf. Mt. 6:15)! If we want the benefits of the cross of Christ, we must forgive! If Mary could do it, so can I!

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