

Recently, I was working on a devotion, for our Facebook devotion group, on Mark 15:40 where it says, "***There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome.***" These women were looking on from a distance as Jesus was crucified and eventually died. The next verse describes these women as ones who followed Jesus while he was in Galilee, and they ministered to him. Now, I do not want to read too much into the reasons they were watching from a distance as opposed to being close to the action, but it did get me thinking about this "distance" thing.

As a follower of Jesus, do you see yourself as a close follower or one who follows at a distance? Maybe there are seasons in your life when you are close because it is convenient, and then back off when life gets busy. Maybe you want to be a close follower but just do not know how. Maybe you are distant because of a life event or some sin in your life that has dictated to you to stay back. Maybe the distance is to protect something in your life that you do not want to give up. You want your cake and eat it too.

And much can be said about this, with guilt trips being laid out to make people feel bad. But in the end, coercion, guilt, or force will not entice a person to bridge the distance gap between them and Jesus. Actually, there is no need, because though you may feel distant, Jesus is NEVER distant from you. Whatever you do to hold Jesus at arm's length or whatever sin tells you that you must do, Jesus is forever close. The women watched from a distance as Jesus died, but Jesus was dying for them. He loved those women with an unconditional love that knows no distance. Though they were physically distant, Jesus had them in his heart. And though you are distant, the same holds true for you.

This Lenten season, I urge you to do whatever it takes to remove those barriers that tell you to keep your distance and know that Jesus is closer to you than you are to yourself. If you are holding Jesus at a distance because of convenience or the busyness of your life, stop it. Let down your defenses and know the closeness of your Savior. If you are struggling to know how to draw close, again, Jesus is already there, just receive his love.

The distance gap has been bridged and it is called the cross. So come and enjoy closeness with Jesus.