

## Episode 5: Spirit

The episode starts out with Mary collecting persimmons while saying a Jewish blessing. She gets spooked as she sees two Roman guards traveling towards her. The Jewish blessing she is reciting is called Birkat Hallanot which is a Blessing on Trees that is recited when seeing blossoming fruit trees for the first time. The blessing in English is written below:

- *Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe. Who has made nothing lacking in His world, and created in it wonderous creatures and good trees to give mankind pleasure.*
- Also while she is gathering fruit, she quotes the same verse she, Ramah and Matthew were memorizing. If you remember it or need to look it up, write it below:
  - **Psalm 139:8 (ESV)** –

In the next scene, Shmuel is interrogating Jesse, the man who was healed at the pool of Bethesda about Jesus. Shmuel and the other Pharisee are trying to figure out how they can escalate an investigation into Jesus as a false prophet. They are trying to use the Jewish sects' disagreements to get the appropriate attention on Jesus. There are two sects in addition to Zealots, which we learned about in the previous episode, the Pharisees and Sadducees.

- Pharisees – well intentioned people interested in applying the bible to their everyday lives. Desired to maintain a life of purity by properly obeying the Law. They affirmed life after death, physical resurrection and spiritual beings (Acts 23:8). Jesus opposed the Pharisees not so much in their goal of holy living, but rather their hypocritical way of favoring their own oral traditions over the intent of the written law (Matthew 15:1-20, Matthew 23:1-36, Mark 7:1-23 and Luke 11:37-54).
- Sadducees – accepted Roman rule, they were content with the way things were. Not looking for a Messianic figure to rise up and rescue the Jews. Denied life after death, physical resurrection and spiritual beings (Matthew 22:23, Mark 12:18, Luke 20:27, Acts 23:8).

These two groups of Jewish leaders will continue to be a main part in the story of Jesus as well as his arrest and ultimate crucifixion.

Mary continues to help Ramah learn to read and you can tell ever since she saw the Roman officers, something has been off with her. As she is talking with Ramah she mentions that she was picking persimmons and was praying. As soon as she saw the officers she stopped praying and ran away. She ran from her fears and stopped praying! I think she realizes that she should not have stopped praying. When you are scared, prayer is what helps the most. Has there been a time that you were scared or went through something difficult and prayed to God? How did that make you feel, how did it turn out?

Jesus meets up with John the Baptist in this episode as John is headed to Jerusalem to confront Herod. This interaction is not stated in scripture, but it does give you an idea of what is to come for John the Baptist. Underline what John had said to Herod.

- **Matthew 14:3-5 (ESV)** – <sup>3</sup> For Herod had seized John and bound him and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, <sup>4</sup> because John had been saying to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her," <sup>5</sup> And though he wanted to put him to death, he feared the people because they held him to be a prophet.

As John the Baptist was talking to Jesus in this episode, John was explaining to him how Herod was breaking Jewish law and was not allowed to take Herodias as his wife. This is important because we know not only has John made Herod an enemy, but also his wife Herodias. More to come in upcoming seasons.

Simon the Zealot, in full Zealot, private spy mode tracks down Jesus' followers, scopes out the situation and luckily is there to help when things go bad with the man possessed by a demon. As this interaction is not from scripture, the closest scripture I could find was from Mark. As you read it, circle what resembles the possessed man from the show.

- **Mark 5:5 (ESV)** – *Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones.*

The demon in this scripture causes the man to cut himself and is known as Legion. This is not the depiction of Jesus' interaction with Legion from scripture, we do not see Jesus cast the demon into a herd of pigs. But Legion is mentioned when the demon is talking to Mary. As the show did not stick to the scripture, I'm not 100% sure which demon they were trying to portray in this scene, it may or may not be Legion.

The demon possessed man leaves his first interaction with Simon and heads to Jesus and the disciples camp. The demon talks to Mary and then attacks her. Luckily Simon the Zealot is there to help, but only until the demon uses super strength and starts to choke Simon. Then you hear the voice of Jesus command the demon out of the man and Simon and Mary are saved. Jesus to the rescue! Then Mary sneaks away and heads out of town. We aren't sure what she is doing, but she heads back to the bar where she was known as Lilith. More to come on this in the next episode.

There is not a lot about Simon the Zealot in the bible. His name is referenced in the following verses:

- **Luke 6:15 (ESV)** – *and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and **Simon who was called the Zealot.***
  - This was when the 12 disciples were listed in the Luke's gospel.
- **Acts 1:13 (ESV)** – *And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and **Simon the Zealot** and Judas the son of James.*
  - This was when Matthias was chosen to replace Judas after Jesus' resurrection.

Since there is not a lot about Simon the Zealot in the bible, a lot of the story from this episode is not from scripture. It is not recorded that Simon and Jesus had a conversation by the water and Jesus threw his dagger in the water. But Jesus did ask Simon the Zealot to be his disciple, and Jesus does not like

violence so it is possible that he would discard weapons. I did like how Jesus said to Simon the Zealot that no one buys into the group with special skills or abilities. All Jesus is asking of us is for us! He wants us to be his followers, and our skills are not a qualifier. Look up Ephesians 2:8-9 and reflect on how that verse written by Paul relates to what Jesus was saying here.

How does this make you feel? Write a prayer of thankfulness to God.

The episode ends with Peter and Matthew heading to Jericho to look for Mary. They don't know where she is or why she went there, but it was stated in the show that Ramah thought the presence of the demon had affected her. We will find out more about what Mary is doing in the following episode.