

John 12:1 – 24

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~ This report from our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God takes us into the home of Lazarus, Mary and Martha again for supper with Jesus in Bethany. Today's menu should reveal many things as we pray the Holy Spirit will open our understanding to Scripture. One of the things this section of Scripture teaches is that the Lord Jesus places a definite emphasis on the home and upon marriage. Remember, we began this Gospel at a wedding in Canaan, in Galilee. Well, the public ministry of the Lord Jesus is concluded by the visit to this home. There is a very special blessing for the home and marriage that truly has God in it and genuinely seeks to glorify Christ....

1 Then Jesus six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

2 There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

3 Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

~ At our supper tonight we have Lazarus, freshly back from the dead, sitting with us. He is in one hundred percent fellowship with Christ, and he won't be saying one word tonight. The Lord Jesus said in our last report, "I am the resurrection and the light." He that believes in Jesus, though he be dead, yet shall he live. Lazarus sits with Jesus physically in the picture Jesus is painting here; but you and I are brought into fellowship with the Lord Jesus spiritually through His resurrection. You and I were dead in trespasses and sins before He saved us, and we had no knowledge whatsoever of fellowship with the Father; but he that believeth shall live and never die - and has constant fellowship with our Father in prayer.

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We also see Martha serving - and God bless her for that. Putting a meal on the table every day is difficult work and a rare gift, friends. Mary is sitting at His feet, learning. It is the home life that matters to God in the lives of Christian's today. The early church began in the home; the church will end in the home. The world thinks it's seeing a tremendous turning to God; however, the organized so-called church is turning people away and killing them spiritually. Many are turning away from the things of God right in the church. The organized church today is no longer a place of blessing; it has been relegated to a place where mundane social activities are carried on. A totally false fellowship is harped all the time, but it isn't of any value or meaning. Here, we see Lazarus raised from the dead and he is, as I said, in quiet fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Lazarus wasn't writing a book on his experience in Paradise, either – he was studying to be quiet in his own home. I wish we had a little more of that going on with Christians today.

If we are to have fellowship with God we must know Him. He must be in our home, marriage, business and all relationships. We must know the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and then grow in grace and in the knowledge of Him. That's what Mary's doing now as she comes to the place of adoration and worship in true fellowship. Many talk about learning as much as they talk about fellowship, to be sure. They are generally doing a great deal of everything except Bible study. These people likely will not be seen serving, either. Of course, all three are essential; and this should be our ideal picture of a church today. This is a remarkable portrait of Christ we have here.

There are many who confuse this incident with the woman who was a harlot and washed Jesus feet; I think you'll have trouble with this Mary one day if you think that. This is an altogether different and separate occasion, and a close consideration of the details reveals the only similarity is that the Lord has His feet washed and anointed. Of course, the hair was used by both women in both cases. The odor of the ointment is just filling the place up now, and you can smell it outside. It is sweet and delightful, you know....

4 Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,

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5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

~ Judas now reveals his heart to the brethren. Judas, being the bookkeeper, was absolutely defrauding and embezzling from the Lord Jesus and His ministry and His true disciples. I'm here to say that very little money made it to the poor, if any. The true test - and perhaps final test - of a Christian is the hard coin test, meaning a report on how that individual handles God's money indicates what is in their hearts. The finances of any organization or church are the true test of who they are and what they are doing. Taking money for one purpose and using it for something else is fraud. The Lord Jesus calls that person a thief, friends....

7 Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

8 For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

~ This is a remarkable statement that I think many people read over too hurriedly. Mary entered into the death of Jesus with Him before He died. People talk about the apostolic succession, but I don't consider myself a part of that. These apostles missed this entire point. This woman didn't miss anything, and she sensed ahead of time what Jesus had been saying about dying on the cross for the sins of the world was, indeed, true. The fragrant odor of that perfume filled the house and wafted outside, and it filled the entire world as Jesus said, "where the Gospel is preached this incident will also be told." This is where light and darkness come together....

9 Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

10 But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death;

11 Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

~ I think what we have here is a belief based on curiosity. These people believed on Jesus, but Jesus didn't believe on them, and we have seen that dynamic before. These curiosity seekers weren't interested in Jesus – they just want to see the Lazarus freak show. Sure, they would have passively applauded the hero of the hour, but they aren't prepared to accept Him as the Messiah and trust Him as Christ - even though they came to see a dead man raised. There was simply no way the Pharisee's were going to follow Him and revert to His teachings. All they care about is minimizing or completely explaining away the miracles.

As we have learned, Jesus public ministry is concluded at this time. What happens next is a public offering of Himself as their King. Of course, they are totally rejecting Him; and He is no longer amongst them teaching and healing. The teaching, feeding and healing have ceased. This account is an act of the Father that Jesus performed; this is not part of His ministry. This is not any sort of triumphal entry, either - as we have stressed before....

12 On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

13 Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

14 And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written,

15 Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.

16 These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

17 The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.

18 For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.

19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him.

~ If Christ were ruling and reigning on earth today, you and I could never be saved. That isn't a triumph. An artist once gave a startling rendition when he painted the crucifixion as three empty crosses where three people had recently been crucified, and the bodies had been taken down and removed. In the background there is a little donkey eating a palm frond. That simple picture is probably the only religious picture in this entire world that is appropriate. The so-called Triumphal Entry has all these tokens associated with it, but the only important thing to see is the cross. This crowd is yelling, "... Hosanna" but, the next day, they yell, "... crucify Him!" Then, they're gone - and they are no longer following the Lord Jesus Christ. They leave HIM on the cross or – if they stayed to watch Him die – they see Him go to the tomb that day. This is not a public appearance; it is a public offering of Himself as the King - and the record is that He was rejected at this time....

20 And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast:

21 The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.

23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

~ Our Spiritual Safari moves into the shadow of the cross as we go forward from here. Jesus is conscious of the hour of crisis towards which He has been moving all along. His plan for which He has come out of eternity to execute is nearing the time it is to be carried out. Unto us a child is born, and a Son is given. In Canaan, at the wedding, Jesus said His hour had not yet come. Now, His hour has come.

These Greeks want to see Jesus because He has raised a man from the dead - and that has their attention. Well, Jesus directs the attention of the Greeks to the cross. The conception Jesus held of the cross was quite different from that held by the Roman populace. The cross was a place of shame, disgrace and infamy; a gibbet where criminals died. This is where Jesus became obedient to the Father in redeeming us from the curse of the law. He was made a curse for us – cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree. The glory of God is seen in the empty symbol of the cross. Jesus is to be glorified. That happened when He died for you and me and came forth from the tomb. Mercy, pardon and forgiveness are all found only here at the cross, and this principle the Lord Jesus is putting down is of all importance.

When you look at a seed you don't see the whole plant. The seed has to go in the ground to be of any function beside bird feed. The seed, essentially dies; and then comes the tap root, stalk, xylem, phloem, node, blade, ear and, eventually, it is ready for harvest. Many people think they have seen Jesus because they have studied the Bible. Most of what people write about God is written by people that have never seen Jesus and they do not believe God – at all. They think they do, and they say they do – but they don't. Well, until you comprehend and accept the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His redemptive death whereby He

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gave of Himself that you and I might have life everlasting, then you just haven't seen the God of the Bible, friends. Christ died for the sins of the world on the cross. If that isn't the Jesus you worship, then your Jesus is perfectly meaningless, doesn't exist - and never did ~

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