

John Ch 12:4-8

“Contemplating the Counterfeit”

We enter back into the scene of this supper that’s been prepared for the Lord in this home of Simon the leper in this little town of Bethany just about 2 miles outside the city of Jerusalem. Approximately 5 days before the cross we find Jesus just spending some time with His friends, He’s sought out those who are truly committed *to Him*, that He might spend His time *with them*. and You recall from last week the 2 categories of people found in these 1st 8 vs that are bracketed between the *curious* there at the end of Ch 11, and the *critical/contentious* in vs 10-11 of Ch 12. We have both the *committed* and the *counterfeit*, and so far we’ve taken the time to observe in some detail the characteristics of the committed as found in Martha, Lazarus, and Mary.

We took the time to isolate those qualities because they serve to give us a profound yet practical picture of a spiritually healthy individual, and a healthy church body. and As you know we observed the characteristics of *working*, *witnessing*, and *worshiping* as represented in Martha, Lazarus, and Mary. and So far so good as the events of this supper unfolds before us, the Lord is preparing to face the most difficult challenge of His earthly life. He’s preparing to be separated from the Father for the 1st time in all of eternity as He takes upon Himself the sin of the world, becoming sin *for us* that we might become the righteousness of God *in Him*.

Surely throughout this supper His heart has been encouraged, there’s so much controversy concerning Him at this point, some are for Him, many are against Him, but yet in this little house He’s reassured of the fact that there are those who are truly committed *to Him*, and desperately in love *with Him*. and As He prepared Himself to confront the cross, He was no doubt comforted in the company of these His friends, and we left off last time as Martha was just there working as *unto Him*, Lazarus was fellowshiping *with Him*, being that witness of the new life that Christ offers, and Mary was worshiping *before Him*, and the fragrance of her worship filled that whole house, and it still fills hearts and lives today.

But there’s one in every crowd isn’t there? and This is where we left off last time, with Mary there just “pouring” herself out there before the Lord, laying her glory down at His feet as she let her hair down and wiped the fragrant oil from His feet, just a beautiful scene happening here. They’re not at all concerned with what they can get *from* the Lord, they’re just wanting to give *to* the Lord, He’s already done so much, and now they just want to present themselves before the Lord as living sacrifices at His disposal, it’s their reasonable service right? Just like with you, and just like with me, the Lord has done so much for you, and for me, just in giving us new life, and so there’s something that just wells up with in us so as to say, “Lord it’s not about what I can get *from* You, but now rather what can I do *for* You, how can I be of service *to* You?”

Vs4-8

So the segue is made from the committed to the counterfeit. Judas, Simon's son, who would betray Him, and what's the 1st word recorded in all the scriptures that Judas uttered? "Why?" Kind of a fitting depiction of his life isn't it?

Vs5

Now there's irony dripping everywhere off this statement. In Matt and Mark's gospel we read where before giving his rationale, he said, "*Why this waste?*" Matt 26:8 How interesting that Judas, the son of perdition (according to Jesus' prayer in John 17:12) which means, "The son of *waste*" would be here haggling over a waste. and Furthermore this one who's here belittling this act of worship due to it's worth (which is ironic in itself, "Why worship through the means of worth?" Is there any other kind of worship? Can you truly worship by that which is worthless? I think not. How can something worthless be worship?)

But how ironic that the one who would belittle Mary's worship because of how valuable it was, would later that same evening, haggle the betrayal of the Lord for 30 pieces of silver. Which was more valuable, a bottle of perfume that was worth a years wage, or the person of Jesus Christ? and Yet Judas would sell Him out for the price of a gored ox (Ex 21:32).

But in this we're beginning to glean from the mindset of the counterfeit, they don't understand the "whys" of true worship. They feel it's a waste to give of your precious resources, or your time, efforts and energies to the Lord unreservedly, why waste your resources being so "spiritual" why not do something more practical? "Why go to church Sunday after Wednesday after Sunday, you know all the things you need to get done around the house. Or if it's benevolence that you're looking to be apart of, you could go down to the local soup kitchens for a couple hours on Sunday morning, or ring the salvation armies Christmas bell at the mall on Wednesday evenings, why waste your time going to church?" and There's always misunderstanding in the mindset of the counterfeit, the bible says, "*...the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*" 1 Cor 2:14 I have a buddy who was told by someone at work one time that he could immediately add 10% to his annual household income simply by ceasing to tithe. The guy didn't get it, "Why this waste?" Look at the question again there in vs 5. (Read)

Boy that sounds so spiritual doesn't it? "Hey if she was just looking to get rid of this, it could've been put to good use." As though there's a better substitute for the Lord Himself. But, "Why wasn't this sold and the money given to the poor." Now as I mentioned last time 300 denarii was about a years wage, and how Mary acquired this stuff is speculative, but the bottom line is that it was worth a lot of money, and Judas considered it a waste to be poured out on Jesus. Be careful to guard yourself from the mentality of feeling like it's a waste to give of your resources to Jesus. and I'm not going to turn this into a teaching on giving, but suffice it to say there's no point in which our giving to the Lord becomes a waste, like you can give *this* much, or perhaps even *that* much, but once you reach a certain point it becomes *too* much.

Jesus is worthy of our everything, it's impossible that we should give too much to the Lord, He's given us His all, now is He worthy of any less from us? I don't think so, and Judas makes this comment, but it's cloaked, and his mask is about to be torn off. He makes this comment like he's a *caring* man, *considering* the *cause* of the poor. But as we'll see it wasn't as though Judas was caring at all, he was *condescending*, he was *critical*, he was *conniving*, and we'll see as his cloak comes off, the bottom line is that he was *covetous*. and I want you to see this before we move on, he cloaked himself with concern, but it was just a covering for his covetousness.

Perhaps no sooner than this criticism came out of his mouth, Mary thought, "Did I make a mistake here? Maybe this was a bit over the top, and I should've been a bit more practical." But the Holy Spirit gives us the insight in the next vs here that his motives were all messed up, what's my point? Judas was one of the 12 in *number* but not in *nature*? He was a counterfeit in the midst of the committed, or as the bible would put it, he's a tare in the midst of the wheat, and none of them (outside of the Lord) knew it. For nearly 3 yrs now he's been growing right along side the wheat, and none of them discerned that he was a tare, so what's the point? You can't always discern the counterfeit simply by outward appearances, or even by the conversations they hold, or even the actions they perform, there are those who are absolutely incredible at cloaking themselves. So then how do we know who's who? Jesus said it like this, *"You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them."* Matt 7:16-20

Here's the deal, fruit doesn't pop out on a tree overnight, you have to plant it, water it, cultivate the ground around it, and over a course of time, the type of fruit that it will bear becomes evident. Now the Lord has known the deal with Judas from the beginning, but the fruit of his life is just now beginning to bud forth, he's cloaking his covetousness with concern. The bible talks about how Satan comes to people as an angel of light, he cloaks his true colors, disguises his disdain with something attractive, or appealing. and That's what Judas is doing here, yet secretly he's in contempt of her compassion, his religious façade is covering secret sin in his life. and Though he's 1 of the 12, an apostle by definition, he discouraged such dedicated devotion by Mary, beware of people who discourage your dedication, and your devotion to the Lord.

One more quick application and we're on to vs 6. Judas supposes to have thought some other act would've been a better thing to do, than that which Mary opted to do, and so he considered her actions wrong, but the Lord's going to defend her. So let's not slip into the mentality that just because someone goes about something, or does something as unto the Lord in a manner that differs from what we'd have done if placed in the same position, that they're automatically in error. As though we set the standard for acceptable service and if it's not done our way, it must've been done the wrong way, big mistake, Judas supposed something better could've been done, but notice how the Holy Spirit un.masks him.

Vs6

Judas is a type of those whom the bible talks about there in Ezek 33:31 "*So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain.*" Vs 6 tells us what? That Judas had his own agenda in this whole thing, and of course in the light of Mary's commitment to the Lord, Judas' counterfeit nature looks all the darker, this is a harsh contrast here. and As to where Mary is seen as one who was giving to the Lord, Judas was all about the taking from the Lord, he would commonly steal from the resources that people would entrust to the ministry of the Lord. We're not talking about every now and then he would slip or stumble, or give in to temptation, this was an established pattern for Judas. He was a thief, he sought to gratify his covetousness by stealing from the money box. and There's so many things we could talk about at this point, whether it be over the danger of the love of money, or how these patterns of sin in our lives should cease when we give our hearts to Christ. Or even how we need to be careful regarding the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desire for other things that enter into our hearts and choke the word so it becomes unfruitful in our lives, Judas is such a practical example of all of those things.

The bible says, "*Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*" 1 Tim 6:6-10 Judas, pierced through with many sorrows, so greedy, pilfering the money box, selling the Lord for even 30 pieces of silver, godliness with contentment, that's where the gain in truly at. When Paul was writing to the Corinthians he said, "*Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.*" 1 Cor 6:9-10 In other words, "Listen brothers and sisters, there may've been some things that you were about in the world, but in Christ those patterns need to be broken, the fruits of repentance are displayed in a changed life, and "lifestyle."

John makes the case that once you're in Christ, you *can't* sin like you used to, listen to this, "*He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.*" 1 John 3:8-9 Now we read that and we go "Wow!" Is John saying that if you're in Christ you lead a life of sinless, practical perfection? No, because just before all that he says, "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*" 1 John 1:8 and The point he's trying to make is this; there is a sin nature in all of us, and the propensity, or the potential to sin pressing in on us at any given moment, but as to where when we were in the world and we were just slaves to the flesh, sinning at it's given will. But in Christ, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our lives, that practice and that pattern of sin will be radically broken.

It's not that you'll never make a mistake, or some how stumble in isolated cases, but if you're persistently pilfering in and from the money box, then we have problem, if there's a pattern of sin in your life, then there's cause for concern. Because what used to be so easy for you to do in the world, once you're in Christ, becomes a radical violation of your heart and mind because of the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life giving you conviction where as before there was none. But Judas was one who consistently, unreservedly, and with out conviction would steal from the money box, he was consumed with the cares of this world. and Not to press the point beyond the need, but that's why Jesus issued the warning regarding the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things, and how they enter into your heart and choke out the word of God so that it becomes unfruitful in your heart and in your life.

Judas sat under the same teaching as the rest of these guys for the same 3 year period, but because he cared for the things of this world, because he gave way to the deceitfulness of riches, and the desire for other things, the Word of God was choked out and unfruitful in his heart and in his life. He was calloused to the things of God, did you catch that phrase there in the beginning of vs 6, "Not that he cared," Judas didn't care for the poor, he was calloused to their cause, or anyone else's for that matter, he was serving his own agenda. He was a counterfeit in so many aspects of the word.

Vs 7-8

Now we have kind of a deductive sort of observation here just right off the bat and that is that Jesus would've never censored a true concern, but rather He would've catered to it, or perhaps reasoned the concern through. But here He basically just cut's Judas off and puts a stop to his criticism. (and Of course according to the other gospel records it seems as though the Lord's rebuke was what served as the catalyst to go ahead and follow through on his betrayal because following this event Judas went out and bargained his betrayal.) Jesus just shut him down, and didn't leave the discussion open for debate, why? Because he knew Judas' heart, that's the observation we deduct here, which is another nuance in the text here of his deity, because the bible is clear that only God knows what's in the heart of man.

Jesus knew what was in Judas' heart, but He also knew what was in Mary's heart, and so He immediately comes to her defense. and I love this practical picture, of the Lord being her defense, she's just really exposed right now so to speak, she cast herself out there and made herself vulnerable before the Lord, and Judas swooped down on her like a vulture, and the Lord becomes a shield for her, protects her from the covetous and criticizing comments of Judas Iscariot. The Psalms tell us, "*You, O LORD, are a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head.*" Ps 3:3 and Again, "*For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; With favor You will surround him as with a shield.*" Ps 5:12 and Here the Lord has surrounded Mary as with a shield.

He's her defense in this her time of need, just like He is for you, and just like He is for me. He knew the intent of Judas' heart, but He also knew the motives of Mary's heart. He knew her heart, but here's the radical part, Mary knew His heart as well, they had what we might call a mutual understanding regarding one another's hearts. "What do you mean?" Notice what Jesus says there in vs 7, "She has kept this for the day of My burial." Now this is significant, why? Because as you track through the gospel records you realize that over and over again Jesus would tell His disciples that He was going to die, and on the 3rd day He'd rise again, and I'm not sure where the communication breakdown was, but the bible is clear, they didn't get it. They didn't understand that the Messiah would have to suffer, and be raised again the 3rd day, and though it was foreshadowed in the OT, they couldn't see its fulfillment until after it took place.

But listen, Mary's seeing it in advance, she (and according to the record we have) she alone, got it, she understood what was about to happen, that the Lord was going to be pinned to a cross in just a few days. and I suggest to you that not only did Mary understand that Jesus was going to die in just a few days, but that she had gleaned insight to the resurrection as well. You see when Jesus was on the cross, you don't see Mary of Bethany mentioned as being there along with the other Marys. When the other ladies went to the tomb that resurrection morning to anoint Him, and place spices on His body, Mary of Bethany wasn't one of them. Why not, didn't she care, was there a lack of love on her part? Emphatically not, just the opposite is true, she was deeply in love with Jesus, consistently at His feet in worship, and listen, therein lies the key. How is it that Mary and Mary alone understood the big picture? How is it that she seemed to have the insight that all of the others had to glean in retrospect?

I suggest to you one reason, and one reason only, because she spent so much time just resting at the feet of Jesus, in worship and reverence of Him, just listening to His word, and gleaning from His heart, and consequently she had the insights of His heart that no one else seemed to get, or were able to see.

This is another insight to worship that we were unable to tackle last week. Sure it comes so often from brokenness, yes true worship is costly, and is often misunderstood and criticized, we realize that worship is always beneficial as we take on the same fragrance as our Lord when we spend time at His feet, but we also realize here the *blessing* of worship. Because out of the overflow of our time spent at the *feet* of Jesus, is the insights and understand of the *heart* of Jesus.

Mary got it. Mary's worship of the Lord was such a blessing to her personally, she anointed both the Lord's head (we learn in other gospel accounts) and His feet, He was just blessed from head to toe with her act of worship. Hers was the worship of adoration, of affection, of abundance, it was the worship of selflessness and humility, she worshiped Him unashamed, personally yet publicly, it was sacrificial and spontaneous, Mary was just a worshiper. and I'm telling you now that if you'll become a worshiper of the Lord, if when you rise in the morning, or perhaps draw your day to a close in the evening, if when you come to this place, or whatever it may mean in your life personally. If you'll just be a worshiper of the Lord, spending time at His feet, worshipping Him affectionately, and abundantly with your whole heart, if your worship is that of selflessness and humility, just drawing near *to* the Lord in order that you might be *with* the Lord. Then you're going to be gleaning insights from the heart of the Lord that perhaps other people just aren't going to see or understand, they just won't get it. Does it make you more spiritual?

No, it's just the blessing of being at His feet in worship and adoration of Him. The Lord knows your heart, but He wants you to know His, but it's going to be a result of the overflow of your time spent *with* Him, just in worship and adoration *of* Him. and Finally

Vs8

Now we know that the Lord is all about ministering to the poor, *practically*, but the point here is that they're not a rival substitute for the Lord *personally*. and So though there's always going to be times to reach out practically, we need to safeguard those opportunities of intimacy with the Lord personally. and Whenever you have an opportunity to be intimate with the Lord, spending time in personal worship of the Lord, take advantage of it. Safeguard those times, Judas didn't get that, he wasn't committed to the Lord, he was a counterfeit, consider him well, and allow the Lord to evaluate your own life, and root out those counterfeit characteristics that contrast so sharply with the qualities of the committed. Say along with David, "*Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.*" Ps 139:23-24

Perhaps you're here today and you've *never* surrendered your heart to Jesus Christ and the Lord is searching your heart today, and He wants to lead you in the way everlasting, and that way is through Jesus Christ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have *everlasting* life. Jesus went to the cross and shed His blood for the remission of your sin, and if you'll simply believe on Him, you'll never perish, but have everlasting life, you can be forgiven today, washed white like snow, a new creation in Christ. But it won't happen any other way, we've contemplated the counterfeit today, but we've also seen the truly committed, the choice is yours which category you want to be in. So if Jesus is knocking on the door of your heart, just open it, don't reject Jesus Christ receive Him.