

Matthew ch. 26

Last week we finished Jesus' last major discourse in the book of Matt, which I found to be very pertinent for us in the day and age in which we live. There are just so many riches to be plumbed from the depths of those 2 ch. as Jesus spoke very candidly about the signs of the end of the age and of His coming again to the earth. and Because we don't know the day or the hour (yet we do recognize the seasons) we are to watch and be ready lest we be caught on a day and at an hour that we do not expect. and Jesus spoke in such a way as to strike that sense of urgency in our hearts, that we count the cost and that we be found being faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ, that we are diligent to remain committed to Him and sensitive to the things of the Spirit.

In the parable of the 10 virgins they all were grouped up into 1 bunch, they were all supposedly of the same party. But one critical ingredient made a distinction between the 2 and that distinction was devastating. The only bridesmaids that were recognized and accepted by the bridegroom when He returned were the ones who still had oil in their vessels when he came. The Holy Spirit dwelling in their lives, they hadn't grown weary of well doing, Jesus Christ was still the top priority of their lives. But those who were foolish had let that relationship diminish to the point that they had completely "ran dry" no longer were they concerned about the bridegrooms return, but rather they were distracted by the things of the world. Sure they may've started well, there was oil in their vessels in the beginning, but over time, when the bridegroom didn't return, they began to grow apathetic, and complacent, quit reading their bibles, after all there would always be time later. But they were caught off guard, the bridegroom came when they were least expecting it and as a result they weren't accepted into the wedding party, but instead they were rejected by the bridegroom suffering the ramifications of no longer having a personal relationship with Jesus.

I've said it so many times so forgive me for the redundancy but that's why Jesus never said well *begun* good and faithful servant, but He said *well done*. You see, it's not near as critical how you begin as it is how you end, and since none of us know when that end may be, that's why it's so critical that we strive to maintain that close intimate relationship with Jesus Christ so that we're ready at any given time to see our Lord and give an account to Him. And that's what Jesus spend the remainder of His discourse emphasizing, that all of us have been given certain abilities (though some more than others). But nonetheless He will require of us an account as to what we did with those gifts He entrusted to us. As to whether or not we invested them wisely to the increase and profit of the kingdom, or did absolutely nothing but be a spectator as time went by and consequently wound up with exactly what we started with.

So that only gives all of us 1 of 2 positions in the kingdom, you're either helping, or you're hindering, are you moving forward or faltering, being a benefit or detriment, helping, or hindering, fumbling or faithful. Because when Jesus Christ returns as He speaks of in vs 31-46 He will require an account of our lives as He separates the nations and judgment begins. In Dan 12:11-12 it tells us, "*And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. (Or 3 ½ yrs till the end.) Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.*" During that 45 day period of time is when I believe this judgment period of time takes place, and those who make it till the end will enter that millennial kingdom, but those who don't, as it says in vs 46 of ch 24 they will go away into everlasting punishment.

Vs1-2

Now bear in mind that the Passover was a huge event in the city of Jerusalem, Josephus (the historian) tells us that approximately 250,000 lambs would be slaughtered in the temple in preparation for the Passover. and If there was just one Lamb slaughtered for every 10 people, (which they could do by law) then that tells us that there would be approximately 2.5 million people in Jerusalem at this time. And Jesus has prophesied His crucifixion (according to the record) no less than 5times so far, this being the 6th, however this time He specifically tells them that it's going to take place during Passover.

Vs3-5

They feared the people because they considered Jesus a prophet, but notice the sharp contrast between what's happening here and how Matt is ensuring us of the fact that Jesus is orchestrating this whole thing. Regardless of what His enemies say because He is on a divine timetable, in vs 2 Jesus says that the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified when? During Passover, in contrast the religious leaders wanted to kill Him that much is for sure, but they said "not during the feast" or not during the Passover lest there be an uproar among the people. Jesus said He would die during Passover, they said no He wouldn't, when did Jesus die, during Passover. You see, it's Jesus, not His enemies who set the time for His execution, He's the One who's in command and in control, even when He seems the most weak and vulnerable, He's still in charge and in control of the situation. Peter speaks of Christ as the "*lamb without blemish and without spot.*" Who, "*indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world.*"

This wasn't some tragedy that happened as a result of men's evil planning, this was God's plan to redeem mankind from before the foundations of the world. and Even the day that it was to take place was divinely instituted and Jesus knew that, and in order for Him to fulfill all the O.T types and become the Passover Lamb of God, shedding His blood so that all who would abide under that cleansing flow would be spared the wrath of God. It was necessary for Him to die and shed His blood as God's perfect sacrifice on that very day and then what happened at the time of the Exodus just becomes a shadow, a prophecy in type of what was to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ

Now Matt ch 26 seems to for the most part kind of be various pictures of contrast as to what's taking place over these last days of the life of Jesus, it isn't all exactly chronological, but we'll see some plotting against Jesus and some hateful actions being taken toward Him. and Then in sharp contrast, Matt will flash to a scene where just the opposite is taking place by those who love and adore Jesus. If it were a movie you would see kind of dual story line developing simultaneously.

Vs6

Who obviously wasn't a leper any more or else he would've been quarantined or isolated from society, so this was a man who no doubt Jesus had healed. and Now Jesus and His disciples along with (as you combine the other accounts) Mary, Martha, Lazarus, and Simon were all enjoying fellowship and dinner together, so there were at least 17 people present in this house.

Vs7

But we know according to John's Gospel that she wound up at His feet wiping His feet with her hair with this costly oil. and We know also according to John's gospel that this was Mary the sister of Martha. And I find something very interesting about Mary that's worth mentioning and worth taking note of. In the scriptures this Mary is only mentioned 3 times and every time we see mention of her it's at the feet of Jesus and we see in those 3 accounts, 3 very valuable lessons for you and me. #1 She found at His feet her blessing, #2 it was to His feet that she brought her burdens, and #3 it was at His feet that she gave her best.

The 1st one is found in Luke's gospel ch 10 vs 38-42 and it's there that we read of that familiar scene where by Martha is busy about the business of preparing the meal, no doubt overwhelmed trying to cook for some 13-14 guys besides herself and her sister. and It tells there, of Martha's sister Mary who also "*sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word*" and it tells us that Martha was distracted by much serving.

In other words she wasn't listening to the words of Jesus, she wasn't soaking up His direction for her life, she was too busy, she was running around like a chicken with her head cut off. and Even though what she was doing was valid in that she was serving Jesus and serving others, we find that there has to be that balance of giving and receiving, because how can we give what we haven't received.

So there's this balance that we need to strike so that the serving that I do isn't just for the sake of serving, trying to stay busy for the kingdom in and through the efforts of my flesh. Neither should the serving that we do, or the investing of our gifts that the Master has entrusted to us, our feeding of the poor or visiting of the sick or clothing the naked. Or even serving in our home fellowship, be the result of some overwhelming sense of guilt stirred on by the fear of being cast into hell if we don't. But rather my service to God should be the result of an overflow of my time spent at the feet of Jesus, receiving from Him direction. Receiving from Him that burden for the lost or for the kids in the children's ministry, that burden to serve and be beneficial to the kingdom in any way that I can that He sees fit to use my life. Don't just jump in there and go for the sake of going.

Read 2nd Samuel ch 18 sometime and read how there were 2 runners, one had beneficial information for David the king, the other didn't have any news at all, but he wanted to run so bad, that Joab finally said fine go. and He ran real fast, and he even out ran the other runner and got to the king 1st but when they opened the gates to let him in, he didn't have anything to say, all the energy that he expended in service was pointless, he didn't have the message. Don't be so anxious to jump in there and go that you don't even take the time to receive the message, serve out of the overflow of your time spent at the feet of Jesus. Now I'm not giving you an excuse to do nothing either, I've known people who have known the Lord for years and when they're placed in check about what they're doing for the kingdom, you get the classic disclaimer, "oh, I'm just sort of resting at the feet of Jesus right now growing and being rooted in Him." But in reality it's more like they're petrifying at the feet of Jesus because they've sat there for so long, that now it's impossible to get them to move. and So there's a balance to be struck there, even though I serve the Lord (I would like to believe on a regular basis). I still take the time to sit at the feet of Jesus and receive from Him for my own personal life, the life of this body and all of those things so it's possible to strike the balance.

But Mary was at the feet of Jesus and Jesus blessed her for that, Martha was all, *"Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."* And Jesus answered and said to her, *"Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good, (or beneficial) part, which will not be taken away from her."* What part was the needed and good part, sitting at the feet of Jesus.

2^{ndly} She brought her burdens to the feet of Jesus, Lazarus was sick, he seemed to be delaying His coming to heal him and his condition grew worse and worse until ultimately Lazarus died. and The Lord still 4 days from making it to them when He finally arrived found them all obviously grieving and heartbroken. and When Martha heard that Jesus was in town she ran out to meet Him and said Lord if you had only been here our brother wouldn't have died. and Jesus told her that he would rise again, and Martha said well, I know that in the resurrection he will rise in the last day. and Jesus said to her that famous passage, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"*

Your position is every bit as critical today on that same issue as it was for Martha then, do you believe it? Martha said, *"Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."* and Jesus told Martha to go and get Mary, now there wasn't a lot of people around Jesus just yet and Martha told Mary secretly that Jesus was calling for her. and When Mary heard that it says that she rose up quickly and followed Martha, and we read that, *"Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."* She brought her burdens to the feet of Jesus,

1 Peter 5:6-7 says, *"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you."* Ps 55:22 *"Cast your burden on the LORD, And He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved."* Ps 56:3-4 *Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?* Phil 4:6 *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;"* Heb 13:5-6 *"Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"*

The emphasis of everyone of those scriptures being cast your cares and your burdens upon the Lord trusting that He is in control and that He will be your comfort in your time of mourning, that He will bear you up underneath your burden as you give it to Him. Mary was bringing her burden to the feet of Jesus, how true the words that old hymn are, *"oh what peace we often forfeit, oh what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer."* Take your burdens to the feet of Jesus.

Then finally Mary gave her best at the feet of Jesus, the oil that she brought to anoint Jesus with could've been sold for more than 300 denarii Marks gospel tells us, which was about a years worth of wages. This was no doubt the most prized and valued possession that Mary had, she gave her very best in worship at the feet of Jesus. and We'll speak more about that in just a second.

Vs8-9

Now again Matt gives us no specific names here and it could be that they all were sort of persuaded in this mind set with Jesus having just taught on the importance of meeting the needs of others. But John tells us specifically who was the instigator to say the least. And we find in his gospel that it was none other than Judas Iscariot who instigated this resentment, and there are those who seek to make Judas sort of a hero here. and They try to make him out to seem as though he's a very benevolent man with this great concern for the poor. and Yet here's this extravagant waste poured out upon Jesus when the money could've been given to the poor. and So Judas seems to be this hero, and Jesus seems to be a rather careless person who is disregarding the needs of others, but these people in their seeking to somehow devalue the character and person of Jesus, really only display their own ignorance of the scriptures because had they just kept reading, the bible exposes the motives of Judas. and They were about as far from benevolence as one could get, it tells us in John 12:6, *"This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it."*

Judas was the treasurer of the group and so Judas wasn't concerned with the poor, he was simply trying to sound spiritual so that his true motives could be camouflaged. The bottom line is that Judas had been thieving out of their resources and he saw that that fragrant oil could have been sold for what would in our standards today be several thousands of dollars and thought man if that amount of money was put into the money box, I could make a small fortune and no one would ever miss it. He was a deceiver plain and simple and his motive was to steal the moneybox. Judas fell prey to the deceitfulness of worldly gain and desired to become rich and he didn't care what it cost him or anyone else around him.

Just as Paul the apostle said, *"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. (Jesus called Judas the son of 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."* and Surely Judas was pierced through with many sorrows and fell into both temptation and the snare that would cost him ultimately his soul as he strayed from the faith in pursuit of worldly gain and riches.

So he called this act of pouring out this fragrant oil, this act of worship, a waste, surely something better could've been done with a years salary than pouring it out on the head and feet of Jesus. What a waste, Judas said. and Such is true about anyone who doesn't Love or understand God's ways, they always see worship as a waste, but Mary has shown us a few valuable lessons in this seemingly simple act of worship.

#1 as she broke open the flask, we can learn that profound truth that true worship so often comes through brokenness. When we're at the end of ourselves, and things seem hopeless, and we are caused to humble ourselves before the Lord realizing who we're not and who He is and so we cry out to Him and worship Him and we're taken to the feet of Jesus. Ps 34:18 *"The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit."* Ps 51:17 *"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart--These, O God, You will not despise."* Isa 66:1-2 *"Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest? For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist, "Says the LORD." But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word."* Worship so often comes through brokenness.

#2 We learn that true worship is so often costly, it cost Mary an entire year's wages, by today's market the equivalency of several thousand dollars for this one moment with Jesus. David understood this concept, and so when he sought to buy the threshing floor from Ornan for sacrifice and Ornan wanted to honor the king by giving it to him and yet David refused to take it at no price. He said I will not offer to the Lord (or worship the Lord) with that which costs me nothing. Because if it costs you nothing it means nothing to you, if it's of no value to you, then it's meaningless.

What does it cost you to worship God today in America? Your image maybe, I'm not going to sing out, people might hear me and think I'm a geek or something, I'm too cool for that. What if Jesus thought that He was too cool to hang on a cross in public despise and humiliation for you? After all He had he had a reputation and an image to uphold, Phil tells us this. *"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."*

If you're worried about your image, you're full of pride and need to humble yourself before God and repent. "If I lift my hands people will think I'm weird, so what if it's a sign of submission and adoration and being open to receive from God, I'm not that open." If all that worship costs you is a little pride, then consider yourself fortunate, because true worship so often comes at a price, it will cost you something, be it time, be it money, be it effort, energy, pride, your image or whatever, it will cost you.

Finally through this incident we see that worship is often misunderstood, there's always going to be those Judas type people that kind of sit in the corner and scowl and say, "quit trying to be so super spiritual or so holy, why don't you do something practical?" But let me just tell you that true worship, though you may be broken, and even though it comes at a cost, is always beneficial. As Mary wiped the feet of Jesus with her hair what happened? The fragrance of Jesus was upon her, that's what worship does, as you worship the Lord in Spirit and in truth you begin to take on the fragrance of Jesus. and John tells us that when she anointed His feet and wiped it with her hair that the whole house was filled with the aroma of the ointment. Let me ask you something does your house stink? Is there tension in the air, maybe your marriage is on the rocks or your worried that your kids are falling apart. Then the aroma that's filling your house is that of tension, worry, stress and anxiety. Learn from Mary, take your burdens to the feet of Jesus, grab your family and spend a few minutes at the feet of Jesus in prayer or in worship and you'll be amazed at how that changes the "aroma" of your house. Now when Jesus was aware of the attitude that was taken concerning the act of Mary He said in Vs 10

Vs10-12

So even though Jesus had told them a minimum of 6 times that He was going to die, Mary alone seemed to be the only one that was spiritually sensitive in her understanding. How is that, I suggest to you that it was because she spent so much time at the feet of Jesus, revelation and adoration are intricately linked together. As you spend time at the feet of Jesus in worship you begin to see and understand things that others just don't seem to get. and So if you're saying man I have so many questions, there are just so many things I don't seem to get, then I would ask you how much time are you spending at the feet of Jesus.

In their day the bodies would be anointed after death to reduce the stench of putrefaction and decay. But David had prophesied specifically that He would not see corruption, which begins to take place on the 4th day. and So on the 3rd day when the ladies went to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus, what did they find, nothing. Jesus was risen, and so Mary alone anointed the body of Jesus and she did it prior to His death, because there would be no need after His death because He would rise again before His body began to decay.

Vs13

We stand and sit here this morning in fulfillment some 2,000 yrs later of these words of Jesus, and probably hundreds, if not thousands of times each Sunday or Wednesday somewhere on the globe someone is sharing from this text in fulfillment of this prophecy of Jesus. and So this morning we've taken the time to look at this that we might learn a few lessons from a godly lady about the importance and significance of taking the time to sit at the feet of Jesus.