

## **Lighthouse Bible Church**

**January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

**John 12: 1 – 11**      *Scripture reading: Matthew 26: 6 - 13*

**‘Where do you stand with Jesus today?’**

### **Stand – Read – Pray**

We are finally returning to the book of John and before we look at this passage in Chapter 12 lets be reminded of what was happening to bring us to where we are today.

You remember that Jesus was sent a message from Mary and Martha that Lazarus was sick and close to death. When Jesus heard that, He stayed 2 more days in the place where He was. Then, after that, Jesus told His disciples that they were going to Bethany because Lazarus had died and He was going to raise Him from the dead.

Well, they arrive in Bethany near Jerusalem and the people, including Mary and Martha, are mourning the death of Lazarus. They had already put him into the tomb and were going through the several day long time of mourning. Many people, including the Pharisees, came to mourn with them.

Jesus tells Martha and the others who were there that He is the resurrection and the life and He who believes in Him though He may die, yet shall he live and whoever lives and believes in Him shall never die. And then they go to the cave where Lazarus was buried.

Jesus stands outside the cave and calls Lazarus, who had been dead 4 days, to come forth from the grave and he does. And as a result of that many of the Jews believed in Him and some of the Pharisees, who had seen the miracle, hated Him all the more.

So they gather together all the religious leaders, the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees, all known as the Sanhedrin, and plot to kill Jesus. They put out an order to all the people that if anyone sees Jesus they are to report it to them so they could seize Him. So He goes to the city of Ephraim and no longer walks openly among the Jews until we get to Chapter 12.

It is close to the Passover and there are many hundreds of thousands of people heading toward Jerusalem to purify themselves and preparing to celebrate the Passover and that is where we will pick it up this morning starting in Chapter 12 and Verse 1.

**Verse 1: then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany where Lazarus was, who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead.**

So 6 days before Passover is to begin Jesus leaves the city of Ephraim near the wilderness and comes back to the city of Bethany. This is the same place He came to raise Lazarus from the dead earlier and Lazarus is there amongst other people.

**Verse 2: There they made Him a supper and Martha served but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him.**

This supper, **Matthew 26: 6** *parallel passage* says was **at the house of Simon the leper**. Apparently this is someone He had healed earlier who opened his home to Jesus and His friends, Lazarus, Mary, Martha and the disciples, at least. Martha was doing what she always does, she was **servi**ng and Lazarus was a guest at the table. And this time Jesus didn't rebuke Martha for serving like He did in **Luke 10: 38 – 41**, because He knew this time she was motivated to serve out of love and gratitude and that she genuinely wanted to honor Him the best way she knew how and that was by serving.

While they are at Simon's house, **Mark 14: 1** *parallel passage* says that the **Chief Priests and Scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery and put Him to death.** Can you imagine the conversation around the table with Lazarus there and Jesus, the One who raised him from the dead, there.

**Verse 3:** then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair and the whole house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

A very similar thing happened to Jesus back in **Luke 7: 36 – 50** except there it was a prostitute who stood at Jesus' feet and it says **she began to wash His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil.**

So at some point while everyone is reclining around the table, that was the way they typically ate and the phrase *was one of those who sat at* is one word in the Greek and it means to recline, Mary comes over to Jesus and does an incredible thing. She takes about 12 ounces of **a very costly oil** and pours it on the feet of Jesus and then **wiped His feet with her hair.**

This **oil of spikenard** was **very costly** oil and it is the same kind of oil mentioned 3 different times in the Song of Solomon. What made it so costly is that it was an oil from a fibrous root of a plant found in India. The oil would be extracted from the root and then sealed into alabaster jars and then transported to wherever.

As a matter of fact Verse 5 says that the **fragrant oil** could have been **sold for 300 denarii.** According to **Matthew 20: 2** one denarius was a day's wages, so this oil was about a year's wages being poured onto the feet of Jesus. Mary used it to **anoint** the feet of Jesus.

It was common to wash the feet of those reclining at the table, it was not so common to use such a costly fragrant oil and that much to do it. And then Mary did something else surprising, she let down her hair, which a Jewish woman was not to do in public in the presence of a man because it was a **shame** and **disgrace** for her to do so, and then she used her own hair to wipe His feet.

The parallel passages in **Matthew 26: 7** and **Mark 14: 3** say that Mary not only poured the fragrant oil on Jesus' feet but on His head as well. And the end of Verse 3 says **and the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil**. Can you imagine that? Mary did this out of love and devotion for Jesus in an act of sacrifice and selfless worship with no thought of herself or of the cost of that worship. That is true love, devotion and worship for Jesus.

Jesus says about this act of love and devotion and worship in **Verse 5** that **she has kept this for the day of My burial**. In **Matthew 26: 12 – 13** Jesus said **for in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her**. In **Mark 14: 6** Jesus said **she has done a good work for Me...she has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial...**

But Mary probably had no idea what she was doing more than just showing her love and devotion and worship of the One who recently raised her brother back from the dead and said He was the resurrection and the life. But in this act, Jesus said 'she is doing this for My burial'. Now look at how the disciples react to this in Verses 4 – 6. Mary's was one of selflessness and Judas' was one of selfishness.

**Verses 4 – 6:** but one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him said, why was this fragrant oil not sold for 300 denarii and given to the poor? 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.

The parallel passages in Matthew and Mark both indicate that several of the disciples were **indignant and criticizing her sharply** as **Mark 14: 5** says. That is why Jesus has to say in **Verse 7** ‘**let her alone**’. But it was probably initiated by **Judas Iscariot** as John records here. Judas is always portrayed as **the one who would betray Him**. *John didn't know that at the time, he is looking back.*

Think about this! This is one of Jesus' 12 closest disciples who has followed Jesus for 3 years and he is labeled at least 10 times as ‘the one who would betray Him.’. He was labeled that way because it was so hard to believe that that could be done. Since this is looking back, they label Judas for who he is, a traitor and betrayer of the Messiah, the Son of God. *They paint him in the worst possible lt.*

But they don't know this yet, but Jesus does and that is why He says in **Matthew 26: 24** **the Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.** John records what Judas says in Verse 5.

**Verses 5 - 6: why was this fragrant oil not sold for 300 denarii and give to the poor?** That sounds pretty noble ... until you read verse 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 didn't care for the poor, he didn't care for the other disciples, he didn't care about Jesus, he cared about himself. Judas is the ultimate hypocrite and deceiver and con man. Why was Judas in charge of the money? Because he was so convincing; he was playing his hypocritical deceptive role to the hilt, and every time money was put into the box, he was taking it out and using it for himself.

And when Mary, from his perspective, wasted a years worth of wages that could have been put into the money box for him to steal, he was indignant with her and convinced the other disciples to be the same way toward her.

And what to him was a waste, Jesus says was a memorial to her. And right after that in the chronology of things according to **Matthew 26: 14 – 16** Judas would then go to the Chief Priests and begin his ultimate deception in betraying Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.

You really see the contrast between the selfless sacrificial love and devotion and honor and worship of Jesus by Mary and then you see the selfish, personal, hypocritical, deceitful, hatred of Jesus by Judas. It is no different today, there are those who feign worship of Jesus while serving themselves and getting out of it what they can. So Jesus says to Judas and the disciples in Verses 7 – 8.

**Verses 7 – 8: but Jesus said ‘let her alone, she has kept his for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always.**

Jesus here is talking not only to Judas but all the disciples because He uses the plural **you** when He says ‘for the poor **you** have with **you** always’. Jesus says you have the poor with you always ‘but you won’t have Me always’. He says ‘Mary had the right priority, guys, you need to have the right priority’. *Explain.*

**Verse 9: now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came; not for Jesus’ sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.**

Well, apparently with the news of Lazarus’ being raised from the dead people began to find out that Jesus was staying in Bethany. So a **great many Jews** found out about it and they went to Bethany to see Him and to see Lazarus, the one raised from the dead.

They were somewhat curiosity seekers; they were interested in Jesus but they were also interested in the miracle He performed, and that living miracle, Lazarus, was sitting at the table. They are not so much different than people today who have a superficial interest in Jesus and a curiosity about what He can do and has done. So they are captivated by the reports of miracles and healings and supernatural events that peek their religious curiosity.

They are the kind like this group here in Chapter 12 that will, in one breath, shout Hosanna and in the next breath shout crucify Him. They are swayed by the tide of the crowd at the time and have no real conviction about what they believe because they are spiritually indifferent to Jesus and guided by sensationalism and self- fulfillment and what they can get out of Him.

But there are some who, having heard the teaching of Jesus directly or indirectly and who heard or saw the miracles He performed, believed in Him as the Messiah, the Son of God. And what made them believe, **Verse 11** says is that they were standing face to face with a living miracle, Lazarus. And as we have said before, it is not about the miracle but the miracle worker.

And between what Mary and Martha and others who had witnessed the miracle of Lazarus being raised from the dead and Jesus who had performed the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead and Lazarus himself standing their telling everyone that he was dead and that Jesus is the resurrection and the life, **because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.**

Again, that should be a cause for rejoicing and celebration, but look what **Verse 10** says **but the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also.** Remember, they had already plotted to kill Jesus in **John 11: 53** and other places, and now they want to kill Lazarus as well.

Why? Because he is living proof that Jesus is the resurrection and the life and has the power of life and death and is the promised Messiah, the Son of God, God in human form.

Listen, part of the chief priests included the Sadducees who didn't believe in a resurrection. So they wanted Lazarus dead. The rest of the chief priest just wanted him dead because if they didn't kill him, he would go around telling everyone that Jesus was the Messiah and the One who raised him from the dead and the chief priests killed him.

There is that hatred, anger, jealousy and envy in the hearts of the religious leaders that would not only kill their Messiah but they would kill Lazarus because He would point the people to Jesus and then, as we saw before, the religious leaders would lose everything because everyone would then follow Jesus.

The motives today for hating Jesus and His followers, the Christians, may be different than in Jesus day but the end result is always much the same; persecution and death, right.

Jesus, when He began His ministry told the people in **Matthew 5: 10 – 12** **blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake, rejoice and be exceedingly glad for great is your reward in heaven for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**

At the end of His ministry He said in **Matthew 23: 31 – 36** *Read*

Many people, many prophets who stood up for God suffered for righteousness sake. Look at **Hebrews 11: 32 – 38**.



Today, all over the world we have Christians being persecuted for righteousness sake and being jailed and killed for the cause of Christ and the kingdom of heaven. But it won't stop there; it will continue and even get worse during the tribulation period just prior to the return of Christ.

**Revelation 6: 9** says **I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. Revelation 13: 7** says the anti Christ and his forces will **make war with the saints and overcome them. Revelation 17: 6** says the false religious leaders under the authority of the anti Christ will **be drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. Revelation 20: 4** says **then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God...**

You cannot remain neutral with Jesus. You are either like Mary and Martha and many others who are dedicated to Jesus no matter what the cost or price, or you are like the fickle crowd who are indifferent to Jesus and just go with the crowd, go with what is politically correct, or you are like Judas and the chief priests who hated Jesus and if they could, would crucify Him again today.

But listen to this, no matter where you stand with Jesus, it will determine your eternal destiny; Heaven or hell, eternal life or everlasting punishment. Where do you stand with Jesus today?

There is only one way to heaven and eternal life and that is through Jesus Christ. Jesus said in **John 14: 6** **I am the way and the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father except through Me. Acts 4: 12** says **neither is their salvation in any other for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.** Gospel here

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Introduction and Review:

Verses 1 – 2:

Matthew 26: 6, Luke 10: 38 – 41  
Mark 14: 1

Verse 3:

Luke 7: 36 – 50, Matthew 20: 2, 26: 7, 12 - 13  
Mark 14: 3, 6

Verses 4 – 6:

Mark 14: 5, Matthew 26: 14 – 16, 24

Verses 7 – 11:

John 11: 53, *John 5: 18, 7: 1, 19*  
Matthew 5: 10 – 12, 23: 31 – 36  
Hebrews 11: 32 – 38, Revelation 6: 9  
Revelation 13: 7, 17: 6, 20: 4

John 14: 6, Acts 4: 12

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Verses 4 – 6:

Mark 14: 5, Matthew 26: 14 – 16, 24

Verses 7 – 11:

John 11: 53, *John 5: 18, 7: 1, 19*  
Matthew 5: 10 – 12, 23: 31 – 36  
Hebrews 11: 32 – 38, Revelation 6: 9  
Revelation 13: 7, 17: 6, 20: 4

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