**EYES ON JESUS - ANOINTING IN BETHANY** R Giglio 10/16/20

**In His final days before the cross, Jesus attends a farewell dinner, given in his honor.**

SETTING: **Bethany**

* Meaning “House of Dates”. (very Near Beth Page which is “house of unripe figs”)
* A small village about 2 miles from Jerusalem that served as a “Suburb” of Jerusalem.
* Located on the Eastern slope of the Mount of Olives on the way to/from Jericho.
* Jesus was very familiar with Bethany and seemed to be a regular visitor at the house of Mary, Martha and Lazarus.
* The Triumphal Entry began here and Jesus Ascended from here according to Luke.

The Dinner:

* Dinner in Jesus’ honor takes place at the home of Simon the Leper
* Takes place *near*, but not *at* the home of Lazarus/Mary&Martha where he was staying.
* The apostles and Lazarus were in attendance Martha served.

**Mark 14:1-9**

**“**Now the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were scheming to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. **2**“But not during the festival,” they said, “or the people may riot.”

**3**While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.

**4**Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? **5**It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly.

**6**“Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. **7**The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. **8**She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. **9**Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

* Jesus was at a table at Simon the Leper’s home in Bethany.
* “a woman” poured expensive perfume on him,
* “some” rebuked her harshly.

Who was *the woman*?, and *who rebuked* her?”

(what is rebuke anyway? : ) buke, buke and rebuke?

Rebuke = Sharp Criticism

In the Gospel of John’s version, he inserts the missing names into the story to tell us who was the “rebukor” and “rebukee”

**John 12:3-8 “3**Then *Mary* took about a pintof pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus’ feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

**4**But one of his disciples, *Judas Iscariot*, who was later to betray him, objected, **5**“Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year’s wages.” **6**He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

**7**“Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. “It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. **8**You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.”

Let’s look at this as a scene in a drama production:

CHARACTERS –

**JESUS** – On His way to Jerusalem, knowing it was His time to die just as He predicted.

Simon the Leper – Presumably healed by Jesus or he would not have hosted a dinner. Not the same as “Simon the Pharisee” in a similar event that takes place in Galilee in Luke 7. (Simon was a very popular name in the NT, as was Mary) *“finger sandwiches”*

Lazarus – Was very famous because he was raised from the dead. He was also on the Pharisees ‘Hit list” along with Jesus.

*John 12:9-10* ***9****When all the people heard of Jesus’ arrival, they flocked to see him and also to see Lazarus, the man Jesus had raised from the dead.****10****Then the leading priests decided to kill Lazarus, too,****11****for it was because of him that many of the people had deserted them and believed in Jesus.*

Martha – Seemed to be the head of the house that she shared with her brother Lazarus and Sister Mary. Luke 10:38 describes it as “Her House”.

Mary – There are at least seven “Mary’s” mentioned in the New Testament. The three “Main Mary’s are: Mary Jesus mother, Mary Magdalene, and Mary of Bethany the sister of Lazarus and Martha. This IS the same Mary that sat at Jesus feet back in Luke 10, but not the same woman who anointed Jesus up in Galilee in Luke 7 (that one *may* have been Mary the Magdelene from nearby Magdela where he cast demons out of her.) THIS is Mary of Bethany.

Judas – The one who betrayed Jesus just a few days later, was also the one with the most vociferous complaint against the “waste” of costly perfume. *John 12:6 says: he was a thief, and since he was in charge of the disciples’ money, he often stole some for himself.*

The Disciples *–* presumably all were present.

**Jesus had “Friends”**

Jesus was enjoying a dinner party that was given in His honor by his closest friends. Jesus was a close *friend of the family* to Mary/Martha/Lazarus. These are most likely a household of adult siblings who were unmarried and whose parents are not in the picture, Martha was likely the oldest and in charge of the house. They probably have some wealth because they have a house large enough to host guests and the alabaster jar of perfume that Mary had is valued at a *year’s wages*.

*(it was the ultimate in Essential Oils)*

Jesus had very personal and candid relationship with this family, their conversations were very *persona*l and *informal*:

**Luke 10:38-42 38**As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. **39**Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord’s feet, listening to what he taught. **40**But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, “Lord, doesn’t it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me.”

**41**But the Lord said to her, “My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! **42**There is only *one thing* worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her.”

Their friendship was *strained* in John 11:

**John 11:1-7** **“**A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha. **2**This is the Mary who later poured the expensive perfume on the Lord’s feet and wiped them with her hair. Her brother, Lazarus, was sick. **3**So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, “Lord, your dear friend is very sick.”

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**5**So although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, **6**he stayed where he was for the next two days.

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**17**When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days.

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**20**When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house. **21**Martha said to Jesus, *“Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died.****22****But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask.”*

**23**Jesus told her, “*Your brother will rise again.”*

**24**“*Yes,”* Martha said, *“he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day.”*

**25**Jesus told her, “*I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying.****26****Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?”*

**27**“*Yes, Lord*,” she told him. “*I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God.”*

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**32**When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, *“Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died.”*

**33**When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled.**34**“Where have you put him?” he asked them.

They told him, “Lord, come and see.” **35***Then Jesus wept*. **36**The people who were standing nearby said, “*See how much he loved him!”*

Jesus went on to raise Lazarus from the dead, but not before showing us the relationship he had with this family. He had a *genuine personal love* and deep personal friendship with each of them.

THE ANOINTING:

The “Nard” or Spikenard was contained in an Alabaster Jar. Alabaster is a translucent stone that is carved into shapes. In this case a fancy container for the precious ointment. The value of this jar of nard is said to have been worth 300 denarii (Roman Coins). About a *year’s wages*.

Judas superficially protested that the oil should have been used for the poor instead of wasted on Jesus. In practical terms, Judas made a lot of sense, but Jesus’ response was very interesting:

Mark 14:6-7 “Leave her alone. Why criticize her for doing such a good thing to me? **7**You will always have the poor among you, and you can help them whenever you want to…”

This is somewhat puzzling, because Jesus could have stopped her and directed that the oil be sold and the money given to the poor, but he didn’t.

It would seem that directing resources to the poor would be at the heart of Jesus purpose and ministry here on earth and any efforts toward that would be commended, *not condemned.*

Why didn’t He?

Mary’s actions were from a true *heart of love for the Lord*. Judas’s suggestion, as disingenuous as it was, is that it is more important to care for the poor.

Jesus said that both are important, and appropriate in the right times. But what Mary was doing took precedent over any act of charity or good deeds that could have been done at that time.

We are commanded to love the Lord *first and foremost*,

This is the first and greatest commandment.

*after that* we are to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Matt 22:37-39 **37**Jesus said to him, “‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ **38**This is the first and greatest of the Laws. **39**The second is like it, ‘You must love your neighbor as you love yourself.’

If we mix up these priorities, we are not putting God first the way we are commanded to worship Him.

Jesus said “The Scriptures say, 'You must worship the LORD your God and serve only him.”

There is a misleading message that is prevalent in modern Christianity called “**The Social Gospel**”, which says that the needs of the poor and disenfranchised in this world are *more important* than our devotion to love, worship, honor God and preach His word.

Both are important. In fact, compassion for others comes *from* loving God.

But not only is “Loving God” *more* important,

but any *good deeds of charity* and *social justice* WITHOUT love,

more specifically Love for God; “Profits Nothing” (1st Cor. 13:3)

It can be deceiving, because they both are right, but Paul says…

*“having a form of godliness but denying its power.” (2nd Timothy 3:5)*

WHY ANOINTING:

*Who Gets Anointed?*

Anointing of this type with this kind of oil was reserved only for; High Priests, Prophets and Kings of Israel. By expending the entire jar of oil of that value on Jesus, Mary was declaring that he was all three in one.

* A High Priest: **14**So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God. (Heb. 4:14)
* Prophet:  **22**Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from among your own people (Acts 3:22)
* King: On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords. (Rev 19:16)

The most Holy and Important use of the word Anointing is**; “Meshiach”** – The Hebrew word for **Messiah** which literally means “*THE ANOINTED ONE*”.

Jesus was and is and always will be “The Messiah, The Anointed One.”

In fact John writes in his gospel is this; “***31****But these are written so that you may continue to believethat Jesus is the Messiah…*(John 20:31)

MARY GAVE ALL SHE HAD:

Mary poured all that she had out in love and devotion before the Lord. She knew he was about to die, Jesus even said that she is *preparing his body for burial.*

In fact the perfumed oil was so strong, it’s very likely that Jesus *smelled like this fragrance* the whole time he was arrested, beaten, crucified and buried.

*What she did:*

* *She gave Jesus her complete devotion.*

Mary demonstrated that she was more interested in honoring Jesus than anything else in her life.

* *She was giving Jesus her reputation*:

She endured ridicule and humiliation because of her humble posture of anointing Jesus’ feet with it, wiping his feet with her hair.

* *She was giving Jesus her future*

Mary took what was most likely her most valuable possession, and poured it out upon Jesus. It’s possible that could have been her dowry that her father might have left for her, in order for her to someday be married.

She could have played it safe, and did what was suggested by just selling her expensive perfume and given the money to the poor to offer them temporary relief from poverty. It would have been commendable and admirable, but she *did more.*

She gave her complete love, devotion, reputation and future to Jesus, and He blessed her for it.

**(V.9) “**Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

She was given a lasting legacy for her devotion to Jesus.

When we give our heart fully to the Lord, he takes it and transforms it. He uses all that we give Him to work mightily in us and through us to all those around us.

*Do you want to leave a lasting legacy?*

Let’s be like Mary, and worship Him with all we’ve got. Let’s give our lives, resources and possessions extravagantly to Him, and be devoted to Him beyond all things.

This is what it means to love and worship the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength…

And from that, He will give us the ability to not only *love our neighbor as ourselves*,

but *love one another as He has loved us*.