

(John - Part 43): Jesus at Supper With Mary, Martha, and Lazarus

by A.W. Tozer

The presence of Jesus is the most important aspect of a church, and it is the key to bringing life, enthusiasm, and zeal to the congregation.

Duration: 47:45

Scripture: Exodus 33:1, Luke 10:38, Acts 1:8

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the importance of Jesus being present in the church. He emphasizes that the efforts of pastors, missionaries, and evangelists are dependent on the faithful service of ordinary church members. The speaker warns against relying on external factors such as money or entertainment to create a meaningful church gathering, stressing that the presence of Jesus is what truly matters. He also challenges the idea that certain roles, such as missionaries, automatically come with a halo of holiness, reminding listeners that true spiritual growth and impact come from a personal relationship with Jesus.

Transcript

Then Jesus, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he had raised from the dead. There they made him a supper, and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. 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 odor of the ointment.

Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag and put therein. Then said Jesus, let her alone. Against the day of my bearing has she done this, or has kept this.

For the poor always you have with you, but me ye have not always. 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. Now let us offer prayer.

O Lord Jesus, we profess to be a company of believers. We profess that we believe in thee. We feel a cool breath over us tonight, Lord.

We feel not the hot breath of the devil, but the cold breath of indifference. And we would pray against it. We would lift up our voices to thee, the Christ of God, and ask thee to breathe on us with thy warm breath.

We pray thou deliver us, O God, from indifference, laziness, carelessness, lack of desire, and all of these little foxes that spoil the vine. O Lord, we pray. We've prayed today that thou wouldst move in on us, as the Shekinah of old moved in on Israel.

And Lord, if you did it, it had to be unknown to us. Up to now we haven't seen, nor felt, nor heard. O Christ, thou art risen from the dead.

Thou hast appeared unto Peter and five hundred brethren at once, and to Paul as one born out of due time. And thou art seated at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens from thy vantage point of power. O Christ, help us tonight.

Help us, Lord, for tomorrow we die. Help us, Lord, and help us as we try to hear the word of God. Speak, Lord, for thy servants listen.

Speak, Lord, through thy word as in ancient days. Open heavens and let the glory shine upon us, and give us, we beseech thee, visions of the King high and lifted up with his train filling the temple. O God, save us from this dull routine.

Save us, we pray thee, from this circular grave where we march around and round and round. O God, do something new. Thou said give camp long enough in this mount.

Get thee up into the land that I will surely. Help us tonight, Lord, even tonight, that some of us here might move forward and get up and move. If we have not large numbers, Lord, those who are here can do it.

Thou didst preach thy greatest sermons to a half dozen or a dozen men. We pray that thou, Lord, will do things that will be significant and apocryphal and be a turning point in somebody's life tonight. By the blood of the everlasting covenant and by the power of the cross where you died, O Lord Jesus, we pray that thou wilt fumigate and drive out and cure and kill all the anti-holy, anti-good, anti-God, devilish germs that infest and infect the hearts of people in this terrible generation.

Help now, Lord, and fulfill the word that ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you. May we hear from thee tonight. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. In the previous chapter, we had seen the resurrection or the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Now in the twelfth chapter, Jesus comes to the home in Bethany where dwelt Lazarus and Mary and Martha, brother and two sisters, and they made him a supper.

The rude translation says that they made a dinner for him, a dinner in his honor. Now Jesus had done a work just a little while before, a wonderful work that was not seen very often, the raising of a man who had been four days dead in a hot climate. And now they were gathering in from the north and the south and the east and the west to sit down with that man, Lazarus, who had been dead.

Jesus, our Lord, had done a work, and that work was still there as a proof that he had done it. It was standing up under scrutiny. It could be examined.

I believe that any work of God can be examined because it is real, it is actual. There is much religion that is the result of overheated fancy. We might as well admit it.

You say, yes, in the church across the street or the church down the block. No, right here. There is much that is simply overheated fancy, and I suppose we'll never be able to escape that as long as we're human beings and the devil is in the world and human flesh is prone to evil.

But the work of God stands because it is real and it is actual. But there is much, I repeat, that is not done by the Lord. People are coaxed into making religious decisions, or they are frightened and stampeded into religious decisions, or they are pressed into it or pushed into it, or they move into it because it's the trend of the time, and such, of course, is not a real thing.

And so it disappears. People go by their feelings that change all the time, and it's not the work of God. But whatever God does, that shall stand.

I know that whatsoever God doeth shall stand forever, said the man of God in the Old Testament. Now, whenever God does anything, it stands. It's written that in the beginning God made the heaven and the earth, and the heaven and the earth, after the passing of countless and uncounted centuries, are right here to tell the story.

The hard earth bulges up for us to walk upon, and the stars shine in the heavens above, and the moon by night and the sun by day tell the old, old story that the hand that made us is divine. It is still here. God did it, and it's still here.

God made the race of mankind, not like a Maxwell automobile or some other machine that was made for a while, and then they stopped it, and now you can't find anything but old relics in some second-hand place. But God made the human race, and the human race is still propagating, and it's still here. Thou didst a work, O God, when thou didst make man, and blow thy breath in him, and man still walking round on the earth of proof that when God doeth anything, it shall be forever.

God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gave him a covenant, and made him to be the father of an innumerable seed. And oh, go where you will all over the face of the earth today, and the stability of God's doings stare you in the face. Go where you will, anywhere in the world, and you'll find a Jew.

God's people, God's ancient people still are there. God wrote a book, a wonderful book, and caused men to speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and that book is here after the passing of the centuries. More now than ever before, even though it has been the subject of the bitterest attacks that ever have been made upon anything or anyone, since man stood up on the earth and our sad history began.

And God made an atonement in the blood of his Son, and raised him from the dead, and still that atonement stands. Blessed be the great atonement. It still stands without diminution, without the passing of one energy, bit of energy from it.

It's still with us, the great atonement. God created his church, his living church, and we're divided, God knows, into many, many sects. And the church has undergone, has gone through many tunnels, and has, as a stream, had many tributaries poured into or down the years.

But the Holy Ghost is the conservator of orthodoxy and the keeper of the seal. And Jesus said that the church that I've found, the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. And go where you will over the face of

the earth, you'll still find people who have not bowed the knee to Baal.

You'll still find those who believe in God and who do follow the Lord Jesus Christ regardless. And the Lord will make a new heaven and a new earth, and when he has made the new heaven and the new earth, the old heaven and the old earth will pass away as the shedding of the skin that is no longer needed. But up out of the debris, up out of the rubble and the crash and the whirl and ruin of old forgotten worlds, God's new heaven and new earth will stand forever.

Whenever God does anything, it lasts, it stands. And that's why I believe that we ought to be very cautious about testifying or witnessing or saying God did anything. But when we know God has done it, then take your stand on it, because it can no more go down than the highest peak of the Rocky Mountains.

And there they made him a supper in that home where Lazarus was and Martha and Mary. They made a dinner in his honor, which was the natural thing to do. He had done so much for them.

He had raised their brother from the dead. He had restored unity to that simple believing home. He had brought laughter back where tears had been.

He had brought smiles where grief had been. He had caused the silver bells to ring again where nothing had been heard but the tolling of the bell of death. And of course it was natural that they should want to do something for him, so they made a dinner in his honor.

And now the strange lack of eagerness in our day, the strange lack of enthusiasm and ardor among Christian people is a foretaste and a sign. Why is it if we are what we claim to be and he is who he claims to be and what he claims to be, if he has done for us what we say when we're under pressure that he has done for us, why don't we make a dinner in his honor? And why is it that we do not gather in his name? Why do we gather in the name of the passing vengeance? Why do we gather in the name of someone lately come from afar, someone who had a big name out in the world? Why? Why the lack of ardor? And why the lack of ardor in the Christian church, the lack of enthusiasm and zeal in the Christian church? Has God done nothing for us? Are there no Lazaruses among us? Are there none here that were dead and behold, they are alive again? Are there none who were lost and they were found? Why are we so self-possessed? Why does etiquette and Emily Post take over when we enter the church of God? Instead of Jesus Christ running the service, Emily Post runs the service. And we all do the thing that is proper and right and stare straight ahead in a religious fashion as our ancestors did before us, fearful lest we shall do something that is not right according to the latest findings of the high priestess of the decaying order, Emily Post and her crowd.

There was nobody here to tell them it was not right to have a dinner in the honor of this prophet who did not have a good reputation. There was nobody here to tell them that it was not being done and they would get their names brooded abroad as being fanatics. They were so full of zeal and happiness because they had their brother back that they made a feast in his honor and invited everybody.

Has there been nothing seen by us? Has nothing been heard by us? Has there been no experience, no encounter? Why are we sitting so quiet and so still? Why do we talk about everything but God? Why when we meet does the conversation run to a thousand things instead of God? Why in the churches all over Chicago tonight will there be a rehash of the United Nations and Time Magazine and Life Magazine? Why will the meldings of Gabriel Heater and Lowell Thomas be used as text and subject matter for religious discourse in a thousand pulpits tonight? Have we had no encounter, no experience? Have we not seen

God? Is there nobody with us that is dead and alive again? Have we robbed no graves and taken the prey from the jaws of no lions? What's the matter with us? Sometimes I can find more spirituality walking out under a tree than I can in the houses of God because there's no Lazarus there, and there's no inspiration there, and no encounter there, and no experience there, and no happiness there, and no smile there. Well, here's a picture of a local church. I want to point out to you tonight who was here.

There was a presence here, Jesus. There was life out of death there, Lazarus. Martha was there serving, and Mary was there worshiping, and Judas was there complaining.

And there's your sermon. A presence was there. There would have been no meeting.

That wasn't a coffee clutch. Nobody telling stale jokes they read in this week's magazine, the surfboard. Nobody trying to be the life of the party.

The presence was there. They made a dinner in his honor. If he hadn't been there, nobody would have come.

He was there until they came. Lazarus was there, and some came to see him, it says, too. But their guest of honor was Jesus.

He was there. The presence was there. I'm telling you that this religious family was alive.

There was a breadth of another world there. There was evidence of miracle there. There was a mystic presence there.

Jesus Christ was there. God was there incarnated, and Lazarus was there. And their religion stood not in a form, nor in a text, nor in a doctrine, but there was life there.

Now, this is always of vital importance, always of vital importance, that there should be a presence there, that Jesus Christ the Lord should be there. Nothing can take the place of it. You can have the best music in all the wide world, and if the presence isn't there, you've got a concert.

All the eloquence in the world will not take the place. Some men gifted, gifted with silver tongues, nightly or weekly entertained their audiences with snatches of poetry in rolling numbers, by throwing a little religion in, a little sentimentality, a little in about mother, a little in about a little girl who died, a little in about pets and animals, and a little in about the world and politics and the United Nations. We succeed in charming our people.

But, oh, my brethren, what a cold, stale, dead, dry and barren gathering it can be if the presence isn't there. If Jesus Christ is not there, it's a PTA meeting. If Jesus Christ is not there, it's simply a lodge meeting.

If Jesus Christ is not there, it's simply a lot of people in a building. But if Jesus is there and the meeting is held to his honor, then all the ingredients of a church are there. You cannot, with all the money in the world, buy a substitute for Jesus being there.

If I knew that I could have my choice tomorrow morning, if I knew that someone would come to me and say, Mr. Tozer, if you will stop preaching the way you do and ease up a little and try to be a little more popular and cut the corners a little and not be quite so sharp and be a little friendlier and a little more sociable and a little less true to your so-called convictions, I'll endow your church with one million dollars.

I'll put one million dollars in Continental National Bank and hand your treasure a checkbook. I'd talk rough to that man.

Blind leaders of the blind. And I would say, take your million dollars and give it to the Polio Foundation or the Cancer Research Foundation. We don't need it! We have the presence.

We have God in a high state of condensation. We have God here. We have Jesus Christ in the midst.

You keep your money, we'll take Jesus. Take the world, but give me Jesus. All its joys are but a name, but his love abideth ever through eternal years the same.

And all the money in the vault at Knox would not make up for the absence of Jesus. Better to have Jesus in your ministry, sir, if it's a small one. Better to have Jesus if you don't mount too much.

Better to have Jesus and not much reputation. Better to have Jesus and not much social standing. For it was the presence that made it the glorious place that it was.

When the glory begins to depart, then men say, all right, we'll have an educated ministry, a more educated ministry. Now, I believe in education. You know that I do.

I haven't read day and night for thirty years for nothing. If I hadn't believed in education, I'd pitch horseshoes instead of reading everything that was written in English. But, brethren, it's a poor substitute for the presence of God.

Socrates, with his learned crowd gathered around him, they were the epitome and the ni plus ultra, probably beyond which it was hard to go in that day of all brains and learning. And yet what had you, a barefooted philosopher and a crowd of learning men? But you had no pulse of light, you had no impulse of glory, you had no God and no presence. But the presence is here.

So there's the picture of the local church, Jesus Christ in the midst. Ah, some of my conduct has made it hard for Jesus to come to this church, but I hope that by the blood of the everlasting covenant and the forgiving love of God, I and you may so live that he can be welcome here. Invite him, won't you, next week, this week.

Invite him. Keep inviting him. Beg him to come.

Urge him to come. But some legalist says, he says he'll be here. Yes, he says he'll be here.

But brethren, while I'm talking to you, music is passing through this building, not the music of my voice. Passing through this building while I speak to you tonight, there's opera music. While I speak to you tonight, unknown and unseen and unrealized, there's passing through this building, jokes are being told, and jazz is being played, and clowns are making funny remarks, and high-paid lunatics are telling jokes on Sunday night, and news of war of the world is coming through this building.

We know it's here, of course, but nobody's hearing it. You know it by faith, but it's doing you no good. You're not tuned in to it.

While I'm talking to you, unseen light waves are passing through here, or waves that will be transmitted or translated into light waves and television, where a great many people are tonight. They expect to go to heaven and go TV. But it's passing through here, but nobody here is getting anything out of it.

Why? Because you're not tuned in to it. Your ears do not hear, and your eyes do not see. So let us beg the Lord Jesus Christ to come and unveil his glory in our midst, better a thousand times than he did do it.

And we should have a legacy of money, or that we should have prestige, or that we should have more brains, or that we should have greater gifts in our pulpit, far more important. Yes, he was there, Jesus was, and around him gathered were some wondering people. He had done a wonder, and they were there to celebrate.

There's your picture of a local church. But there was something else there. There was life out of death there, too, and that was Lazarus.

Now, Lazarus stands for the company of the regenerated, and so should every church be. Every church should be a company of the regenerated. Not a gathering of religiously minded people, but a company of the regenerated.

Those who've been born once and then have been born twice, and are conscious of it, and are of the company of the regenerated. So this church should be, and so every church must be, or it is no church at all. What is a Christian? Someone who has been baptized by sprinkling, pouring, or immersing? No.

What is a Christian? Somebody who has been solemnly entered on the book by the church clerk? No. What is a Christian? One who has come down to the front and received the soft hand of the pastor who never works enough to get a callus? No. What then is a Christian? One who has come from death into life.

One who was alive out of death, and who, like Lazarus, once morally lay in the grave, and the processes of decay had set in, and that one heard the voice of Jesus saying, Come forth! And they came forth, and are alive out of death. That's Lazarus. And that's a church, and there isn't any other kind of church.

You say, That's the old-fashioned conception of a church. No, that's the biblical conception of a church. And let every man take heed that he build according to the pattern shown us in the month.

That's the only pattern there is, life out of death. And then Martha was there, and Martha was serving. Now, Martha loved her Lord Jesus, too.

And she was saying it in the way that she could say it. And let nobody underrate Martha. And let nobody belittle Martha.

But you say, Didn't Jesus rebuke Martha because she was serving? No! Jesus said, I'll take another helping, please. And ate what she was serving, and drank what she set before him, and thanked her, and smiled. He said, Thank you, Martha, that was fine.

Jesus didn't rebuke Martha for serving at any time. He rebuked her for being full of care, and troubled about many things, and critical of her sister. That's all.

He rebuked her for her spirit in which she served, not for serving. We get the idea that Martha got a round scolding from the Lord because she was busy here and there. No.

She was rebuked because she was a fault-finding little lady there in one instance, and because she was full of care and anxiety and troubled about many things. That's what the Lord rebuked her for, not for serving. Scripture says, God is not unmindful of your good works and your labor of love, but we tend to be unmindful of good works and labor of love.

The pastor, if the church goes, gets the credit. If it doesn't go, of course, he gets the blame, so I suppose it's six of one, and half a dozen of the other. But if it goes, he gets the credit.

But who is it that makes it possible for the pastor to move at all? What could the pastor do if it wasn't for the Martha's in the congregation, and the male Martha's, and the female Martha's? If the church did not serve and was not a serving church, what could that fellow do down there if there wasn't somebody to make it possible for him to do it? What could I do? What could McAfee do? What could her missionaries do? What could evangelists do? We depend upon God's plain people who serve in the church, serve with their money, serve with their gifts and offerings and tithes and contributions, serve with their hard work and their hands and their feet. Serve. Let's give Martha the place that she has earned in the grateful memory of the Christian church.

The pastor gets the credit, but what could the pastor do if it wasn't for the lady? The evangelist is praised and the brass band meets him, but who are the plain fellows that have sweated it out all day long, all week long, and are weary and nervous and tired and into a bed at night? Then that Sunday, he puts down a big check into the offering basket or throws in a big bill that nobody knows he gave and goes away into anonymity and passes out into the shadow while the evangelist stands in the spotlight and bows. He's a missionary, that where bound has got to have a crown on his head because he's a missionary. Listen, boy, one of the first things you will find out is that halos don't grow on a man's head while he's crossing the ocean.

You'll find that out when we send you over across the water in a year and a half. You'll find halos don't grow like they are arborealists as soon as you get out on the sea on your way to the mission field. Missionaries are just people preaching the gospel in another country from which they were born, that's all, and preachers are people preaching the gospel in the same country where they were born.

That's all, no difference. We give a missionary all the credit. I remember one time over at Beulah Beach.

I was the evangelist one time there for a few days, for ten days or so, and we had some missionaries there, and one of them was, I don't know, maybe his diet wasn't right or something, but he was a little sour. And every time he'd speak, he'd scold us to death. He compared our badly with the singing of the people over there.

He compared our zeal badly with the zeal of the converted heathen. And I began to feel like a heathen and looked around for a fetish, and I began to pity the poor congregation because everybody was getting lectured. The missionary was taking the high place and laying us out.

So one night I'd had enough of it, and being me, I got up and I said, I'd like to correct an impression that's being given here to this congregation, that all of you are backslidden hypocrites on your way to the pit. I said, listen, if we were as bad as this missionary makes us out to be, he'd come home for want of support and swim home for want of fare. I thought I'd just take the side wants of the good folks that were making it possible for that grumbler to be on the field.

Now, they're not all like that. Just once in a while the liver goes bad and then they get that way. But not all of them.

Out of the 720 we have on the field, I don't suppose that there's more than three or four that have bad livers. But there are some, and I've met them. But I'll not allow anybody to abuse my people.

I'll not allow any man to stand up or even come into this pulpit and tell me that my people are all hypocrites and no good and all the rest. They're not. How do we get \$36,000 to send men out to all over the world to preach the gospel in 180 languages? If we were all backslidden, we'd be at the ballpark tonight, or home looking at TV and cuff-hauling over Jack Benny or somebody.

Well, God looks upon the people who serve and the hard-working laypeople. Brother, we still find God loving them, and they're still of great importance to the Church of Christ. So important, indeed.

Take away the laypeople and your preacher will do no good. Take away the preacher and you'll get another one. Martha was there serving.

God bless Martha. I'd like to shake her hand, just not quite so soft maybe as Mary's, but a good hand I'd like to shake. Then there was Mary and she was worshiping.

And so we have a presence in life, in service, in worship. And that's what makes a church. Nothing else does.

Lazarus was there representing life in the Church. Mary was there representing worship in the Church. And Martha was there representing service in the Church.

Now you have these three things, life and worship and service, and they come in that exact order. And they can come in no other order and be divinely given. We try to make Christians by putting them to work and saying, get to work, sir, get to work, do something for the Lord.

And after the evangelist with nice curly hair gets through with the Church, everybody runs in circles for two weeks. We have tried to get service out of dead men. Service is a by-product of worship, and worship is the result of life.

And there were three present, and all of them had to be and do all three things. You can't allocate life to one group in the Church, service to another group, and worship to another group. All of us have to have life, and all of us have to worship, and all of us have to serve.

It's the picture here. It took three of them to present it properly. It's 3D, if you like.

Three dimensions here. Gathered around Jesus Christ, we have one dimension, worship, another dimension, life, another dimension, service. So every Church ought to be like that.

And if there is no worship, it's because there is no life. I remember one of the young women who used to be in our Church here, married a pastor, went away to another Church, and she good-naturedly grumbled. She said, You know, I've got to do all the praying for everybody.

She said, Nobody in our Church can pray. She said, If anybody is to lead in prayer, I have to do the praying. She had to do all the praying for everybody, because the Church didn't have life, and not having life, it didn't have worship, and not having worship, it couldn't have prayer.

A Church may be known by the spontaneity of its worshipers and its prayers, but first there must be life. Excitement won't do it, agitation won't do it, scolding won't do it. If it could have, we would have really gone places years ago.

Scolding won't do it, and urging won't do it. No, no. Exhorting won't do it.

It takes life. Over the last couple of weeks, I've been in several funeral rooms, and I've looked at the faces of dead men. And all the scolding in the world won't make them get up and stretch and smile and yawn and say, Good morning.

They're dead. And a man who is dead remains dead until an infusion of life on another level comes into him and makes him alive. They could have had a revival meeting there in Bethany and had gone from house to house and pushed every doorbell and given a tract to everybody in Bethlehem.

For Bethany, I mean. And Lazarus would still have been dead in the tomb. But the presence came.

God Almighty's Son, the ancient light came and spoke. Lazarus come forth, and Lazarus came out alive and walked among men. So we have to have life, an infusion of life from another world, the life of God in the soul of man.

And then that brings worship. And then as an example, we turn to Mary. Here was Mary sitting at his feet, and here was Mary breaking the alabaster box, sweet with ointment, despite her very precious, pouring it upon his head and his feet.

And our Lord received her worship. Sure, they could have used that money for something else, but Jesus didn't rebuke Mary. Sure, it was an extravagant thing to do, for that stuff was what in the country they called deer.

That is highly expensive. And Mary, it says here, took a pound of ointment of spikener, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.

And of course, it got on Mary, too. And for two or three days afterward, every place that Mary went, she smelled like spikener. And everybody said, I bet that's the woman who was in that house with Jesus.

How do you know? I remember about that spikener. Nobody else had that costly spikener. Nobody could afford it.

But listen, this woman, Mary, she's just an ordinary woman, lives there, a couple of old maids, Mary and Martha, and an old bachelor brother. They don't have much, no, they don't have much, but what they had they poured on the feet of Jesus. And Mary smelled like it.

She wiped the feet with her hair. I always claim you smell like where you've been. After I've been off on the trip and come home, I always smell of tobacco for a while.

There's not a trace of it around our house, but it always clings to your garments until the sweet winds of heaven blow it away. And you always smell like where you've been. Well, Mary smelled like that ointment.

She didn't use it herself, but she poured it on Jesus' feet, and Jesus accepted it and didn't rebuke her, but did accept it and say that through mystic insight, she's preparing me for eternal, for the burial that shall be mine in the day when they slay me for your sins. Now, what a beautiful picture this is. How utterly lovely.

Wouldn't TV have ruined that home? I suppose just about that time somebody had turned on a TV set and Jack Benny had started talking about Rochester, and I heard him once years ago, so I remember he had somebody around there named Rochester. All right, I just wonder if somebody started talking about baseball here. Say, did you hear about what Harvey Klein, he had a home run and saved the game?

Wouldn't that have upset this business here? Oh, there was a presence, and there was a light out of death, and there was a lovely little woman serving, and another lovely little woman that looked like her worshipping, and Jesus sitting all smiled in the middle.

Oh, wasn't that wonderful? Never will anything quite like that be repeated, maybe until the day when we see him as he is. If somebody had told a joke there, wouldn't that have been out of mood? Wouldn't it have been if somebody started criticizing, as somebody did just a little further down, wouldn't that, wasn't that out of mood? That wouldn't do, brother. Now again, Judas was there.

Judas was there, so don't expect perfection even in any church. People sometimes come around here, and after they've been here a while, they come to me and say, I'd like to join your church, and I say to them, well now, just let's talk it over a little bit. I don't say that to all, but some I do.

You're too enthusiastic, we're not that good. You're too eager, we're not that good, we'll disappoint you. If you expect perfection here, you'd better not cast in your lot, because you'll be disillusioned come the first of next month.

And they all tell me, no, I don't want perfection, I just want to worship God. But here we had Judas, and Judas came to Mary and saw her do this extravagant, fanatical thing, and said, could not this have been given to the poor? And this he said, said the Holy Ghost, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and he bare what was put therein. And when he reached down in to get himself a little commission, he wanted the thing to be full.

And if they kept on pouring it on Jesus' feet, they'd run to the bottom of the bag, and he might have to go to work for a living. Thief that he was, he was still a member of that sacred party. And then somebody blamed me? If a Judas appears in her midst? No, if Jesus couldn't keep him out of his little circle, how do you expect us to keep him out of ours? They do come, brother, they surely do.

But they're certainly not very welcome. Judas was there, and he was complaining. And an unregenerate church member is always ready to complain about love, and sacrifice, and zeal.

Somebody says, I want to go to the mission field. Four or five people that didn't care a hoop about him before, run up to him and said, why wreck your life, bud? Why wreck your life? If he'd wanted to go on the stage, they'd have said, wonderful. If he'd wanted to become a bookie, there are churches even that wouldn't mind.

But if he wanted to become a missionary, they'd say, don't ruin your life. And this they say, not because they care. Judas didn't care.

He wasn't honest about it. God says so. He says, don't be too religious.

My dear little old mother, God bless her. She's in heaven now. But she was a good little Presbyterian, and just as stiff as they came.

And when her son that they prophesied that I would hang, I may hang yet, but I hope not for what you think. But they prophesied I'd hang. And when my dear little mother heard that I was preaching on the street corner on a soapbox, oh, it just broke her Presbyterian heart.

And she said the idea that he would preach, that's bad enough, but preach on the street, oh, terrible. Well, it's too bad. But as she lived to change her mind about that, and get converted, and love the Bible, and I'd go home and see a big print Bible with a pair of glasses on it.

She'd be out getting me something to eat, and the old Bible would be lying there with her glasses on it, you know, the old wire rimmed ones that they used to wear. So she didn't think that long, but first she did. Judas never changed his mind.

He died the scoundrel that he was, a thief. Now, I'm closing. It says here, "...much people came, not only for Jesus' sake, but they came to see Lazarus.

A company of persons back from the dead, they are always the best advertisement for our Lord Jesus Christ, always the best. Lazarus was there, something of a prodigy indeed, something of a marvel and a wonder. And they came to see him because he was a marvel." Do you know that every Christian should be something of a prodigy? Every Christian should represent life out of death.

Every Christian should be an example of a dead man who lived again, whether it be a child in her middle teens, whether it be an old man in the graying years of his life, whether it be a moral man who never went out to the bad things of the world. Whoever it might be, wherever the life of God appears in the soul of a man, that man's a prodigy, a wonder, a marvel, and they can't explain him. I have read William James' famous, justly famous work twice, I think, Varieties of Religious Experience.

William James, the wonderful psychologist that he was, talked about that of which he knew nothing. He knew religious experiences, he knew the patterns of religious life, he knew that, but he didn't know how Lazarus could rise again. He didn't know how a dead man could live, he didn't know that, and no man knows that.

Not all the psychologists and psychiatrists in the wide world can explain that wonderful prodigy, a living man who was dead but is alive again. Only God can do that for a man, and every Christian should be that kind of person. No matter whether you were in jail or not, whether you were a wicked person or not in the worldly sense of the term, that makes no difference.

But the fact that you were dead, Lazarus maybe wasn't a bad man. I don't know anything bad about Lazarus, but the point is he was dead and he lived again. And that's the biggest thing about a Christian.

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