

Triologies in Life of Christ - Part 4

by David Adams

The sermon examines three key incidents in Bethany that reveal important lessons about faith, service, and God's timing in our lives.

Duration: 47:42

Scripture: Micah 5:2, Matthew 2:6, Luke 1:35, Luke 10:38-42, John 8:59, John 11:9-10

Topics: "Divine Love", "Faith In Action"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the transformative power of love. He uses the example of Mary, who was so moved by her love for Jesus that she took action. Four action verbs are mentioned: she went, she took, she broke, and she poured. The preacher highlights the importance of love being expressed through service and action. The sermon also mentions three reasons for the events described: to glorify the Son of God, to strengthen the disciples' faith, and to inspire belief in the multitudes.

Transcript

Good evening to you all, all those who have escaped the partial rapture and are here with us again tonight. We're just delighted to have you. I'm somewhat frustrated, I don't know if that's permissible or not, but I was going over my material this afternoon, thinking about we just have tonight and then two meetings tomorrow, and I was beginning to question the wisdom that I had or didn't have in dividing our subject the way I did, particularly in relation to the absolutes, for there are just so many left that we could put in another week quite readily.

You've got a good colleague of mine from North Carolina coming to visit you next week, and I know you'll have a very pleasant time. Brother Phil and I shared a week at Greenwood Hills, and he was the last speaker of the conference, and he said he was thanking everybody for their participation in the conference and what they had contributed, etc., etc. And then he wound up by saying, oh yes, and I have to thank my brother Dave because he laughed at all my jokes.

And then he added, it's a credit to his intelligence that he did that. You never know what Brother Phil's going to say. So afterwards, outside, he and June and I, the three of us, were talking, and I said to him, well, Phil, I'm certainly leaving the conference here at Greenwood Hills feeling quite well, quite good about this whole thing.

And he said, why? I said, because I'm going with your accreditation of my intelligence. And he looked at me and kind of frowned a bit, and he didn't remember what he'd said at all. So he said, why did you say that? So his wife, God bless them, spoke up and said, Phil, you said off the platform that it was a credit to Dave's intelligence that he laughed at your jokes, on the platform and off.

And he put on that blank, innocent look that only Phil can, and he said, did I really say that? So you're in for a good week, I'm sure. Yes, because I didn't know when I got looking at it all over, we could have spent all this week, morning and evening, on the absolutes. And then I thought, yes, but there are so many trilogies left, so we're going to come up on the short end of both of the subjects regardless, so I just have to go home frustrated.

Tonight I want to look at one of the trilogies that we have been looking at in connection with our Lord. And again, it's in relation to a town or a city. And by the way, those of you who have been looking for that solution to the biological dilemma in connecting with Bethlehem, I haven't forgotten it.

I suggest you look, if you want to look now, it will keep you busy thinking about that and you won't hear me at all the rest of the meeting. Luke 1 and 35 is the answer. I'll be watching to see if you're still puzzling over that one or not, but the solution, I think, according to my understanding of it, lies there.

And then we shall see how you get along with that problem. So I want to speak with you tonight about three incidents in connection with Bethany in relation to our Lord. Let's go to Luke 10, because there's a lot of material to cover this evening.

Somebody is saying, so what else is new? And I'm going to have to speak rather quickly, so what else is new? I want to cover some of the material, if I may. Three incidents that took place, a trilogy of incidents that took place in relation to Bethany, and so we're in Luke 10 for the first one. Verse 38, reading the last paragraph of Luke 10.

It came to pass as they went that he entered into a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. She had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet and heard his words. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her, therefore, that she help me.

Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. Here's distraction for you. But one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen the good part which shall not be taken away from her.

This is the first of three incidents that I want to consider with you this evening regarding our Lord at Bethany. I did suggest to you, I believe already, that this is not the only three, because there is one very significant incident in the last week of his life. As you recall, he went out to Bethany or to the Mount of Olives and did not apparently stay in Jerusalem, not even for a night, nor did he stay in the area of the temple more than necessary.

But he did go out to Bethany. And this is the introduction of the family, this is the introduction of the home, this is the introduction of what took place at Bethany. So our Lord comes into a certain village, it's not named here, but we know what it is, and it says that a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

And you stop right there and you say, now, what is the picture? The picture is that there is a specific house mentioned, and there is a specific woman mentioned in relation to the house. It was her house. She apparently was not only the hostess and the cook, as you will see, but she was also the owner of the house.

If you go to Matthew 26, in the last of the three incidents that I want to mention this evening, we discover this was the house of Simon the leper. And we don't really know who Simon the leper was. You may do a little sanctifying imagining, if you please, but we don't know who Simon the leper was.

Was he the father of the family, and is he dead? Yes, evidently. Or was he Martha's husband and left her the house? That's a very clear possibility, because you see, it was her house. And that's the house that our Lord entered into, even though it's called the house of Simon the leper.

Now, we'll see that that is very significant in what happened in that house in the last of our trilogy this evening. But it was the house of Simon the leper. Not at all a welcome or desired stigma that should be attached to anyone's home.

The house of Simon the leper. And you know, as we'll see and mention perhaps when we get to the third incident, that this carried with it, down through a considerable period of time, a stigma that was not at all enviable. And the Lord's come into this house.

As I say, we don't know any more than the three members of the family that are recorded for us in Scripture. I may suppose, and you may conjecture too, that it belonged to Martha's husband and that he's gone, he's dead, and he's left her the house, because it definitely says it was her house. And you can see that not only was he in her house, but she was the hostess in the house.

Definitely assumed the responsibility of providing the meal for the master when he came. And then another thing that is said here, it says she had a sister called Mary. If you read that the way it sounds, I think you'll understand that she was a junior member of the house, Mary.

She was a younger woman in the house. And she was sort of an appendage, if you will, tacked on to Martha. This house belongs to Martha, though it's still called the house of Simon the leper.

And she is the hostess, as I've said. And she had little sisters, a little sister called Mary. Sounds like an almost an abdicante, doesn't it? Did you ever find yourself in that position? Were you the younger member of your family? And were you always kind of left on the edge of the family? I had three siblings that were older than I was, so I still accuse my older sister, who's in Chile, I still accuse her of having brought me up very rigorously.

And of course, she loves me to do it in front of company, you understand. And I tell them that I was bossed around from the time I was a little guy, so it didn't do a great deal of harm for me later on when I got a bossy mother-in-law. Now, as a result of that... But here's something else that happens, too.

And this business of Martha had a sister. Martha had a sister, and her name was Mary. There she is.

Not of much importance. This younger sister, Mary. You know, we like to be known and loved and appreciated because of who we are, don't we? But because of who we are in ourselves, not because we're related to somebody who is more important than we are.

So I have a very close relative of mine at home, and she just loves it when we go somewhere, and she's never been there before. Or she goes somewhere on her own, and somebody who knows her is speaking with her, and along comes someone else, and she introduces this lady to her, and she says, you know, meet Mrs. Adams. And the lady says, pleased to meet you, and that's it.

And then they carry on the conversation, and then the friend says, you know, this is Dave Adams' wife. Oh, Mrs. Adams, I'm so pleased to meet you. My wife says, why can't they like me for who I am, not for whom I'm married to? There's Mary.

Tags on to the elder sister. Martha had a sister, and she was married. Now, Martha's very busy with the task, and I want you to notice, if we have time to look into this in detail, I want you to notice the influence on the characteristics and the personalities of the members of this house, consequent upon the frequency with which the Lord visited them.

This is the first case. This is the first time it appears, and you can see the order of events in this home. Martha assumes the responsibility.

She assumes the leadership, and she goes in to make the supper for the master, and Mary's off to the side. Martha was comfortable about serving, it says, and she came to him and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Now, it evidently was Martha's position to be the hostess. And she's attending to her responsibility.

She's fulfilling her vocation. But she's frustrated. She's exasperated.

She's very busy about this. This is an important occasion. After all, the master himself is here, it appears, for the first time.

So she's perpetual motion. We had a missionary sister in Cuba who was like that, and her husband used to say that Jeanie never let the dust settle. When she got things all cleared up in the front room, she went into another room.

By the time she finished in that room and came back, the dust was just nicely settling in the front room, and she started all disturbed all over again. Well, this is the way Martha was, it seems. She was just constantly on the move.

Perpetual motion. But she's frustrated because Mary is sitting in that China doll-like position. Very pacific, very passive, very quiet, very demure.

That's how he always used to think of her. When I listened in my younger days to preachers expatiate on this subject, I saw Mary there, and there wasn't a sign of a crow's feet around her eyes at all. I used to call her the China doll sister.

I used to see her sitting there, and she was always spoken so highly of, and Martha's there in a whirl of smoke from the charcoal stove where she's cooking, and Mary's sitting there so demure, so quiet, so nice. But, you'll discover, that wasn't the way it always was to be. We'll see that later.

And Martha comes to the Lord, and she says, She's left me to serve alone. Speak to her. Tell her that she's helped me.

After all... After all what? Well, after all, this really was Martha's vocation. And you will see, when we come to the end of the story, of the visitations that the Lord made to this house, that Martha never had her vocation changed. I'm going to sit with you.

So, she complains about her sister, her little sister, because she seems to have no interest whatsoever in the cooking, in the preparation of the meal, and she's just sitting there, very nice, quietly, demure little soul. And the Lord said, Martha, Martha, He says, you're torn three or four different ways about this much serving. Now, Mary has chosen this, and we will not take it away from her.

And thus, you see, the incident ends. Now, turn over to the Gospel by John, because I want to notice two other major incidents that form the trilogy of the experiences of the home at Bethany. Let's go to chapter 11 first, please, if you will.

Chapter 11, verse 1. A certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary. Who switched the order? Who put Mary first now, when Martha was first in the previous passage? Well, that's exactly what the Spirit of God does in this chapter. He puts Mary first, and her sister, Martha.

Now, I don't know exactly what time may have elapsed between Luke chapter 10 and John chapter 11, but certainly some time has elapsed. And in that time, there is a reversal of the naming of the sisters in the order. And you see, all we have to do is just go on living.

And events will take place by which God brings everything into perspective. He knows how to elevate and to lower. He knows how to give prominence to one and when to do it, and not give the prominence to another.

All you have to do is just go on living. Leave it with God to bring everything into perspective according to his divine mind as to position. Now, we're all involved in position.

One way or another, in one place or another, in one factor or another. We're all involved with position. And you've watched the little guys in the house, and the one that's a little bit older generally takes the supremacy and exercises the authority over the younger one.

But the young one comes along sometimes, and because of partiality on the part of the parents, which is a deadly thing to do, but they do it, the little guy gets more preference, and finally the older one has to submit to the little one, and the little one grows up with an ego that's far too big for what he's built and able to handle, and the younger one gets to be submissive. Just let them go on living. You'll see that God will level everything out in the end.

And let's not be grasping for place or power. Let's just leave everything with God, and according to His dictates and according to His divine disposition as to where we are and what we are supposed to be doing, He levels everything out in the end. Let's not be over-anxious about recognition, about appreciation, about elevation.

Because now you see, Bertrand's name is the town of Mary. And then he tells us why he said that it was Mary first and her sister Martha, because it was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. Now that's a parenthetical portion, as you can see, but I think it throws light back onto the fact that the order has been reversed here at this point between the two sisters.

Therefore his sister sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. And I believe I did mention to you before in these studies that this is a very significant way that the sisters approached the Lord regarding the need of Lazarus. I'm sure most of us would not have done it this way.

We would have sent a message to the Master and we would have said, Oh, our brother who is so devoted to you, who is dedicated to your service, and who loves you so ardently, he is sick, Lord. And we would have thought that because of the qualities that our brother had manifested in relation to the Lord, that would bring the Master to his help, to his aid. But that's not what they said.

They said it in the reverse order. They said, Lord, he whom thou lovest. Very clearly it was a move of discretion, of courtesy, and of wisdom.

Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick. And so we're expecting the Lord to respond in this hour of need because of his love for their brother, not their brother's love for him. Verse 4, when Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but he died.

There are three specific reasons why things happened in this case of Lazarus, his death and his resurrection. There are three specific reasons that our Lord gives us in the chapter, why things turned out the way they did, and why he orchestrated them the way he did, why he manipulated and maneuvered them the way he did. The first thing is we have in this verse, we're looking at verse 4, This sickness is not unto death.

That's not going to be the end of it. That's not the final outcome of it all, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. You'll recall that we noticed in our study of I Am the Light of the World, in John chapter 9, that there was a reason why this man was born blind, and it wasn't what the disciples thought it might be, but it was that the works of God might be manifest in him.

I know not how many years before, when that child came into the family and was born, and they saw they had a blind child, I don't know how long it was or how many years passed by and they're carrying this burden and carrying this sorrow before they knew the very specific reason why he was born blind. And it wasn't because of his parents' sin, and it wasn't because of the mystery of prenatal influence that he might have had, consequently he was born blind, as they suggested, but it was because that the works of God might be manifest in him. The parents didn't know that.

The parents would have grieved, and I think they got bitter, too, when I hear them talk later on. I think they got bitter that their son was born blind. They could not see 30, 40, 50 years ahead how many it was before it was revealed why he was born blind.

And do we? Do we always know the reasons why tragedy or sickness, disaster of one kind or another strikes our experience? We don't know. But he knows. The I Am knows.

And what does he say here? He says, This is for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. Now that's the first specific reason that the Lord gives for Lazarus being sick. It's not unto death.

It's not unto death. It's unto something beyond death. And he himself will provide that something that will justify the sickness and the death as well.

This is the first reason. Now, we'll come to the other two as we go. Now, Jesus loved Martha and her sister in Lazarus.

No question. There can be no question about that. And behind this sickness and behind this death and behind the tears and the lamentation, always there was this.

Jesus loved them, all three of them. When he heard, therefore, that he was sick, based upon this love that he had for them, he abode two days still in the same place where he was, which was a surprising development of this whole thing. Our Lord has said, It's not unto death, but that the Son of God might glorify thereby.

And then it is said he loved him and his two sisters as well. And based on that love, he stayed two days longer where he was. Seems incongruous, doesn't it? It seems totally contrary to what you would have expected.

If Lazarus is sick and sick not unto death as he said, but he died, then you would have thought that the Lord, because he loved him, would have hastened to him. But he didn't. He didn't.

Do we know the divine wisdom with which our Lord moves in the affairs of our experience? And so often it's not when we thought he would or should have moved, but the love is there before the movement takes place, you see. And everything the Lord does is going to be based upon that love for this man as well as his sisters. So he stayed two days still in the same place where he was.

Then after that, he said to his disciples, Let's go into Judea again. But his disciples protest. Why, the last part of the previous chapter tells us that the reason why he left Judea was because they were going to stone him for what he had just been saying.

And his disciples say unto him, verse 8, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and coerced thou thither again. Now watch this. Jesus answers, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. Now doesn't that seem out of joint? Doesn't that seem out of place? What has that got to do with the case in question? Are there not twelve hours in the day? And if you walk in the day, you don't walk into traps? You don't stumble into a pit? Because you're walking in the light. But it must have something to do with what they've just said.

They said, Master, the Jews sought to stone you just recently there. Are you going to go back there again? But you see what the Lord is saying? He said, I'm walking in the light of my Father's will, and there's no fear of stumbling into any trap they've laid for my feet. I'm walking in the day.

If I were walking in the night, if I did not know what the will of my Father is, if I did not know the pathway, if I did not know what lies before me, yes, I could go back to Judea and be stoned. But I cannot stumble when I'm walking in the light of his will. That's comforting, isn't it? When we walk in the light of his will, there's no fear of falling into a trap.

These things said he, verse 11, And after that he said unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may wake him out of sleep. Reminds you of Jairus' daughter, doesn't it? Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleepeth he shall do well, or he shall be saved. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death, but they thought that he had spoken of taking a rest in sleep.

Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And if I have come to the proper conclusion about this matter, I believe that Lazarus was dead when the Lord got the message. And he brings it up now,

early in this whole unfolding of his purposes.

Lazarus is dead. Now, here's reason number two. I am glad for your sakes that I was not there.

Why? To the intent that ye may believe. First of all, he says this is all happening so the Son of God might be glorified. Secondly, he says it's all happening so that the disciples might be confirmed and strengthened in their faith.

That's why he has delayed two days longer, so that when he gets there it's going to be four days that Lazarus has been dead. I'm glad he said, for your sakes, that I wasn't there, that ye may believe. Verse 16.

Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, by the way, where was the twin? Do you know? Thomas is one of the twin. Where is the twin? Unto his fellow disciples, let us also go that we may die with him. I've heard Thomas criticized back and forth and up and down because of his doubting at the time when the Lord appeared in the upper room at Luke 24.

I think it's time we quit criticizing Thomas and calling him Doubting Thomas. Call him Didymus Thomas if you want, for he was a twin, you see. But listen to what he's saying.

He says, let us go with him, that we'll die with him. The masters say we're going to toot to Lazarus, and he says Lazarus is dead. So if he's going to Lazarus, let us go with him, with the master that is, and let us all die together with him.

Thomas isn't as worthy of your criticism that you've been giving to him. Then when Jesus came, he found that he lay in the grave four days already. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem about fifteen furlongs off, and many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother.

Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him. But Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

I think that's what she said. I see a little exasperation in this. I see a little complaint in this.

And the reason why I say that is because look what she did. Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, see the switch? But I know that even now, whatsoever thou wouldst ask of God, God will give it thee.

She's complaining. She's a very forthright sort of individual, and she jumps right into a conclusion immediately. And in the voice of complaint, which I take it to be, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

But I know, I know, I know that even now, see how she switches that? See how she turns it on? Watch her do it again in a minute. If thou hadst been here, he said, I know. Jesus saith unto her, thy brother shall rise again.

Moses said, I know that thou shalt rise again in the resurrection at the last day. How did she know that? Jesus saith unto her, and here's our absolute again, I am the resurrection. Here's one of our absolutes that we're considering in the moment.

And let me suggest something to you. Why did he put it this way? I am the resurrection because Lazarus is dead. But why did he say, and the life? We wouldn't have put it that way, would we? Why? Resurrection brings you out of death into life.

Yes, but after resurrection, what is there? Oh, there's life to be lived. And if we want to speak about our resurrection, for the glory yet to come, how about those endless ages of worlds yet unborn where we are going to be? What about this? After resurrection, what? After resurrection, there's going to be life. But what's going to sustain that life? And what's going to make that life livable? And who's going to hold us in that life that we don't fall or stumble? See what the Lord says? He says, I am the resurrection and the life.

The life that is to come post-resurrection. How will it be sustained? How will it be enjoyed? How will we be kept that we don't stumble and fall as we've done so many times already? Because he's not only the resurrection, you see, he is the life post-resurrection. That's security, isn't it? Oh, you don't agree with me.

I never saw anybody say yes or nod their head vertically. We're all looking forward to the resurrection, as we're looking forward to the time when all that are in the grave shall come forth. But the dead in Christ, as far as we're concerned, shall rise first.

We shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And then what? Then he who is the resurrection for all those coming ages is also the life. He's the source and sustainer of the life that we shall have post-resurrection.

Then he went on to say, He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. Well, that's Lazarus at this moment. But how about this? Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

And he said to Martha, Believest thou this? How would you have answered that? How would I have answered that? He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. We all believe that. But how about this? He that lives and believes in me shall never die.

How do you understand that? What's the Lord meaning? What's he saying? But then he turned to Martha and said, Do you believe that? Watch what she did. She said to him, Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, that shalt come into the world. And she so said she went away.

Now, if that wasn't a supplety for feminine dexterity to get out of a jam, I don't know what it was. He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Do you believe this, Martha? Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, that shalt come into the world.

What's that got to do with the question? And then she turned and went away. Very nicely walked out of that problem, didn't she, though? How would you do with it? All right. When she so said she went away and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master's come and call her to thee.

And so Mary gets up, and the Lord was just coming into the town, not quite there yet, and the Jews that was with Mary rose up and went with her, and so on. But then when Mary was come where Jesus was and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying, Unto him, Lord, had God been here, my brother had not died. I didn't read that the same way, did I? There's so much in the inflection of the Lord in what we say.

Sometimes we hear something and we repeat it, and when we repeat it, it doesn't have the same meaning at all to the way we first heard it, and it's all because of the way it was said the second time. I think these two sisters said the same thing to the Lord in a totally different tone of voice and with a different reason. All

right.

When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping, which came whether he groaned in the spirit and was troubled, and said, Where have you laid him? They said, Unto him, Lord, come and see. And Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved them.

And some of them said, Could not this man which opened the eyes of the blind have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore again, groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. There was a cave and a stone lay upon it. Why does the Master at this time groan in his spirit? It's a very strong word, this.

It's something almost like a paroxysm of grief that took hold of him. He's groaning in his spirit. He knows he's going to raise him from the dead.

He knows he's going to call him out of the sepulchre. He knows he's going to turn him back to the sisters in his home life again. Why is he groaning in his spirit? Why is he so troubled about all this? I know.

They've asked more questions than he gives answers for. Well, I have to keep my honest away somehow. Now, Jesus said, Take ye away the stone.

Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto the Lord, By this time he's been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. Jesus looked her up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I knew that thou hearest me always, but because of the multitude which stand by, I said it.

Reason number three why this whole scene has taken place. One, that the Son of God be glorified. Two, that the disciples may be strengthened in their faith.

And three, that the multitude which stand by might believe, he said, that thou hast sent me. When he had thus spoken, he cried to the loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. I think if I were artistic or an artist, I would love to paint this picture.

Here's the sepulcher, here's the grave, the stones rolled away, the dark tomb lies there, and the decaying, decomposing body of the saint lies inside. And together, face to face, are the two mightiest forces in the universe, the force of light in the author of light, and the force of death in the ruler of death, and he who had the dominion of death, the right and the might of death, as Hebrews tells us. And these two forces come together in opposition each to the other.

And what is the outcome of this clash, this battle of the gods, going to be? He stands and he looks into the sepulcher, and he says, in all the dignity of his own sovereignty, Lazarus, come forth. He that was dead came forth, bound and put to the grave, clothed in a napkin round about his head. I'd like to speak with you a little bit about that napkin in connection with our Lord himself, but let's move quickly over to chapter 12.

I want to get this third one in, if I may. Then Jesus, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, which had been dead. Oh no, that's not Bethany.

It was the home of Martha and her sister Mary, and then it was the home of Mary and her sister Martha. And now what is it? It's the place where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. Watch this.

Then there they made him a supper. Something's gone on, hasn't it, in the development of the character of these three, of this family? Now it's not just Martha, it's in the plural. They made him a supper.

And what does it say here? Mary and Martha served. So Martha's vocation, her job, her calling, has not changed. It is just what it was when the Master went there the first time.

But the difference is she's not doing it alone. Mary is very evidently assisting, and I know not what Lazarus did, except it says here that he was one of them that sat at the table with her. But I want to get on beyond that, too.

Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus. Now I noticed with interest, as I read the other accounts of this incident, Matthew 26 and Mark 14, that there are four action verbs that are used and applied to Mary in what she did. Now here's Mary sitting in Luke 10 at the feet of the Lord, not moving an eyelid.

She's listening. But you see, this love that was building in her heart, in her soul, and by the frequency with which the Master visited the house of Simon the leper, love is not and cannot be static. You cannot hold it in silence.

You cannot keep it bound up in inactivity. Life must express itself. Love must express itself.

Mary has come to know and to love the Lord in such a way that she's got to move. She's not sitting here now quietly listening. Four action verbs are spoken about Mary in this incident.

She went, she took, she broke, and she poured it on the Lord. See what love does, my friends? It motivates us to serve us. We may say we love him.

We may sing about how we love him. And yet, is there any proof of it? Husbands tell their wives all the time that they love him, don't they? You mean they don't? Some of you ladies look as though you haven't heard it in the last 15 years. Well, if it's true, and not only verbal, there's got to be proof of it.

There's got to be action that follows expression of it. Mary went, Mary took, Mary broke, Mary poured. Why? Because she's listened to the Master.

She's been in his company. And after the period that existed between Luke 10 and John chapter 12, Mary has come to love him so much that she can't sit still. She's got to express it.

So she goes and gets the box of alabaster ointment, and she breaks it and pours it on his feet as he reclines there at supper. And let me notice another little thing here very curiously, if you will. It says at the close of verse 3, the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.

What house? The house of Simon the leper. A house that was carrying the stigma of leprosy, defilement, uncleanness. Through the action of this one woman, the house of Simon the leper is filled with the odor of the ointment.

And then a strange thing happens. John chapter 12 says that Judas Iscariot comes in. If you go to Matthew 26 and Mark 14, you'll discover something happens here.

Judas has been watching this whole thing. Judas the commercial expert, Judas the banker, Judas the man who carried the bag and the verb is, he continually took out of it. John says that in retrospect, 60 years later.

Judas was the financier, he was the treasurer of the band. But Judas carried the bag, but that's not all. He constantly took out of it.

The verb is past continuous. He kept taking out of it. And so he's looking at all this, and he knows how much the ointment is worth, and he says, well, that thing could have been sold.

Instead of being wasted, it could have been sold for 300 pence. But when you go to Matthew and Mark, you discover that others went along with him. Matthew says, the disciples were indignant.

And Mark says, some of them were there also had indignation, and they said, why was this waste? Waste? Waste, what was expended on the Lord himself? Waste, did you say? But here's the thing, brethren. When Judas brought this thing up, do you know what he's doing? He's manifesting in the house of Simon the leper the leprosy that was in his heart. It was the leprosy of covetousness in the soul of Judas who finally sold his Lord for 30 pieces of silver, that said, why was this waste? This could have been sold, sold, sold.

He sold his master for 30 pieces of silver. He said this should have been sold and given to the poor. Why? Because he had the bag and he was constantly taken out of the bag.

That's why. But the leprosy from the heart of the greedy Iscariot spread and contaminated that beautiful scene when the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. One man's covetousness marred the service that Mary had bestowed upon her Lord.

And the leprosy came into the house again and spoiled this act of worship that Mary had bestowed upon her Lord. Another thing I noticed is this. Not only is leprosy contagious, the leprosy of covetousness is contagious.

Let us watch our spirits and especially in sacred things that concern the Master. It also says, and I noticed this was interesting, I'll just throw it out to you for consideration. It says here in John 12 that Mary anointed the feet of the Lord.

It says in Matthew and Mark that she poured the ointment on his head. And what are we going to conclude from this? There are no mistakes, are there? There's nothing extraneous, there's nothing unnecessary. Everything has a reason, everything has a meaning, doesn't it? We found that out in our study this week.

So if John says Mary poured it on his feet, this is 60 years after it happened, if you go back to Matthew and Mark, they say that she poured the ointment on his head. Did she pour it on his feet or on his head? Well, if you just listen to what the Master said, you'll find out. Because you see, when they started criticizing her, when they were indignant about this way, the Lord says in defense of Mary, the Lord said, listen, in that she has poured this on my body, she did it for my burial.

Why trouble ye the woman? He didn't say on my feet, he didn't say on his head. He said she poured it on my body. You remember in his resurrection, where were the angels sitting? One at the head, one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had laid.

That's it. That head, with that napkin, that he took off himself, and folded it up, and put it onto one side, and the grave clothes were left lying as they were. Why did it happen like that, brethren? Why in the resurrection was there this distinction made between the napkin and the grave clothes, or the windings that they used? What's the difference between pouring the ointment on his feet and pouring the ointment on his head? Or, as the Lord says, she's poured it on my body, so he takes in the act in its completion.

But in the resurrection, you see, when the napkin that was about his head in the sepulcher was folded up and put in a crate by itself, and the grave clothes were left lying over here, there's a very, very important lesson in that, surely. And if you listen to what the Lord said to Mary Magdalene that morning, on the first day of the week, remember what he said? He said, Go and tell my brethren that I ascend to my Father and your Father. Didn't he? He didn't say, I am going to our Father which art in heaven.

No. He said, Go and tell them that I ascend unto my God and your God. What's he doing? What's he saying? He's teaching us the lesson of the napkin and the grave clothes separated in resurrection.

Why? Because in resurrection, you see, the Lord became the head of the church, which is his body. And while it is true that you and I have come into the benefit of the resurrection of our Lord, part of the grave clothes which belong to the body, there's something we must always remember. In resurrection, he must be chief.

He must be supreme. And we cannot say, and I revolt inside every time I hear it, and sometimes I sing it in some of the hymns, we cannot say that our Lord is our elder brother. Not in resurrection.

He's the head of the body which is the church, but he must be supreme. His place must be distinct. It must be by itself.

Yes, we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones, but he is the head, and the napkin is left in a place by itself. In resurrection. And we, as well, are caught up together with him, for we stand in the light of his resurrection for us, too, don't we? And so, I don't know about you, but that's the end of the clock.

I don't know whether I've worn you out yet or not. But these things surely are of great interest to us, these trilogies, and that which concerns Bethany. The first instance, the second instance, and the last instance, and the supper, we've only just kind of touched the edge of it.

But let us rejoice, at any rate, in him who hallows every occasion and every experience and every time that he visits his people, he comes into us with blessing, with favour, and he makes the house to be filled with the odour of his person. Shall we pray? Our Father, we thank you for who he is. We thank you for the glories of this one of whom we have read and of whom we sing, and so often fills our hearts in days of darkness, in days of light, in days of trial, in days of sorrow, and even death.

And yet we thank thee that he is supreme. He is the resurrection and the life. He is the one who shall yet be seen in the full consummation of his own resurrection when he calls the members of his body to himself.

And then we shall glory, we shall triumph in that which was his personal experience in which he has brought us into relationship with himself. May thy blessing rest with thy people, Lord, this evening as we give thanks and commend it to thee in his name. Amen.

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