

Mary of Bethany.

by Gareth Evans

The sermon explores the complexities of Mary of Bethany's faith, her offense at Jesus' delay, and the lessons of trust and servanthood in the face of grief.

Scripture: Matthew 5:5, Luke 22:27, John 11:1, John 11:25, Philippians 2:3

Topics: "Faith And Obedience", "Jesus' Compassion"

Description

Gareth Evans preaches on the story of Jesus, Lazarus, Mary, and Martha in Bethany, highlighting the different responses of the sisters to Jesus' arrival and the importance of obedience and trust over prominence and popularity in the Lord's service. Jesus wept not because of Lazarus' death but because Mary was offended, emphasizing how Jesus grieves when we take offense despite His willingness to die for our offenses.

Transcript

Jesus had some special friends who lived in the small village of Bethany.

He was just a few miles away when He heard that His friend Lazarus was dying and that the sisters, Mary and Martha were grieving for him. When He heard this, Jesus stayed several days longer in the place where He was! We read of no miracles, no teaching that He did during that time! And Lazarus died!

On the journey to Bethany, Jesus taught just one simple truth. He who walks in the light does not stumble (is not offended), but he who walks in darkness is offended for he does not see the light.

When Jesus finally came to Bethany, Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days and his sisters were in deep sorrow. It was Martha who came out to greet the Lord.

That is noteworthy as she was the one we normally consider to be the drudge, the one who was kitchen bound, while her sister Mary would leave everything to sit at Jesus' feet, washing them with costly perfume and wiping them with her hair while absorbing everything He said. The Bible adds the interesting comment, "but Mary stayed at the house!"

Today, Mary would be prominent in Christian activity, President of the local Women's Adoration Group, while her sister would be in the background making coffee and serving cookies.

Martha says to Jesus, "Lord if you had been here my brother would not have died". Jesus assures her that He is the resurrection and the life. I do not hear any condemnation in the comment of Martha, just a sadness.

She then goes to Mary to ask her to come to Jesus. Why isn't Mary already there? Surely she knows He is coming! Everyone would be aware of that, but Mary still sat in the house. Why?

May I suggest that she was pouting! She was offended!

When she comes to Jesus, she falls before Him and says the same words as Martha, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died". This time Jesus wept!

Not because Lazarus was dead. He had known that for some time and also knew that, in a short while, all would be rejoicing at his resurrection. He did not weep because Mary, Martha and their friends were in sorrow. He had known they would be for that was natural at the death of a loved one.

He wept because Mary was offended! Jesus would die for our offences but He still grieves when we take offence.

Did He allow Mary to be offended because she had to learn that obedience and trust are more important than prominence and popularity in the Lord's service? Greatness in the Kingdom is counted to those who would be least, even as servants.

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