

# The Christian Divinely Pictured

by John Nelson Darby

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*The sermon presents the believer as a picture of new life, service, worship, and testimony, with Christ as the central figure and the only way to heaven.*

**Scripture:** John 11:25

**Topics:** "New Life in Christ", "Worship and Service"

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## Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the transformative power of Jesus as the resurrection and the life, illustrated through the story of Lazarus, who, after being raised from the dead, represents the believer's new life and liberty in Christ. The sermon highlights the roles of Martha and Mary, showcasing service and worship that stem from a relationship with Jesus, and the importance of giving our best to Him, akin to Mary pouring out her costly spikenard. Darby also points out that true testimony of faith is not just in words but in the manifestation of a new life in communion with Christ, which can lead others to believe. He concludes by reflecting on the unique revelation of God in Christ, emphasizing that there is nothing like Him.

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## Transcript

{Words of Help, Vol. 22, 1933, pages 16-18.}

In chapter eleven Lazarus was dead and corrupting, and the sisters Martha and Mary broken-hearted with sorrow.

Jesus, the resurrection and the life, comes into this scene of death and sorrow, and gives life and liberty to dead Lazarus, and joy and peace to the sorrowing sisters. Then, in chapter twelve, they make Him a supper.

There is not only life, but liberty; for when Lazarus heard the voice of the Son of God and came forth, he was bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and could not see, or walk, or move at all. But when the second word reached him, "Loose him and let him go," he gets liberty.

So it is with our souls, and we have in Lazarus, the man who was dead, sitting in a new life and at liberty, supping with Jesus, a picture of the believer. Indeed, Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, taken together, make up one Christian. If Christians, we are all Lazaruses, Marthas and Marys. Martha is seen here serving, and not now, as in Luke 10, cumbered with it, and careful and troubled about many things, but here it is a

picture of service flowing from life, liberty, and communion with the Son of God. Mary personifies worship, also flowing from the same, and a beautiful picture it is of worship. Mary pours out on the blessed Lord's feet, what (if she had not known and loved the Lord) she would have put on her own head - given to herself - and worship, i.e., praise, thanksgiving, and adoration, is just what we all like naturally to give and get for ourselves.

When, however, we get to know and love Him, we gladly give Him what we used to give and like to get for ourselves. We adore and thank and praise Him. We thus break the box of spikenard on Him instead of ourselves, and the Lord's Table is the place where we should specially come together to make "Him a supper," in the outside place gathered to His blessed name, like the little group at Bethany which was outside Jerusalem and all the Temple worship there.

But we must not think to find a box of spikenard all ready to hand because we have come to the Lord's Table on the first day of the week. Just as Mary's box of spikenard cost her something (it was very costly), so it will cost us something to have a box of spikenard to pour out upon Him. It will cost watchfulness, prayerfulness and self-denial during the week in order to keep near the Lord and walk with Him, else on Lord's Day there will be no spikenard to give to Him - no worship in us.

"And the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." God smells a sweet smell when we make much of His dear Son; when we pour out on Him our adoration, praises and thanksgiving as we remember Him together. Men, and even Christians like the disciples (carried away by the "good words and fair speeches" of a Judas), call this waste, waste of time, etc, getting together for a whole hour or more and spending it all in making much of God's Son, but doing nothing for man. But though service, too, is all right in its place, as in Martha, and will not be neglected if we are in communion with the Lord, yet the highest thing of all is to make much of, to adore, God's dear Son, giving praise, thanksgiving and adoration to Him.

But there is another point in this picture: we not only have worship and service flowing from life, liberty and communion with the Lord; we have testimony, too. The man with a new life in communion with the Son of God is a testimony (see verses 9, 10, 11). Much people of the Jews came not only to see Jesus but Lazarus also, whom He had raised from the dead, and many of them went away and believed on Jesus, from just seeing the man with a new life, sitting, feeding with Jesus. This draws out the jealousy and opposition of the chief priests, who consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death, because that, by reason of him, many went away and believed on Jesus.

How blessed to know that if we are only going on in communion with the Lord, people will be attracted by it, and some of them will go away and believe on Jesus, too, through God's grace using those who have a new life and liberty from the Son of God, and are in communion with Him. And it is not here direct service, such as preaching and talking to people, at least we do not know that Lazarus preached to anybody, blessed as that is, but the new life being manifested and so soon in the ways, manners, business, everything, that others are led to think of and to believe in Jesus, too. This draws down religious opposition and the religious leaders try and kill the testimony.

Nothing Like Him.

{Words of Help, Vol. 22, 1933, page 19.}

The value of revelation, of the word, increases for me daily, in a manner that I know not how to express. What a precious thing to have God revealed in Christ! How the Person of Christ stands out alone against

the background of the scene of this world, to attract our gaze, and associate us in heart with God. In this respect the commencement of the Gospel of John has been of much blessing to me of late. Christ is unfolded there in so complete a manner! He gathers around Himself; He must be God, otherwise He would be turning us away from Him. He says 'Follow Me.' He is the Man who makes the way, the only way across the desert; for, for man there is none, since he is separated from God. On the Man Christ heaven is open; He is, as Man, the object of heaven, and of the service of the angels of God. John (a beautiful example of the absence of all selfishness and of all self-regard) receives a testimony from above, but he speaks of that which is earthly. Now that is but a testimony; but He who came from above bears witness of what He has seen, and in Himself He reveals heaven. He gives - He is - the eternal life, in order that we may enjoy it. What a thing to say - that heaven, its nature, its joys, what it is should be revealed to us by the word and by the presence of Him Who dwells there, Who is its centre and glory! Now, without doubt, man has entered into heaven, but it is none the less precious that God should have come down to earth. Man admitted into heaven is the subject of Paul; God, and the life manifested upon earth, that of John. The one is heavenly, as to man, the other divine. This is why John has such attractions for the heart. There is nothing like Him.

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