

Cost of Worship - Part 1

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill's sermon emphasizes the cost and depth of true worship as demonstrated by the woman who anointed Jesus' feet with her tears and hair.

Duration: 42:23

Scripture: Luke 4:16-21, Luke 10:25-37, Luke 15:11-32, Luke 18:9-14, Luke 19:1-10, Luke 22:14-20, Luke 24:1-12

Topics: "Worship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by describing how he was sitting on the front seat in the synagogue. He then repeatedly emphasizes the importance of reading the gospel of Luke. Throughout the sermon, he continuously urges the audience to read and study the gospel. The speaker repeats this message multiple times, emphasizing the significance of engaging with the gospel of Luke.

Transcript

Now, my wife said to me this morning, where are we sitting? I said, I'm sitting on the front seat. She said, you are? I said, yes, it says the Pharisees love the front seats in the synagogue. Let's read from the gospel recorded by Luke, uh, chapter seven.

I've got the wrong chapter here. Okay, chapter seven, sorry. Verse thirty-six.

And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and sat down to meet. And behold, a woman of the city, she was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meet in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment. She stood behind his feet, weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with ointment.

Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who a woman this is, but such a thing, for she is a sinner. Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee, and he said, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors, one owed him five hundred pence, and the other owed him fifty.

Tell me therefore, which of them would love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman and

said, Simon, seest thou this woman? Thou gavest me no water for my feet, but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head.

Thou gavest me no kiss, but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss me. My head with oil, thou didst not anoint. But this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment, wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much.

But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at me with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said to the woman, By faith, as faith thee go in peace.

This story is recorded by each of the evangelists. There are not four gospels, but there's one gospel told by four different men. And there are four different accents on this story.

I think this is the most beautiful of them. But this is one link in a chain of events which had rocked and shocked Jerusalem for quite a period. I understand that tornadoes are caused by hot air meeting with cold air.

And there had been great disturbances in Jerusalem. There had been a wave of hot air from the Pharisees and the temple guard and others. And there had been a wave of cold air from them, a wave of warm air, because there was jubilation that at last somebody had come who really cared for the sinners.

You could say on one hand there were waves of jealousy and on the other hand there were waves of joy. And this event here records the great social event of the year. I guess everybody in Jerusalem knew by the time this feast was to be held, at least this woman had heard of it, and she sure was not on the guest list.

It's a wonderful thing that the only person we know who went to the feast isn't on the guest list. She gate crashed it. I think this man Simon had a lot of problems.

First of all he had very limited space to put his guests, and I figure that he made out a list of guests and deleted one name and put another one in. And eventually he got the list just where he wanted it. And after he'd settled on the folk who were coming, then he had to settle on the food.

After all if you were having Mr. Carter to dinner today you wouldn't give him hamburger on potato chips. Well maybe you would by his rating right now, but normally you'd have a great big festivity, you'd make a great big banquet. And this I'm sure is exactly what this man did.

He got the right folk there, he got the right food, he got the right flowers, he wanted a good aesthetic atmosphere. And as the nursery rhyme says, everything in the garden was lovely. He got up that morning, if I read his mind right, saying something like this, this is going to be the greatest day in my life.

A day I shall never, never want to forget. Whereas it became a day that he never, never wanted to remember. One of those lovely days that you've had sometimes.

You know the first thing you do, you put your foot on the floor and there's a pin there. And from that indication you're going to have trouble the whole day through, because the whole day ended in chaos. People are going to leave this banquet saying, you know what, I've never been to a banquet.

The tables were loaded. Oh no doubt there was wine, because they drank it in those days very much. And I believe he was going to, he thought people would go from that banquet talking about his generosity, whereas they left it talking about his stupidity.

After all, everything was in order, and he puts a guard there and says, look through the lattice, and as soon as you see some distinguished person, let me know. And they came, and according to custom, they took the guest and kissed them on either cheek, and showed them to a slave or a servant, and the servant washed the feet of that individual. And they took them to the table, and they found just where they were to sit, and everything was going well.

When suddenly one of the servants said, master, come here quickly. And he had just been excited, because the mayor, or the master, or the millionaires had just come into the banquet, and his ego was inflated. And he felt great.

He thought, boy I'm establishing myself with society. This is a, this is an epoch in the history of Jerusalem. After all, he got a man there.

The reason for the uprising in Jerusalem, the disturbance, was what always happens when Jesus goes. We say Jesus is the prince of peace. Jesus is the prince of war.

Wherever Jesus goes, there's trouble. He goes into a family, he breaks it up. I remember some society people used to come to a church.

I passed it in England. They used to dance in Buckingham Palace. They used to dance in the dukes.

They used to go to the great social gatherings in the queen's circle, and royal circles, and dukes, and what have you got. Like Brother Red there used to meet with Buck Benz too. But anyhow, at least some of his friends.

And you know, when these girls were not saved, everything was all right. But once they got saved, they became a thorn in the side of their relatives. She won't drink anymore.

She won't dance anymore. She doesn't want to smoke anymore. She won't play cards anymore.

What's wrong with her? She thinks she's better than we are. And immediately, wherever Jesus goes, you get trouble. He came not to bring peace, but a sword.

He brings peace to us individually. You see, Jesus was having trouble here because of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. They were very much the same, a little bit different theologically.

The Pharisees believed in the resurrection. The Sadducees did not. That's why they were Sadducees.

But he had trouble with them. They were antagonistic to his theology. And now they hear that this man, Jesus, the first thing, they were troubled with the man.

The second thing, they were troubled with his message. The third thing, they were troubled with his miracles. He'd arrived on the scene.

He didn't even have a headquarters on earth. Well, he did under a tree. When he wasn't using it, the foxes slept there.

He didn't even have any stationery. He didn't even have a broadcast. He didn't even have an entertainment center for Christians.

You wonder however he made it. But anyhow, he arrived on the scene with no social backing, no prestige. He began his life with a bunch of prostitutes.

How do you know? Because he was baptized between thieves and prostitutes. He ended up on the cross with them. In the middle of life, he's with them.

This woman did what she would never do to a Pharisee. She drew near to Jesus because she'd heard somebody say, this man receiveth sinners. I think that's one of the greatest titles ever given to Jesus, though they never call it his title.

If ever you go to Ireland, it's a great country. It's a bit noisy at the moment, but if you ever go to Ireland, they sing a wonderful hymn there. Sing it o'er and o'er again, Christ receiveth sinful men.

You know, come to think of it, he doesn't receive any other kind anyhow. The only thing that will get you to Jesus is you're a sinner, a stinking, rotten, proud Pharisee, church member, deacon, pastor, or anything else. But the only way to Jesus is that we're sinners.

Now, this woman daringly comes. The guests had been arriving and the servant says, Master, you know that certain woman, he says, yes, if she comes, turn the dogs on her. But Master, she's here.

Where? I think Jesus came in at the back door. I think he came in in the servant's quarters. I like the hymn, uh, they found the sheet we didn't sing this morning, or did we? To that tune in England, we used to sing a hymn.

My heart and voice I raise to spread Messiah's praise. The second stanza is, a servant's form he wore, and in his body bore our dreadful curse on Calvary. He like a victim stood and poured his sacred blood to set us guilty captives free.

Jesus had no show, no ostentation. He didn't get an introduction like some of the big boys get on TV and radio. You know, you've got to introduce somebody.

He's got nothing, so blow him up. Jesus had no trumpeters going in front of him. As soon as he came, there was trouble.

He was only that size. Isn't it amazing that before he could walk or talk, Jesus broke a city in two. He was born, I said, have you heard the news? A king has been born.

And Herod was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him, because there was a new baby about that size. He separated men when he was born. He separated men on the cross.

One went to hell, the other went to heaven. He separated men while he lived. This man receiveth sinners.

Others went away from him. And Simon looked, and he saw that woman there. Oh, he said, in our language, I blew it.

He's no prophet. If he were a prophet, he'd know that she's a harlot, she's this, she's that, she's the other. And Jesus read his mind.

As a matter of fact, he can read yours right now, if it gives you any comfort. Simon said, I made a mess of it. She, ah, he's no prophet.

And Jesus gives him a little story. He said, Simon, there were two men. One owed 500 pence, the other owed 50 to the same man, which would love him most if he had his debts forgiven.

Oh well, of course, the man who has the biggest debt. You know, that's why it's so difficult to get some stuffy church people really say. They've never realized how rotten they are.

If I learned anything the couple of years I worked with David Wilkerson in his early days, when he was struggling there in New York. We lived in that hell hole, that ghetto. If I learned anything, it was this, that when those kids came out of a horrible pit, you didn't have to persuade them they were sinners.

What they wanted to know, is anybody big enough to get me out of it? Is an arm long enough and strong enough to lift me? He only had one quarrel with the apostle Paul, that was that he said he was the chief of sinners. And they said, no I'm the chief of sinners. This woman knew she was a sinner.

I can imagine her at the door. If you'd seen her, you'd have seen her dress going like that, her heart was beating that loudly. And she said, shall I really do it? You know, I don't really think that this is an premeditated act, but it's an unprecedented act.

She didn't copy anybody else. We always copy what other folk are doing. Let somebody stage a big show on tv, and the guy changes and switches his format.

It must be glittering and glamorous. They may not say anything, but after all, you're not supposed, it's not what's on the plate. If you eat off a Limoges plate, it's the fact that the plate was worth fifty dollars, even if you had potato chips.

And today we serve things up glittering, there's not much in them, there's not much substance in them. This woman runs to the Lord Jesus Christ. Simon says, he's no prophet.

And Jesus rebukes him on three counts. What does he say to him? In verse 45, pardon me, in verse 44. I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water.

Verse 44. Verse 45. Thou gavest me no kiss.

Verse 46. You gave me no oil, you didn't anoint my head. He was so busy greeting everybody else, that when the chief guest, that he didn't understand anyhow.

He wanted him for social standing. He wanted him because this Christ was a sensation. All Jerusalem was, again I say, was in a state of earthquake.

There were volumes of hatred, there were volumes of praise, there were great hurricanes of jealousy, there were great hurricanes of joy. People were stopping at street corners saying, you aren't so and so yet, but I've seen you begging at the wrong side. Well, I don't beg anymore, you see.

He touched me. Boy, they just sung that a lot better than we sung it. He touched me.

Oh, he touched me. This woman comes and Jesus says, Simon, I entered your house. Thou gavest me no water.

Thou gavest me no oil. Thou gavest me no kiss. Thou gavest me no water.

This woman says, if I ever get in there, I'm going to wash those feet with water. Not on your life! You mean to say I'm going to get the holiest feet that ever walked the earth in my hands and wash them with water? No, she says, I won't wash them with water. I wash them with my tears.

She should have stood in front of him. She stood behind him. Now she must have nearly broke my neck doing it.

But you see, love doesn't care what it costs. I don't know. I can only guess that maybe Charles Wesley got inspiration for one of his hymns out of this, when he said, Oh, let me kiss thy bleeding feet and bathe and wash them with my tears.

The story of thy love repeat in every drooping sinner's ears, that all mankind with me may prove thy sovereign everlasting love. Wash his feet with water? No. She washed his feet with her tears.

She should have got a nice soft brand new towel. And she said, no, no, no, I'll never wash them. I'll never wash those feet with, with water.

And I won't dry his feet with a towel. And she had lovely long hair and she pulled the pins out and that hair cascaded down. When I think of this, I think of my sister.

She had long hair. She couldn't sit on it. Mother used to brush it.

She used to buy a special whalebone brush. And then when she, when she finished brushing it, it was shiny as though she put some of that shoe polish you shine yours with, you know, whatever it is. But mother used to brush it and that hair used to shine.

And my mother used to say, let you come and feel it. They said, isn't it lovely? And I said, it is. When mother was there, I, I felt it.

When she wasn't, I pulled it. But anyhow, the fact was that I, I never read this story without thinking of this stupendous fact. Wash his feet with tears? No, wash them with water.

Dry his feet with a towel? She took the hair of her head and took his feet in it. Oh, it must have felt gorgeous, that lovely hair. You see, in typology, she laid his, her glory at his feet.

A woman's glory is her hair. Most of you are so worldly about it cut off, but it doesn't alter the fact. You know, if you join the old Pentecostal church, that real fiery Pentecostal church in, in Sweden, the church of Philadelphia, if you went through the door with your hair cut, uh, the deacon would write your name down.

You'd have to meet the, the church board during the week. And they'd say, sister, uh, we don't understand why you're backslidden so much. Why do you want to copy the world? Now, that's a fact.

I don't wonder they still do it. They did it until a few years ago. We're not worldly, are we? No, we don't drink smoke.

But you see, this is, this is where it's difficult really. God's always hitting the pride, and particularly of women. Says you're not to wear ornaments, you're certainly not to wear earrings.

And when you mention this, people say, oh now listen, listen, you know, you go watch this, this is legalism. Anything we don't like is either legalism or bondage. Have you noticed that? Anything that irritates me gets against me.

Well, I think for some, particularly ladies, because we men don't wear earrings. Some clowns do, but not many. But I think this is where you take up your cross.

It isn't being nailed just to a cross. It's every day somebody pointing a finger, maybe in the office, and say, she doesn't paint, you see. Say, no, Indians do.

The Indian war, you know, they do. And some of these clowns from, in jazz bands, they paint up. But as Christians, the adornment is not external.

If it isn't internal, what in the good is it getting painted like a battleship? If you haven't got beauty inside, I wouldn't look twice at you with all your makeup. I don't care if they even do go bankrupt, but there you are. The fact is that this woman took what was her glory, and she wiped his feet with a hair of her head.

Can you imagine that bunch of folks sitting there, and looking, and thinking to themselves, what's this guy doing here, letting this woman make all the palaver? She's weeping, she's sobbing, and spilling her hot tears on his feet, and taking her hair down, and wiping his feet. And then she produced an alabaster box of ointment. In John's account, he says it was very costly.

There are some details there that are very beautiful. It said that she took just one pound of ointment, and it cost 300 pence. Does it matter? It may not to you, but it does to me.

It matters enormously. Why? Because, you see, she was saving this up for a funeral. Now, if this Mary is the sister of Lazarus, Lazarus had been dead, but she didn't love her brother enough to to spill a pound of spikenard on his feet, which I guess is the way sisters go anyhow.

I'm gonna have a real first-class funeral. Are you gonna have one? I mean, it doesn't make much sense. You can't see what's going on.

So why don't they bury you in the jam jar or something? I mean, Billy Graham used to tell the story of a man who was being buried. He was a Texan, and so they buried him in a solid gold coffin, and as they lowered him, lowered him down, one of the colored brothers said, as they lowered the casket, one said to the other, boy, what a casket, and the other said, boy, that's the way to live. But don't we love the outward decoration, the outward show? This woman isn't doing this to be a showpiece.

Nobody'd ever done it before her. She hasn't got a blueprint of somebody else's sacrifice and devotion. She'd been saying to herself over and over, I would never go into the temple, but I do know this, because I can remember hearing over and over and over and over again, my people always saying, well the Lord, he is God, and they're always quoting Isaiah 35, that one day somebody's going to touch this earth, who is God himself, and when he comes, he'll have all the power of omnipotence.

In other words, given back to him, the last Adam will be all the power that the first Adam should have had, and he had it and lost it. And we'll know when the church has really got a super Pentecost, because all the power that came to the first Adam will come to the last Adam. What did he do? Well, when the years come, Isaiah 35 says, the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped, the lame shall leap at the heart, the tongue of the dumb shall think, and he did everything the word of God would say,

and so all Jerusalem is alive.

Why are we being going to the synagogue and the temple, and those old boys go through and they growl, growl, growl, and say, let's all quote a psalm you could quote backwards way, but there's no life, there's no power, there's no authority. And Jesus comes, and instead of being, giving a bit of dignity to the temple, he does all his ministry in the street. Never took an offering, isn't that a shame? I think that inwardly this woman said to herself, I believe this now is really the Son of God.

And out of her overflowing heart she washed his feet with tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. And then she broke that costly one pound of alabaster, of ointment, spikenard, nard they call it for short, but spikenard. Remember it came in the life of Jesus three times.

It came when he was a babe, they presented gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. It came on the cross, and it comes here, shall we say in the middle of his ministry at least, if not the middle of his life, the middle of his ministry. She breaks the box of ointment.

Do you know what this woman was doing? Do you know why she went? Well I haven't read this anywhere, my own conclusion is this, she went there to do just one thing, and that was to worship Jesus. How do I know? For two reasons, or three reasons. One is she took a gift, the second reason it was a very costly gift, and the third reason she never said a word to him.

Everybody and his brother these days wants a ministry. Are you suggesting this woman didn't have a ministry? I met prostitutes on the streets of New York, young men and young women, jailbirds, bedeviled with every kind of sin you could mention. And if you'll permit me to say this and not be offensive, well when I said to one young man, I said, will you take a cup of coffee? It was down in the hall that we had there in Greenwich Village, and he said yes.

And I reached a cup of coffee and a donut, and before I sat down he said this, there was a certain man named Nicodemus, the ruler of the Jews, the same came to Jesus by night and said, good master what must I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said hold it, hold it, you're ahead of me. He said, isn't that what you're going to tell me? I've heard Nicodemus from the top to the bottom, from east to west, and north to south. I've heard Nicodemus everywhere.

All I said, you have a background, and at least a religious background. And he almost spit in my face, he said my dad's a missionary in Africa chasing niggers so they won't go to hell. And his own children are perishing.

Now that would send you back home not to sleep, wouldn't it? You meet a gorgeous girl who says, well I've been prostituting for two years. You see my mother is always so busy in the church, and she's here, there, and everywhere. I've got no time for your ministry.

If all your ministry is to other kids, then you don't want to go into the devil. Timothy says, let them first show piety at home. As I meditated this morning, I wondered what would have happened if Mrs. Wesley had wanted a ministry like a husband.

A woman came to Wesley one day and said, do you believe in women ministers? He said, no. She said, well God has called me to the ministry. He said, have you, are you married? Yes.

Have you a family? Yes. Children? How many? 17. Oh, he said he's not only called you, he's given you the congregation.

Mrs. Wesley had 19. Why would she be running off to meetings and wanting a ministry here and a ministry there? We'd have missed two of the greatest brothers that the world ever saw. You'll see a mark for them on the walls of Westminster Abbey.

John, who was the architect and the god of Methodism. Charles, whose hymns will be sung all over the world this morning. Love divine, all love excelling.

Jiju, lover of my soul. She hadn't nurtured them and nursed them, and she educated them. She didn't give them fairy stories to read merely.

She took the word of God. She took each child, pardon me, each child for an hour, each night. Now all the 19 weren't living at the same time.

She lost a number, sure, but each night she'd say, and Charles would say, it's my night tonight mother. Yes, and for one hour she took that child and instructed it in the things of God. I'm glad she did.

You know what we've done? We've taught Christian people to work and we've taught them to witness. We have not taught them to worship. Our only idea of ministry is wearing yourself thin.

I believe you could win, listen, and I mean this as God records it in heaven, and that's an awesome thing about preaching, that if I preach this message God is going to put it down on something more accurate than any tape recorder. I believe you could win a hundred people to Jesus Christ every day and still be a disappointment to him. Why? Because you haven't worshipped him.

Somewhere about in the 17th or a bit further on maybe in Exodus, where God says you separate Aaron and his sons to minister to me, not to minister to the people. In the Old Testament economy a man could be a soldier when he was 20, because then and now you don't need brains to kill anybody. So he could be a soldier at 20.

He could not be a priest until he was 25. He could not be a high priest until he was 30. Jesus, don't ask me why, ask Winky, he's a better theologian.

But tell me this, a priest could not be a high priest until he was 30. Jesus did not minister till he was 30. John Baptist did not minister till he was 30.

Moses did not minister till he was 30. The apostle Paul was past 30. I don't know why that cut off is at the age of 30, but it's there nevertheless.

So in the old economy a man could be a priest when he was 25. He could not be a high priest, which meant he could not go into the holy of holies. The priest ministered to people in the outer court.

He ministered to people. God says separate Aaron and his sons to minister, not to the people, to minister to me. In the outer court there was daylight.

In the inner court there was a candle light, seven-branch candlestick. In the holy of holies there was no light at all. Now how long do you think we'd have to wait? Let's come down here.

Now forget about the backstreet Methodists and the half-on-fire Pentecostals and the others. But anyhow, supposing we came every Lord's Day morning here into this sanctuary. Not very charming.

I don't see any stained glass windows. I hope there won't be any in the new place. But supposing we waited till the glory of God filled the temple.

Can you imagine the priest coming out of the daylight, into the candle light, into a black chamber where there was no light at all, unless the glory of God came. Now the glory of God doesn't come to us, so we clap and sing and shout. I'm not saying it's wrong.

I'm saying it's a substitute for the, for the more, for the deeper thing, for the more powerful thing. It could lead on to that. You see, prayer is preoccupation with my needs.

Praise is preoccupation with my blessings. Worship is preoccupation with God. I don't know how many people call me and ask me, where can I get Dr. Tozer's books? Or they say I'm reading this book of Tozer's and that.

Now if you want to go to a real good school, apart from Agathic, you read Tozer's book. First of all, read his Pursuit of God, and then after that, read his 21 Studies on the Holy Spirit, the Knowledge of the Holy, and that'll do as much good as a year at Bible school, if you digest them, that is. And I like the things he wrote.

I like better the things he told me personally in his office. And one of the most staggering things was this. I went in one day and he said, Len, latch the door.

He showed me a piece of rug. It was about, I guess, not more than 40 inches by about 28. And he said, Len, look at that rug.

I looked at it and I said, I've seen your rug. These are his exact words. He said, Len, I come in my office some mornings.

I call my secretary and say to her, uh, put a notice on the door. No interviews today. You go home.

I can't dictate any letters today. And then he said what I think is one of the most awesome things I've ever heard. And I've heard the greatest preachers in the world in the last 60 years.

He said, I get on that rug on my belly at eight o'clock in the morning and I worship the Lord Jesus, the ascended Christ, at eight in the morning and I'm still there at 11 or even 12 or even one o'clock. Now that's awesome that a man with a vast intellect, need acres of culture, a brilliant mind, a rich relationship with God. And he says, I can lay on that rug for five, four or five hours and worship him and never say a word of prayer and never say a word of praise, just worshipping him.

Gazing on his holiness, gazing on his majesty. We don't often concentrate. Lord, we thank you what we've done for us.

You've blessed us this week and you've done this for us this week. Forget it. Turn it the other way.

How often do you get there and say, Lord Jesus, I'm thinking of you now. You were there before the stars were there, before the trees of the field clapped their hands or the stars sang together. From everlasting to everlasting thou art God.

Get some of those old majestic hymns say of Wesley's, he laid his glory by and wrapped him in our clay. Could you lay down on the floor for even an hour without saying a word? Most of us would have gone to sleep. Without putting in a word of request.

Told you I like to get hymns. As a matter of fact, you sell the hymn book that he wrote here and everybody should have a copy of it. It's in paperback, a good edition now.

Uh, what's it called? Christian hymn? Yeah, Christian, thank you, Christian book of mystical verse. He puts Ter Stegen in there, Madame Guillaume, um, one that he liked most, best of all favour. He said, Len, I just, oh I'll tell you what he said to me too.

He said, Len, let everybody else do what they like. You and I will worship God face downwards. I read this morning about Abraham.

God appeared to him and he sat on his face. And then I turned into the, uh, Matthew, I forget, the chapter 20, somewhere around there, where it said that, uh, Mary and, and, uh, the, the Marys went to the, went to the, uh, to the grave. And they turned and as they came back, Jesus met them in the way.

What did they do? They shook hands with him. No, they didn't. It says they fell on their faces and they seized him by the feet.

The most favoured men that ever lived were surely the 12 disciples. And I think the most favoured of all was John. Not John Baptist, John the disciple.

He laid his head on the bosom of Jesus. He heard that divine heartbeat. He felt the throbbing of eternity.

And he knew and understood Jesus better than anyone else. Read the Gospel of John, which as Dr. Coffman says, John was the Plato of the New Testament. It's the most profound thing maybe ever written, most beautiful thing ever written.

And you remember that John was on the isle of Patmos and he had a revelation. Of who? Of Jesus. What did he do? Do you think he went up and said, well, Jesus, nice to see you again.

You know, I was the most faithful of all the 12. And, uh, I'm sure you know that I've just about finished the best recording of the Gospel. John who listened to the divine heartbeat.

John who used to sleep with him and eat with him and walk with him and talk with him when he saw him in his risen glory. He says, I fell at his feet as dead. Some people have the idea when they get to heaven, through silly songs we've written, we're going to rush up to Jesus and shake hands and say, hey buddy, you know, I was, boy it's great to see you.

I've been wanting to do this, you know. I remember when we were out with candle or out with agape or out with somebody and the salvation. No, no, we're not going to do that.

I think this woman was awestruck with the majesty of Jesus. She suddenly realized who he was and what he was. And when I see him, he's not going to be the pathetic Christ of stained glass windows and what artists think.

When I see him, I'm going to be terrified with his majesty because his hair is as white as snow and his feet are like burnished brass and his face is like the sun in its strength. Mary Antoinette was maybe the most

beautiful woman that ever lived. She was the power behind the, uh, ruler of France.

Oh, I forget who he was, Louis XIV or XV or she was a big shot. She manipulated him. She was 21 and she was the epitome of beauty and majesty.

But one day she crossed up with the king and he threw her in the Bastille, which is destroyed now. She went into the Bastille knowing that in the morning when the clock struck seven or eight, she was to die. When she went in, she was gorgeous.

Had a gorgeous hair. She had a face that didn't need any makeup. It looked like just beautiful enamel, flawless skin, beautiful teeth.

They put her in the Bastille. She never went to sleep. She had the tolling of the bell of Notre Dame.

When they went in the morning, that 21-year-old woman was a hundred and one. The face that didn't have a mark at a thousand. It was pleated.

It had shrunken. The color had gone. Her hair turned as white as snow in the night.

Why? Because she was bedding the agony of laying that lovely head on the guillotine that would come down and chop it off. I like the hymn that says, Lo, the tokens of his passion, though in glory still he bears. White hair is a sign of purity.

It's a sign of antiquity. It's a sign of suffering. And John says, I saw him.

His hair was white as snow. His feet were like burnished brass. His face like the sun in its strength.

His eyes were living coals of fire. His voice as sound and majestic as roaring waters. What did we sing this morning? Oh, I was going to have you sing it.

You stole my thunder there. Oh, that was yonder sacred throng. Listen, are we going to wait till we get there to follow this feat? If we're going to worship him to all eternity, don't you think it's time we did a bit of homework? She somehow senses this woman.

She says, I don't care what they say. It's a stag party. They could take me and throw me out of the boat, but I'm going to risk it anyhow.

It's a chance of a lifetime. Exactly what you have. You've only one life to live.

You say, I have no box of spikenard to take. Are you sure? Maybe your box of spikenard is your pride. Maybe it's a career.

Maybe you're itching for a pub. This woman did more in her silence. She never opened a lid.

She took the most costly thing that she had, and that's what worship demands. It demands saying, no friend, I'm sorry I can't come to dinner. I haven't spent enough time with the Lord today.

No friend, I can't do this. Because you see, so many of us are caught up in activity. Activity is service and service and showmanship.

And I still reiterate that you could have won a hundred people to Christ every day of your life and disappoint the Lord Jesus. Like the diplomat, one of the ambassadors of the famous Napoleon, used to go around the world and everywhere he went he bought a treasure to his wife. And one day he bought a supremely beautiful vase from the Orient, and he said, darling look at that.

She said, I don't want that gift. I want you. You're always away.

Love me. She put her arms around and he said, like so many Frenchmen they said, no I have someone else I love. He said, keep your gift.

Oh yes, it may involve sacrifice. It may involve leaving home, but wait a minute, and it may involve service to people who are stinking and naturally wouldn't really want to go to them. But wait a minute, when did you last get Jesus by the feet and worship him and adore him and pour out your gratitude and your love until the angels wondered what on earth was going on? Oh the critic stood there and he said, well of course she's just an emotional woman.

Do you know how much that's worth? We put price tags on everything, don't we? Do you know how much that ointment is worth? Do you see what those stupid women have done? She's wasted it. One of them's wasted it. I think you're getting a smell of it even this morning.

How could she have wasted it? He says, the fragrance fill the room. No, no, no, no. The fragrance not only fill the room, the fragrances, the fragrances fill the world ever since.

She took a box of ointment, very precious, and she broke it and put it on his feet. If she put it on herself, it would have lasted maybe an hour or two. But it lasted.

I always get a lift preaching this message. I preach it a few times. Man said to me once, I've heard one of your sermons four times.

I said, you'd be amazed how many times I've heard them. And some of them don't give me a lift, but it's always better. I get back more than I give out if I give anything out.

You see, first of all, we want to give, but no, no, there was a purification in one sense. You see, nobody washed the dust of the world off his feet. They didn't wear holes, and they got grip between their toes, and the slave had to wash their feet.

That's why there was a slave at the door who washed everybody's feet. But she washed his feet with tears. She wiped them with the hair of her head.

She could have anointed. She used tears instead of water. She used a hair of her head instead of a towel.

She could have done it the cheap way. She could have put oil on his head. That was cheap, but she took ointment.

That was the best thing. That was the most costly thing. But wait a minute.

If she'd had it on her body when she was dead, it wouldn't have mattered too much, or even when she was alive. But you see, here's to me, the punchline of the story is this. That when she had washed his feet, and wiped his feet, and then poured the oil, pardon me, the ointments on his feet, what did she do? She wiped his feet again with the hair of her head.

Please turn the tape over for the remainder of this message.

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