

# With What Do You Serve the Lord?

by Timothy Tow

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*We should serve the Lord with our hearts, not just with our actions or possessions.*

**Scripture:** Luke 10:41, John 11:5, John 12:1, John 12:7, Romans 16:17

**Topics:** "Serving The Lord", "Christian Devotion"

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## Description

Timothy Tow preaches on serving the Lord with different parts of ourselves, drawing lessons from John 12:1-9. Judas serves for his own gain, a false prophet who betrays Jesus for money. Lazarus serves with his face, grateful for being brought back to life by Jesus. Martha serves with her hands, exemplifying the act of cooking and serving others. Mary serves with her heart, pouring out expensive ointment on Jesus in an act of love and devotion.

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## Transcript

Text: John 12:1-9

On this 21st Anniversary of the Ladies' Fellowship, may I bring heartiest felicitations to you also on your growth in numbers. As you sang "Channels Only" just now I feel confirmed in bringing you this message, "With What Do You Serve the Lord?"

Let us learn a lesson from Jn 12:1-9 where we see Jesus being entertained by the disciples. The hosts were Lazarus, Martha and Mary and the odd ball Judas.

The one to open the conversation was Judas Iscariot. He had never spoken a word in his three years following Christ, so you could not judge him, humanly speaking. But Jesus saw him transparent through after the feeding of the Five Thousand. He exposed Judas as one who would betray Him. In this 12th chapter, the Apostle John further declares Judas' betrayal in that while he is Treasurer, he dips into the "bag," for his own gain. That is why he objects to Mary's anointing Jesus with the precious spikenard, costing \$3,000 today. That sum should have been given to his keeping "for the poor."

Judas is a fake, a false prophet (a Church Father declared that for a servant of God to be involved with money for his own sake is a false prophet). Judas is one included in Paul's warning to the Church, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom 16:17 -18). Judas serves the

Lord for his own stomach.

Now, I have been principal of Far Eastern Bible College for the last 37 years. We have graduated 350. Have I a Judas from this list? If one serves as a professional, and takes advantage of his position over Church funds, for his own interest, he is a Judas. He serves the Lord for his stomach.

The second character in this holy drama of Jn 12:1-9 is Lazarus. This quiet brother of Martha and Mary went through a most mysterious experience. He died and according to Martha who said he would have rotted after four days in the Tomb came to life at Jesus' Word. He was a miracle of miracles. Were he not grateful to his Lord? A doubly new person, plucked out of the tiger's mouth, to use a Chinese proverb. He surely felt indebted to our Lord. So he sat at table to perform the duty of host. Lazarus served the Lord with his face. With his face also to testify to his coming out of the grave at Jesus' Word.

Now, it must be noted this was a dangerous period in our Lord's life. To be associated with Jesus at this hour might cost Lazarus' life, " But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death" (v.10).

When Christian churches are being burnt in Indonesia will we be able to witness still for Christ? Should persecution come to us can we remain steadfast in the proclamation of our faith? Do we show our face for the Lord?

The third character under study is Martha. Though Jesus in Luke 10:41 did point to Martha's being much troubled about many things in the kitchen, He loved Martha first in line before Mary and Lazarus (Jn 11:5). Jesus together with the twelve disciples had enjoyed Martha's cooking to be sure, and Martha must have spent a full day marketing and cooking. Martha serves Him with her hands.

This is the particular contribution that the Ladies' Fellowship can give for the Lord's sake. There were 14 years in the history of Life Church when our ladies cooked lunch for the whole church. How the Church was blessed. Serving the Lord with our hands can be done by men also, such as sprucing up the Church premises.

Last but not least is Mary. Here she comes worshipfully, unostentatiously, and poured a pound of very precious spikenard ointment on Jesus, which flows from head to foot. She kneels to wipe the overflowing perfume with her hair in an act of further obeisance.

Immediately there comes from Judas a cutting remark. Why such lavishness? It would be more useful if the cost of this ointment of \$3,000 (today's value) be saved for the poor. How hurting is this barb of stinging criticism.

To Mary it is no waste. She has saved this sum since she trusted Jesus for salvation. She who loves much gives much. Yes, Jesus the Son of God, Son of Man, treasures the love of His disciples. "Mary knows my needs, even emotional needs. It is she who enters into my heart of sufferings. Let her alone: against the day of my burying she kept this" (v.7). Mary believes in the Resurrection. She does not go to the Empty Tomb with spices as the other women. Mary serves the Lord with her loving heart.

Judas served Christ for his own stomach.

Lazarus with his face.

Martha with her hands.

Mary with her heart.

Would that every member of Life Church give his or her heart in the service of God. Amen.

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