

Title: The Value of Love

Text: Matthew 26:6-13

Will you open your Bibles, please, to the Gospel of Matthew chapter 26. This chapter deals with events that were preceding the death and resurrection of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ. And in this portion of scripture is found, perhaps, the greatest symbol of what love really is and means that the Lord ever gave. In fact, it was so significant that Jesus said it would be remembered forever. As long as the Gospel is preached, so would this be remembered.

Matthew chapter 26 beginning with Vs 6....

(Read Matt. 26:6-13)

Prayer

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This story that we have just read from Matthew 26 appears two other times in the N.T. It appears in Mark chapter 14 and it appears in John chapter 12. When you put all three accounts together, you have what I believe is one of the most beautiful stories in the entire N.T. about THE VALUE OF LOVE. And I would like to show you the value of love in this story as God has impressed it upon my own heart. And I hope that in some way I can share with you what God has shared with me...THE VALUE OF LOVE.

(1) First of all, I see the VALUE OF LOVE, in the character of everyone who was present in that home. Now, let me show you what I mean.

We read in Matthew that Jesus was in the home of a man named Simon. And Simon was a leper. And according to John chapter 12 verse 1, it was six days before the Passover that Jesus came to Bethany where Simon lived. The actual meal occurred just two days before the Passover. Jesus had been in Bethany for about four days when Simon invited him to his home for dinner,

Now, that is very important, because there were multitudes of Jews who were in Jerusalem. They were waiting for the great feast of Passover. They had come from near and far. And many perhaps were staying in Bethany. Bethany was located just a few miles from Jerusalem.

Just two days from the events of this supper, Jesus will die on the cross. Just one more day and He will have his last night with His disciples. And, dear friends, in these last two days Jesus taught more about love than he had in his entire ministry. The great message, the great burden on the heart of our Lord was LOVE.

We read in John 12 that Mary and Martha and Lazarus were, also, at this meal. As a matter of fact, the meal, according to John 12, was held not only for Jesus, but also for Lazarus. Because the greatest event that had ever happened up to that point in time in the city of Bethany had just taken place. Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead. The miracle of miracles. The sign that the prophets of old said would point out the true Messiah was the resurrection of the dead. The great foundational stone upon which all Christianity is built is the bodily resurrection. And here, Jesus proved that he was the Messiah when He raised Lazarus from the dead. ~~Unbelievable~~

1) And now they are in the home of a leper by the name of Simon. Mary and Martha are there. And there is Lazarus. Unbelievable, but true. Oh, the value of love. It was love that caused Jesus to say: "LAZARUS COME FORTH." And ~~it~~ came forth from the grave.

Dear friends, it is the love of Jesus that will bring new life to any seeking heart that believes in the name of Jesus.

(2) Well, there was someone else at that supper. It was Simon the leper, according to Matthew 26 and Mark 14. Simon the leper was the man who provided the dinner. He was the host. And something thrilling struck my mind right here. Simon the leper was the host. Now, I want to tell you right out that if Simon was still a leper they wouldn't have had that meal in his house. NO WAY! Now when did he get healed? I don't know! Maybe he had been part of the multitude that had been healed by Jesus. Maybe he was one of the by standers. I don't know. But, the thought struck me that no one is unimportant to Jesus. He loved Simon. And he had healed Simon of leprosy.

Let me tell you, Simon knew the value of Love. Think of that situation. Simon sitting at that table as the host. And he had been healed by Jesus of the most hideous disease of that day. A leper had to stand off from society and call out: UNCLEAN ... UNCLEAN... ~~A leper~~

A leper had to isolate himself from his family and friends. He was to have absolutely no contact with anyone other than one with leprosy. And yet, Jesus loved that man. And one day Jesus healed Simon. The Bible says that leprosy is likened unto sin. And you know, dear friends, God wants to heal us of our leprosy. Our spiritual leprosy. God loves us so much He wants to heal us. OH, I hope you can see the value of love in the person of Simon the leper.

(3) But, there was someone else at that table. Martha was there. Please follow me carefully, because I know it will bless your heart. Over in John chapter 12, I read one of the most fascinating things in the entire Bible. In John chapter 12 verse 3 we find these words: "Martha was serving". WOW!! You say, O.K., why is that so thrilling?

Take your Bible and turn to the Gospel of Luke. Luke chapter 10! I want to show you why this is so thrilling. I want to show you what the value of love meant in Martha's life. In Luke chapter 10 beginning at vs. 38 we read of another occasion when Jesus was in the home of Mary and Martha.

(Read Luke 10:38-42)

Do you see what is going on? Martha is so busy. Much like the typical housewife of today. Martha! So worried and so bothered about so many things. Looking at all that she has to do. And there is Mary just setting at the feet of Jesus wasting time. *Martha gets ticked off.*

That is why it is so exciting when I pick up the Gospel of John and read in chapter 12 that "Martha was serving." I don't read anymore about Martha complaining that Mary isn't helping her. All I read about Martha in the home of another person was that Martha was serving.

WOW!

Dear friends, do you know why this is here? It is here to show us that Martha solved her problem. And I believe it was love that made the difference. Martha served! No problems! No cares! No troubles! She had learned her lesson.

There is one thing that we should always remember. Jesus wants our fellowship and love more than he wants anything else. And we go running around trying to serve him. So ~~busy~~ ^{being} doing things. So busy trying to have our needs met. And what Jesus wants so much is for us to relax and love him. Martha served. What a difference love made in Martha's life.

all says etc

(4) Now, come back to Matthew 26 please, and let's look at Mary. What about Mary? The Bible has much to say about Mary. Mary is listed as the sister of Martha. And John 12:3 tells us that Mary is the one who anointed the Lord's feet; and she wiped them with her hair.

In Matthew 26, when Mary anointed the head of Jesus with oil there wasn't anything unusually about that. That was the common custom of the day. A traveler on the road coming into a home usually received that common custom. But, when she anointed his feet, that is where a lot of people would have drawn the line. And then, when she got down on her knees and wiped those feet with her hair, the common customs of the day were all thrown out the window. It was disgusting. It was not according to custom. It was doing that which other folks would not do. But ^{Mary} ~~Mary~~ loved Jesus. And she didn't care what others thought.

You know, we are so afraid of what other people will think of us. Mary loved Jesus. She is the one who sat at the feet of Jesus according to Luke 10. She sat there to learn from him. To hear his words. She loved the fellowship. And then over in John 11 when she came running to meet Jesus to ~~tell~~ ^{tell} him that her brother, Lazarus, had died, the Bible says: SHE FELL DOWN AT HIS FEET. That was Mary. The whole attitude of ~~her~~ ^{her} heart. Mary loved Jesus.

You know, Mary is the only person that I have seen in the whole N.T. that seems to follow Jesus not for what He could do for her, but simply because she loved him.

You know, I am so thankful that God saved me. I am so thankful that God gave me new life in Christ. But, most of us are following Jesus because we know there is no other hope. We want to go to heaven. We don't want to spend an eternity separated from God. And the only way is through Jesus. I hope you understand that fact. And if you have never come to believe in Christ, then you had better get saved today. You had better believe in Christ, today.

But, my dear Christian friends, if you have come to believe in Christ, do you still operate your life because of what Jesus did for you? Why can't we love him for who He is? Do you understand? That is the real heart of this story. Mary loved Jesus for who He was. And her acts showed how much she love him. She wasn't interested in what he could give to her. She was only interested in giving to him. And that is the true heart of love.

Dear friends, I hope you see the value of love in the lives of those at this meal.

(2) Now, secondly, we see the value of love in the cost of this perfume.

CAZ
Simon
Marta
Mary

This is a tremendous thing. In John 12 we are told that the ~~ointment~~ ^{Perfume} of ~~spices~~ was very costly. In Matthew 26 verse 7 it is called very precious. Also, in Mark 14:3. Very precious....very costly.

According to John 12:5 it could have been sold for 300 ~~frances~~ ^{denari}. ~~300 denari~~, a Roman coin. Now, that is very interesting because ^{one} a denari is one days' wages. ^{So} That little jar of ~~ointment~~ ^{Perfume} cost 300 day's wages. It cost almost a years ~~slary~~ ^{slary}. And it was this ~~ointment~~ ^{Perfume} that was poured over the ~~head~~ ^{head} of Jesus.

Now, do you understand why the disciples were so upset? Do you see... Oil is O.K. But, why this costly ointment of spices which cost 300 denari. Listen, "think of all we could have done for the poor." If you have beent there, if I had been there, we would have said the same thing.....

Whata wast...300 day's wages is wasted by pouring on the ~~head~~ ^{head} of Jesus.

You know, love always cost something.....It has often been said that salvation doesn't cost us anything, but it cost God something. It cost him the life of Jesus on the cross for our sins. As He endured the suffering and the mocking of men, as he took the shame and burden of all of our sin upon himself, as He became man.....think of the humility involved in that... God in all of his power and majesty, setting all ~~that~~ ^{His glory} aside and becoming man. And then having to endure all the experiences that we endure, and going through all the suffering and shame of that cross.

I have often tried to imagine in my ~~mind~~ ^{what it would be like} mind if I was Jesus Christ and knew that I was God, the God who created the whole universe, that put this little earth into ~~orbit~~ orbit, that created man out-off the dust of the ground, And having to stand there with all of that behind me, and looking at the people with whom I knew everything that was in ~~there~~ ^{Their} hearts, and here in this human body, standing there with a crown of thones on my head and watching those same people who I had created for fellowship and for love spit in my face.....WHAT AN EXPERIENCE THAT MUST HAVE BEEN.....

And yet the Bible says that he endured the shame and the cross for you and for me. He ~~loved us~~. why, because He loved us

You see, Mary began to understand the value of love. And she took almost a years wages in that one little jar of ointment and poured it over the feet of Jesus and then wiped them with her hair. Fantastic.] And then I look at the life of the church and I ask: What is wrong with us? Why haven't we got the message. We come and we receive Christ. That is wonderful. But, what are we doing that will cause the world to look at Jesus. Dear friends, the issue is love. And it is Mary's kind of love. Dear friends, the value of love is seen in the cost of that ointment.

(3) Then finally, we see the value of love in the concern of Mary for Jesus. And I want to show you something, here, because I believe this with all my heart. I believe that Mary is the only one up until the time of the ^{Resurrection} ~~cross~~, who really believed, outside of the possibility of his own mother. But, Mary is the only one who really believed and understood that Jesus was going to die; was going to be buried; and was going to be resurrected. Jesus had told all of the disciples; but they didn't believe him. In fact, if you will remember the night of the trail, it says that all his disciples forsook him. They all left. But, Mary understood. Do you know why? Dear friends, in this story Jesus reveals why Mary brought this ointment. He said that she brought it for his burial. WOW!!

Do you know what she was saying in that little act? I believe she was saying "Lord! I am in perfect peace in knowing what is going to happen. I know why you have to die. And Lord, I want to do this one last thing for you."

Of course, I don't really know what she said. But I think it is implied. You see, she loved Jesus. And she wanted to do this for Him. Breaking all customs, all traditions, not caring what others thought. And Jesus says that along with the proclamation of the Gospel about his death and resurrection would go the story of this woman's love.

Again, I ask you, do you know why? Because God wants our love more than anything else. God wants us to respond to him just as Mary did. And he wants it more than anything that we are now doing or we could think about doing. God wants each of us to love Him.

Dear friend, if you have never come to experience the love of God in your heart, how can I say it any better than to say that God loved you so much that he sent his son to die for you. And all of your sin is paid for. God has forgiven you completely. Why wait any longer to receive Jesus as your Lord and savior. Come! Now is the acceptable time. Now is the time to make that decision.

And then, my Christian friends, can we not see the thing that is often missing in our life? This whole issue of loving the Lord like Mary loved the Lord. And maybe that is why we often miss out on the blessings of God. Maybe that is why we fail to see or experience the working of the Holy Spirit. Oh, how we need to love Jesus.

Shall we close with a word of prayer