

Worship And Witness

John 11:47-12:11

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The gospel of John records the three crisis points in the life and ministry of our Lord. It's interesting they correspond to the statement Jesus made in John 14:6, which was, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," and all three of those areas, "way, truth, and life" in the gospel of John, are unique crisis points in the life of Christ. The first one, I'm just introducing my topic tonight, is in John 6:66 where it says, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him," Jesus is the way. At that point in time, many of the professing believers turned away and no longer followed with Jesus. The second one is in John 12:37, where it says, "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him," Jesus is the truth. He had done these miracles, these signs and wonders, but they did not believe on Him that Jesus is the truth. The third is in John 19, where it says the people cried, "Crucify him," Jesus is the life. Jesus is the way, they walked no more with Him; Jesus is the truth, they did not believe in Him; Jesus is the life, but they crucified the very Son of God.

You remember in John 20:30-31, in those verses we actually have the reason John wrote this gospel, was there were seven signs or miracles, and it's interesting he used the word "signs" and I've mentioned it because they point to something. They have a message for us. What they point to and the message is that Jesus is the Son of God and that by believing in Him you have life through His name. We saw the seventh sign that Jesus performed last time we were together two weeks ago where He raised Lazarus from the dead. It's interesting that Lazarus came forth from the grave bound hand and foot with grave cloths. Now, I pointed out that the picture of Lazarus resurrected from the dead pictures the salvation of a sinner. We're all dead in trespasses and sins, and we all have gone the way of our own flesh. Lazarus was decaying. His sister said, "Lord," when He said, 'Roll away the stone,' "by this time he stinks," so we're decayed and in depravity of sin. Jesus comes and gives us life. It's called regeneration—we're born again of the Spirit; we have the life of God in our soul. Lazarus came out of the grave with life, but he didn't have liberty. He was still bound. Jesus said, "Loose him and let him go." There are a lot of Christians that are still walking around in their grave clothes. They don't put on the "grace" clothes and walk in the Spirit, and they are bound by their old flesh and old habits. The picture there is that of the regeneration of the sinner.

It says in John 11:45, "Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did," that is, the raising of Lazarus from the dead, "believed on him," that's the response of belief for which the gospel is written. "But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done." In this eleventh chapter, and we're going to go into John 12 to verse 11 tonight, but in John 11, I want you to note that there are three different responses to the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead. The first is that of the eye witnesses in verses 45-46. Secondly, is that of the Sanhedrin in verses 47-54. Thirdly, is that of the Passover pilgrims in verses 55-57. First of all, the consequences of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead were that of the eye witnesses in verses 45-46, "Then many of the

Jews,” those were Jews that were no doubt friends of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, who was their brother who had been raised from the dead, “which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.” This is the gospel of belief, and this was the purpose it was written, they trusted Him.

What does it mean they “believed on him?” John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The word “believe” means not just to have in your head that you believe that He’s the Son of God but to commit your life to, to trust in. We get that concept kind of messed up sometimes. We think, Well, I believe in God. I’m a Christian, but have you trusted in Him? Have you put your faith in Him. Have you put your weight on Him? When you go to sit down in a chair, you put your weight on that chair. You do so because you believe that chair will hold you. You are sitting on pews here tonight. How many of you came to church and crawled down under the pew and made sure that the bolts were strong, the screws were in, and you tested it and sat down real gingerly and kind of made sure that it was going to hold you? No, you just plopped down on it, right? That’s the kind of faith you put in Jesus Christ.

When you go and get in an airplane, think about the faith you have in an airplane. Did they put enough gas in this sucker? Does the guy know how to fly it? Remember months ago there was a pilot that was arrested because he was drunk, getting on the plane. He was going to pilot the plane and, (in a drunken voice) “Which way do I go? Which way do I go?” That’s not the kind of pilot you want flying your plane. Think of the faith that we put in the airplane or the faith you put on a bridge or the faith you put in your automobile when you put on the brakes. It’s just amazing to me. We put our very lives in that situation. Someone says, “Put your faith in Jesus.” “Oh, no, no. I couldn’t do that. I can’t trust Jesus.” You’re putting your faith in Him, you’re believing in Him, you’re trusting in Him.

There’s only two ways so to speak to get to heaven, or two options I guess I would say, that is, 1) Jesus saves you by His grace or 2) you do something to get to heaven—you work your way to heaven. Now, that second option doesn’t work. There’s really only one way to get to heaven, that’s by faith in Jesus Christ. It really all boils down to two ways: Either you get yourself to heaven or Jesus gets you to heaven. You can’t combine the two. Some people think that God saves you by His grace but you have to work and earn it, and you have to discern it. No, God saves us by His grace, and grace and works are mutually exclusive. You can’t put the two together. Either it’s all of grace or it’s all of works, and Paul makes that clear in the book of Romans.

These people in verse 45 saw the miracle but were convicted by the Holy Spirit and trusted in Jesus Christ and came to believe in Him or to trust in Him as the Savior and the Messiah. Verse 46, “But some of them,” here’s the other group, “went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.” Here’s that division, belief and unbelief, and that’s the theme all the way through the gospel of John—Jesus does a miracle, Jesus gives a message, and then the response is either belief or unbelief. Every one of us tonight are in one of those categories. Either you’re believing in Jesus Christ or you’re not believing in Jesus Christ, so

that was the response of the eye witnesses of the miracle. By the way, we're going to see this develop more in the text, miracles are no guarantee that people will believe in God. God can perform a miracle, and people can still be hardened in their hearts and blind in their eyes and choose willingly not to believe that there is a God or that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.

Notice the second response is that of the Sanhedrin, verses 47-54. "Then gathered the chief priests," now the chief priests were comprised of what are called Sadducees. There were two religious sects of the Jews, one were the Sadducees and the other were the Pharisees. They were two religious sects. The Sadducees were the more liberal of the two. The Pharisees were the more orthodox and more conservative of the two. The sad thing is is that the priesthood was controlled by the Sadducees, not by the Pharisees, and neither the priests being the Sadducees or the Jews who were Pharisees, ended up believing in Jesus. Very very few of them did believe other than perhaps maybe Nicodemus and later on Paul the Apostle. Some believe that he was indeed a Pharisee. He tells us that in Philippians 3.

Verse 47, "Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council," the "council" is a reference to the Sanhedrin. The word "Sanhedrin" means the seventy. What it was was the Jewish high court. It was the supreme court of the Jewish nation made up of Sadducees and Pharisees. They gathered together this council. The people, verse 46, ran to them, "and told them what things Jesus had done," so they said, "It's time to confer." Now, we're leading up in John 11 and then John 12 to the conclusion of the public ministry of Jesus Christ in the gospel of John. From John 13, all the way to the end of the book, is the private ministry of Jesus Christ. John 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 are all the Upper Room Discourse that just took place within a couple hours before the cross of Jesus' crucifixion.

It says they gathered together (verse 47), "and said, What do we?" I love that question that they ask because it's the question everyone must ask, "What do we do with Jesus?" He's raising people from the dead, He's teaching, people are believing in Him, "What are we going to do?" It says, "...for this man doeth many miracles." Here, and in several other cases tonight, His enemies affirm that He is performing miracles. There's no doubt, no question that Jesus Christ was performing miracles, and they're kind of bewildered, "What are we going to do? This Guy is performing miracles?" My answer to that is: Why not believe in Him? Duh? He just raised someone from the dead, who'd been dead for four days, many of them saw it with their own eyes and go, "Wow, what are we going to do about this?" Why not believe in Him? Why not repent of your sins? It's because their eyes were blinded, their hearts were hardened. It's amazing how hard people can get in their sin and disobedience and rebellion and unbelief.

They said (verse 48), "If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him," wouldn't that be a bummer—everyone will follow and believe in Him. The result will be, this was a threat to their power and their position, "and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. 49 And one of them, named Caiaphas," Caiaphas was the high priest, and he was a Sanhedrin. He was the president or the leader of the Sanhedrin. "...being the high priest that same year," "that same year" is a reference to the fact that the year that Jesus was crucified was the year that Caiaphas was the high priest. It doesn't mean that it was a one-year term. "...

said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, 50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. 51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; 52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. 53 Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. 54 Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.”

This is an interesting transition from John 11 into John 12 where we’re still seeing the response or the consequence of the healing of Lazarus. The raising of Lazarus actually brought things to a head for the Jewish authorities. They know now they’ve got to do something about Him or many are going to follow Him, and the Romans will come and wipe out the nation and be more heavy-handed with them, and they will take away the Jews’ leadership—their place, their power, their position, and their authority. It was kind of a crucial moment for them.

Let’s look at some of these verses here for just a moment and then I want to wrap up this section. The Sanhedrin met, “What are we going to do? He’s doing miracles, we cannot deny it. It’s undeniable,” and “If many believe on Him, then the Romans will come and take over our place and our nation.” It’s interesting that that’s exactly what ended up happening. In 70 A.D. Titus and the Roman armies came and destroyed Jerusalem and wiped them out destroying the city of Jerusalem. They were then pilgrims and strangers and dispersed among the other people of the earth. They’re going to conspire to basically murder Jesus with the idea that it’s more expedient or beneficial for them (verse 50), “that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not,” which is interesting, Jesus would die that the nation would not perish, but they end up crucifying Him and bringing judgment upon themselves as the nation of Israel was judged of God.

Notice that Caiaphas was high priest, and he’s the one that says...and this is what I call the unconscious prophecy. He had no idea that what he was saying was prophetic. John wrote after this event and with hindsight fills us in with this commentary that, “And this spake he...that Jesus should die for that nation; And not for that nation only,” but other nations would be brought in as well. Caiaphas says, “Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people,” how interesting is that statement? He’s unconscious of the fact that he’s speaking truth that One man would die for the nation, Isaiah 55** (**Isaiah 53:5), Jesus “...was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities...and with his stripes we are healed,” so that Jesus would be God’s substitute. God was in control of the very conspiring of Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin to put Jesus to death. He says it’s better “...that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.”

Here’s the commentary that John gives us in verse 51. “And this spake he not of himself,” in other words, it wasn’t just him speaking, God was actually ordering the words that came out of his mouth, “but being high priest that year,” here it is, “he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; 52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the

children of God that were scattered abroad,” that’s a reference to the Gentiles. So not only would He die for the nation of Israel, but He would die for the sins of the whole world. The death of Jesus Christ was not just for the Jewish people, but it was for the whole world. This is Caiaphas’ unconscious prophecy, and how amazing you see the hand of God orchestrating even the death of Jesus Christ. Jesus would be crucified, as was prophesied, during Passover fulfilling the picture and the type that Jesus was the Passover Lamb, so it was all coming together.

Now, it says in verse 53, “Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.” How blind and how hardened are these religious leaders. It’s interesting. In Luke 16, where you have the story of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man went to hell and Lazarus went to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man asks Abraham to send Lazarus so that he could go to his brothers and warn them that they not come to this place of torment. Abraham said, “They would not believe even if one rose again from the dead.” Here it is. Even if one came back from the dead, they’re not going to believe. Lazarus came back from the dead, and then Jesus Himself would raise from the dead, yet they would not believe. There’s none so blind as those who will not see, and that’s what it was. They were choosing not to see.

There are a lot of people like that today. Harry Allen Ironside once invited a woman to come to church service with him, and she said, “No, I can’t. I’m afraid if I do, I’ll be converted.” She knew that if she went to church, she’d get saved, and she was scared to death. I venture to say there’s people just like that today. “Would you like to come to church?” “No.” They have all these excuses, all these reasons, and you can’t get them to come to church. They don’t want to hear the gospel because they know, “If I go in that place, I might end up getting saved.” Oh, that would be horrible—your sins would be forgiven, you’d have eternal life, you’d have peace with God. That would be a bummer, wouldn’t it? “I might get saved if I go to that church.” People are so blind and so hardened, they choose not to believe.

In Romans 1, Paul lays it out and shows you that they started with a knowledge of God but willingly are ignorant of that so they suppress the knowledge of God, and God gives them over to reprobate minds because they believe not the truth. If you reject the truth, there’s only one thing for you and that is the lie. Either you believe the truth or you believe a lie. There’s no neutral ground in between.

Verse 53, “Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. 54 Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews,” so He wasn’t going to hang out in Jerusalem. He was going to stay away from the religious leaders—the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the Sanhedrin. Now, He didn’t go to Ephraim because of fear, He went there because of God the Father’s timing. Jesus never did anything like, “Oh, I’m afraid. Oh, this is bad. I gotta get out of here.”

I don’t believe that we as Christians...and this is really apropos in light of the Coronavirus pandemic freak out that we have in our nation today. I don’t think we should function based on fear. I don’t think we should live our lives in fear. You know, when it’s God’s time for you to go,

you will go—not a moment too early, not a moment too late. You say, “Well, yeah, but I don’t want to tempt the Lord thy God.” If you’re obeying God, and walking in the will of God, then God is going to take care of you. I believe that God will order our steps. Remember Jesus said there are 12 hours in the day, if a man walks in the day he won’t stumble? But if you’re out of the will of God at night, you’re going to stumble. If you’re walking in the will of God, you don’t need to be afraid. Use wisdom—wash your hands, wear a mask if you want—but don’t live in fear. Don’t let the government dictate how you live your life or what you believe or don’t believe. It’s so very important.

Basically, Jesus wouldn’t walk anymore, but He wasn’t afraid of His life. He had a purpose, He had a plan, and He knew His time would come at Passover when He would be crucified. We don’t know for sure where Ephraim is. The best guess is about 14 miles or so north of Jerusalem, some say northeast of Bethel. It was a wilderness desolate kind of a country area where the Lord departed with His disciples because He was waiting for God the Father’s time.

In verses 55-57, the end of the chapter, we have the response of the Passover pilgrims. It says, “And the Jews’ passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves.” This is a time kind of point, and there’s a gap between verses 54 and 55. We don’t know how long of a time gap, but we’re going to be seeing in John 12 that we’re jumping up to the Passover, six days before the Passover, when Jesus will be crucified. When you get to John 12, it’s only six days to the crucifixion, all the way to the end of the gospel of John.

The Passover was that annual celebration of their exodus out of Egypt when they applied the blood of the lamb to their homes, the death angel passed over, and they were released from Egypt and began their journey through the wilderness wanderings. The Passover spoke of Jesus Christ, who is our Lamb, crucified for us so that we might be set free from the bondage of sin and no longer slaves to sin.

Verse 55, “And the Jews’ passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves,” begin the rites of purification, preparation for the Passover, “Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?” That was the buzz. Everyone was talking about it. Everyone was tweeting, e-mailing, texting, and all that stuff, “What do you think? Is Jesus going to come up to the feast?”

Verse 57, “Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him,” there is the pilgrims coming to Jerusalem and all the buzz going around, “What do you think? Will Jesus show up during this time of the Passover?”

In John 12, it’s really fascinating in verses 1-11. We have the first of three episodes of Jesus relating differently to different people groups. We’ll just cover the first one tonight, Jesus and His friends, and the dinner that was thrown in Bethany in celebration of Lazarus being raised

from the dead. It says, "Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany," here's the countdown to the cross, "where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. 2 There they made him a supper; and Martha," typical of Martha, "served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. 3 Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. 4 Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, 5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence," or denarii, "and given to the poor? 6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor," it kind of reminds me of some politicians I know, "but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare," which means he was stealing, "what was put therein. 7 Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. 8 For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always."

Let's stop right there before we end our text for tonight. Six days before Passover Jesus comes to Bethany. Bethany, again, was just east of the Mount of Olives, only about three or four miles, and a little village still there today. It's kind of West Bank Arab territory. It was where the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus was, but this supper is not in the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. This supper is in the home of a man by the name of Simon, who was a leper. It's kind of interesting that this man Simon wants to host this celebration for Lazarus. Mary and Martha are there, and Martha is busy serving, and it's not even her own house. Let me give you the references. In Matthew 26 and in Mark 14, you have also the same episode. This story we're reading about in John 12 is also in Matthew 26 and in Mark 14. It took place in the home of Simon the leper. Now, when I say Simon the leper, it's Simon the ex-leper. He used to have leprosy. If he still had leprosy, there wouldn't be a dinner in his house. It would be like Covid-19 or something, no one would go to his house. They would all be social distancing. He used to be a leper. Jesus cleansed him from his leprosy, and so they're now having a party at Simon's house. "Everybody, party at Simon's house!" "Isn't he a leper?" "No, he used to be. Jesus cleansed him from his leprosy," which is a picture, again, of how when we're forgiven, not only are we given new life like Lazarus and raised from being spiritually dead, but we're washed and cleansed from our sin. Amen? Everyone's gathering at this house of Simon the ex-leper.

Now, there is another story similar to this that people get confused in Luke 7, and that happened in the home of Simon the Pharisee. So, there's Simon the leper, and now there's Simon the Pharisee, and Simon the Pharisee in Luke 7, invited Jesus to his house to trap Him or catch Him in His words. It was a hostile environment. This is when "the sinful woman" who clearly was a prostitute comes in and begins to weep over the feet of Jesus, her tears wash His feet, and she takes her hair down and wipes them with her hair. It's a very similar kind of story but not one in the same, and you need to keep them different and separated in your minds.

Now, when they ate in those days, they didn't sit at a table and pull themselves up to the table in a chair. The table was only about a foot or two off the ground and shaped like a horseshoe. Around the outside of that horseshoe table was actually a bed, a large bed all the way around. They would lie on the outer bed on their left side, reach up onto the table, grab the food, and just roll back and drop it in their mouths. Someone needs to reinvent this dining room table. I

love it already. Have you ever had a big meal, “Oh, I’m going to go lie down,” you’re already lying down. I think it’s perfect! This is why His feet were extended and the sinful woman was able to cry over and wipe them, and Mary was able to anoint His feet as well.

In John 12:2, it says, “There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.” Now in this supper was Simon the ex-leper, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, who had been dead for four days. Can you imagine having dinner with the dude, “So what’ve you been doing lately?” “I don’t know, I died a few days ago.” I mean, he’d been dead and they’re celebrating him. All of the disciples were there as well. Whenever a dinner like this would take place and a rabbi would be present, it was customary that the public could gather around the outskirts of the room and eavesdrop on the conversation, so they’d be looking in the windows and listening to the master teach, and people would be all gathered around together. It’s a picture of salvation though of Lazarus carried over from John 11. He was dead, he was raised, he was bound, he was loosed, and now he’s seated with Christ in the heavenly’s and supping and fellowshiping with Christ as we are seated with Christ in the heavenly realm.

In the middle of this supper, Martha’s serving, but Mary takes “a pound of ointment of spikenard,” spikenard was from India, and there was only one place in India where you could get this special spikenard. It was very costly, verse 3, “and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.” This very costly ointment, we’re going to find later on in verse 5, was worth about three hundred denarii. The word “pence” is a reference to denarii. A denarii is one day’s salary, so almost a year’s salary. You’d work all year for the amount of money that it would take to have this one little alabaster jar of ointment that Mary somehow was able to acquire. She maybe saved for years or maybe it was in inheritance and she bought it, but this very costly ointment she lavishes on Jesus.

Someone pointed out that we’re never impoverished by what we give to Jesus. I love that because in the natural you see that this wicked man Judas freaks out over this, “Mary, why would you pour that great costly extravagant perfume on someone’s feet?” But she lavished it on Jesus, and we begin to get some real insight into what worship is as Mary worshiped Him lavishly, extravagantly, and publicly without reservation. She wasn’t embarrassed at all that she came in and lavished her love upon Jesus.

In the middle east even today, feet are despised. People’s feet are kind of like the nasty part of the anatomy, and you don’t touch people’s feet. The lowest slave or servant was the only one who would wash feet, yet she pours the most expensive thing she has on the precious feet of Jesus.

Now, the episode goes that in verse 4, Judas, “...one of his disciples...Simon’s son, which should betray him,” said, “Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence,” denarii, “and given to the poor?” At that time no one knew that Judas was stealing out of the treasury, so they thought, Maybe that’s a good idea? Why waste that? “This he said, not that he cared

for the poor,” John writing with hindsight, “but because he was a thief, and had the bag,” Judas was the treasurer, and when it says, “and bare what was put therein,” the word “bare” there means carried it away. I mean, someone should’ve been checking the money and doing a little audit, you know, and making some notes here. Can you imagine that? Not only did Jesus have a Judas, but Jesus knew good and well who he was and what he was but He allowed Judas to be the one that carried the money. Judas was getting rich off this whole thing. He was taking money out of the common bag that they all shared their money in for provision. John writing with hindsight said, “He doesn’t really care about the poor. He’s a thief, and he sees that his opportunity to get rich is being lost here.”

Verse 7, “Then said Jesus,” in defense of Mary, “Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. 8 For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.” Let me mention the poor issue. We should take care of the poor. We should help the poor, but we should only do it in light of the Kingdom of God and the will of God and the purpose of God. We should do it for the glory of God. To be a philanthropist and help people and clothe their body and feed and take care of them but not give them the gospel or not share with them Jesus, is kind of a vain thing. Certainly, James says, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world,” and if we should see a brother in need, we should take care of them.

Jesus said, this is an opportunity...remember it’s going to be only six days and He’s going to be crucified, so Mary did—listen carefully—what she could, when she could. We should do the same. Mary did what she could do, when she could do it, or the opportunity could be lost. The same thing is true of you and me. We let day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year go by, “Someday I’ll do it. Someday I’ll get this. Someday I’ll share Christ. Someday I’ll reach out. Someday I’ll do this,” or “I’ll serve the Lord.” We need to do what we can do, now, when we can do it. Remember, Jesus said for the night comes when no man can work. We need to realize: Now is the time to serve the Lord. Now is the time to give to God our best. By the way, that’s what Mary did, she gave God her best. She didn’t give her leftovers, she gave God her best; and she did it when she had the opportunity. Now is the opportunity. Seize the opportunity. When God’s speaking to your own heart, don’t put it off any longer. “Well, I’ve always wanted to go into the mission field,” or “I’ve always wanted to teach a Sunday school class,” or “I’ve always wanted to serve the Lord,” or “I’ve always wanted to give this money for ministry.” Do it now before it’s too late and you don’t have the opportunity. Take the opportunity now to tell somebody you love them. Spend time with your family. Reach out to others in love.

Verse 7, Jesus said, “Let her alone,” she’s done it because the day of my burial, “hath she kept this.” The amazing amazing point here is that Mary—and only Mary, not Peter, not James, not John, not Andrew—only Mary, not even Martha, had insight and understanding that no one else had. Jesus told everyone, “I’m going to go to Jerusalem. I’m going to be crucified and slain,” and it just went in one ear and out the other, and none of it registered. They didn’t believe that. Even after He was crucified, they didn’t understand what was going on. But this one woman, Mary, had so much insight. I found it interesting that the great Bible teacher, G. Campbell

Morgan, said about verse 7, "At this point I would rather be Mary than Peter, James, or John," I love that, because she had such insight to the reason Jesus Christ came. She was preparing Him for His burial. Remember when Jesus died on Friday afternoon and the Sabbath was soon to come upon them that they had to hurry His preparation? They didn't get to anoint His body, so Mary did it early. She had that kind of insight. How would Mary have this kind of insight? The simple answer, she spent time at His feet. Every time we find Mary, she's at the feet of Jesus—worshiping Jesus, adoring Jesus, praying to Jesus, fellowshiping with Jesus. Do you want insight to the things of God? Spend time on your knees. Spend time at the feet of Jesus. Spend time worshiping Jesus. Mary had insight that no one else had because she spent so much time at His feet worshiping Him.

What's not mentioned here in John's gospel, but is in Matthew 26:13, is that Jesus said, "What she has done for Me will be a memorial for her for all generations wherever the gospel is preached." What a thing to say about this humble, worshiping woman, Mary. For generations... it's recorded for us in God's Word that what she has done would be a memorial for her for all generations, so we need to spend more time at the feet of Jesus like Mary, worshiping Him, spending time at His feet, and get clear insight into the things of God.

Now, in verses 9-11, we have the wrap up. "Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there," that is, that He was in Bethany and would probably come to Jerusalem, "and they came not for Jesus' sake only," that is, at the party, "but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. 10 But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; 11 Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus." Not only do they want to kill Jesus, they want to kill Lazarus. I mean, you talk about crazy! Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead and they say, "We gotta kill him, too." They wouldn't stop their hardness of heart, their blindness of eyes...an interesting example, too, that the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead did not persuade them to believe in Jesus Christ. Now, notice in verse 11, "Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus."

Martha reminds us of service. Mary reminds us of worship, but Lazarus reminds us of witness. We see the Christian life. We're to be serving the Lord, and I think Martha at this time was serving at the home of Simon the leper without complaint. She didn't complain to Jesus and say, "Tell my sister she needs to come help me." She'd learned her lesson to do it out of love. Mary was worshiping at His feet, anointing His feet with oil in preparation for His burial, and Lazarus, what was Lazarus doing? He's just sitting there. Everywhere he went people were like, "Wow! That dude was dead and now he's alive!" I little interesting footnote, and I'm getting a little bit ahead of myself on my notes but that's okay, is that of the family, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, Martha speaks in the Bible, Mary speaks in the Bible, but you never have any words from the lips of Lazarus.

Lazarus never says anything in the Bible. The dude just dies and comes back to life, sits around, and blows everybody's mind. I think it's so cool because it's a picture of the power of the witness of our lives. All you have to do is just live your new life in Jesus and people will say,

"What happened to you? You're different. What's going on with you?" Just the existence of Lazarus drove the enemies of Jesus crazy because he was the testimony to the power of God! Do you know what we need in our churches today? Lazaruses. We need Lazaruses in our pews—people whose lives have been radically changed by Jesus Christ. Amen? Wherever they go without even saying a word people say, "See that guy? He used to be so messed up. He used to stinketh! And now, man, he's alive, and he's amazing, and look at that!" His life was a witness, so everybody at the party was just like...they weren't even just looking at Jesus, they were looking at Lazarus, too, going, "Wow, this is amazing!" So, we serve the Lord, we worship the Lord, and we allow our lives to be a testimony and a witness to the Lord.

Let me wrap this up with five points about worship that we can draw from this text. There are more, but I limited my points to five. The first is that worship is service. Notice it in verse 2, "Martha served." You cannot separate worship from service. If you come to church and you raise your hands, it's wonderful; and you sing your songs, and it's wonderful, and some people actually need to sing and raise their hands, they just kind of sit and listen and observe, "We worship God." But when you leave, if you don't serve the Lord, it's not wonderful. In the Old Testament the children of Israel raised their hands to God and God says, "I don't want to see your hands raised to Me," He says, "You raise your hands to Me but there's blood on your hands. You're not living for Me. You're hypocrites." Worship cannot be separated from service. Martha was a worshiper just as Mary was, she worshiped as she served.

Secondly, worship is sacrifice. Mary, verse 3, poured very costly oil and anointed the feet of Jesus. By the way, Mark 14:3 says she also poured it on His head. She anointed His head and His feet. Worship is service, worship is sacrifice. It's so important that we do that openly, sacrificially, and unashamedly. In 2 Samuel 24 David made the statement, "I will not give to God that which costs me nothing." Isn't it funny how people, when the refrigerator breaks, want to give it to the church? "What are we going to do with a broken refrigerator?" "Oh, give it to the church," you know. Why don't you give one that works? Why do we give God what we don't want anymore? Why not give God your best years, your great strengths, your great talents, your time, your treasures, and your talents? Why not give God your best? Why not say, "Lord, take my life and let it be, consecrated, Lord, to thee?" Worship is service and sacrifice.

Thirdly, worship makes us a blessing to others, verse 3, I love it. It says, "...and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." Everybody that lived in that house, or was in that house at that party, (DEEP SNIFF!) they breathed and said, "Wow! That's awesome!" Do you know when you're a worshiper that you bless other people? You're going to bless your husband, you're going to bless your wife, you're going to bless your kids, you're going to bless your grandkids. You're going to be a blessing to others. When we're a worshiper, we bring a fragrance of Jesus. When you walk in the room, people go, (BIG SNIFF!) "Man, what smells so good?" It's the fragrance of Christ coming out of our lives. What a blessing it is to be a worshiper and bless others.

Fourthly, worship brings glory to Jesus. In verse 7, "Leave her alone. She's done it for the day of My burial, "hath she kept this." She did it to glorify, honor, and respect to Jesus. All of our

worship should be to magnify, to glorify, to honor, and venerate Jesus.

Fifthly and lastly, worship is the witness of our walk, verse 9. Lazarus was there, who had been raised from the dead, and everyone saw him. His life, simply there at the table, was a witness.

Let me close with a quote by Harry Allen Ironside about this story that I think summarizes the whole passage quite well. He says, "The highest exercise of which the human spirit touched by divine grace and regenerated by omnipotent power is capable is that of worship which involves adoration, praise, and implicit devotion. Men may attempt to exalt love of mankind above love of God, but actually the second table of the law finds its basis in the first. He who loves God supremely will love his neighbor unselfishly. The breaking of the alabaster box released the pungent spikenard whose ravaging odor filled the whole house. When the best is lavished on the Lord Jesus, forces are freed which make a fragrance of every department of life." How true that is. Let's pray.