

LIFE'S ISSUE—THE CHURCH: A HOUSE OF FEASTING AND A PLACE OF REST AND SATISFACTION

Message 4

John 12:1-5

Jesus, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ² Therefore they made Him a supper there; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of the ones reclining at table with Him. ³ Then Mary took a pound of ointment, of very valuable pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment. ⁴ But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was about to betray Him, said, ⁵ Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?

Mark 14:6-8

Jesus said, Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a noble deed on Me. ⁷ For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you do not always have Me. ⁸ She has done what she could; she has anointed My body beforehand for the burial.

John 12:9-11

A great crowd of the Jews found out that He was there, and they came, not because of Jesus only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. ¹⁰ And the chief priests took counsel to kill Lazarus also, ¹¹ because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed into Jesus.

A miniature of the church life

1. Outside of religion

John 11:53 From that day therefore they took counsel to kill Him.

Matt. 21:17 Leaving them, He went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there.

2. Produced by the resurrection life

John 12:2 ...Lazarus was one of the ones reclining at table with Him.

3. Composed of cleansed sinners

Matt. 26:6 Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper

4. Outwardly poor and afflicted

John 12:1 Then Jesus, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany...

5. Inwardly feasting in the presence of the Lord

John 12:2 Therefore they made Him a supper there...

S.S. 2:4 He brought me into the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.

1 Cor. 5:8 So then let us keep the feast...

6. Having members with different functions

Martha—Serving (v. 2)

Lazarus—Testifying (v. 2)

Mary—Loving (v. 3)

Rom. 12:4-5 Just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,⁵ so we who are many are one Body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

7. Being a unique place to pour out everything on the Lord—the goal of the gospel

John 12:3 Mary took a pound of ointment, of very valuable pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair...

Matt. 26:8 But when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, Why this waste?

The disciples considered Mary's love offering to the Lord a waste. Throughout the past twenty centuries thousands of precious lives, heart treasures, high positions, and golden futures have been "wasted" upon the Lord Jesus. To those who love Him in such a way He is altogether lovely and worthy of their offering. What they have poured upon Him is not a waste but a fragrant testimony of His sweetness.

Matt. 26:13 Truly I say to you, Wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what this woman has done shall also be told as a memorial of her.

8. Filled with the fragrance of outpoured love

John 12:3 ...The house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment.

Rev. 2:4 But I have one thing against you, that you have left your first love.

9. Being a test and exposing people

John 12:6, 10 He said this not because it mattered to him concerning the poor, but because he was a thief, and holding the purse, carried off what was put into it...¹⁰ And the chief priests took counsel to kill Lazarus also.

Matt. 26:8 When the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, Why this waste?

10. Bringing in many new ones—a prevailing and capturing testimony for the Lord's increase

John 12:11 Because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed into Jesus.

Acts 2:44-47 All those who believed were together and had all things common;⁴⁵ and they sold their properties and possessions and divided them to all, as anyone had need.⁴⁶ And day by day... from house to house, they partook of their food with exultation and simplicity of heart,⁴⁷ praising God and having grace with all the people. And the Lord added together day by day those who were being saved.