

*Mary Of  
Bethany  
And  
Memorial  
Ministry*

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# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Chapter One: Mary of Bethany and Memorial Ministry</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Chapter Two: Memorial Ministry Is From the Heart</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Chapter Three: Memorial Ministry and Compassionate Ministry</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Chapter Four: Memorial Ministry Is Bound Up with Death</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Chapter Five: Memorial Ministry in Nehemiah</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>55</b>



## Introduction

When we began soaking in preparation, we used the example of Esther. In that example, Esther was seeking to be softened by the soaking of the oils, seeking to be prepared, to prepare herself for being a bride for the king. In those parts, a whole lot of the focus can be on us because we are shooting for something. In the early going, there is a certain amount of necessity for it, as long as our hearts are pointed in the right direction. This “soaking” in the Word is with an end that is different from just soaking in the Word, or getting soft, or just being a soft Christian, or just being open more to the Lord or to all those things which every Christian should do anyway.

If we get too much into our preparations for Him, then we are not really mindful of Him. It is my belief that the only true preparation that will really make any difference at all is to have your heart totally given to the Lord for a period of time, totally given, in a concerted manner.

This theme of Mary with the alabaster box gives us even more focus on His heart. In the first of this two-part series, we will discover how Mary of Bethany perceiving the inner workings of the Crucified Lamb drew something out of her that ministered deeply to Jesus. In this ministry, she moves beyond personal soaking into anointing Jesus for His burial.

This theme of Memorial Ministry will be further developed in the second part of this series, which will focus on the Zadok priesthood and their ministry being unto the Lord, rather than to the people.



## **Chapter One: Mary of Bethany and Memorial Ministry**

We will be looking at the woman who broke the alabaster box of perfume. This story is found in three different gospels, and they have slight differences between them. We will start with Matthew 26:6-14, which we will use as our main reference; however, we will draw from the other accounts and portions of them, as well.

*“Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her. Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests.”*

Matthew 26:6-14

*“For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.”*

Mark 14:5-6

*“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 odor of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?”*

John 12:3-5

There are a couple of things we should see. First of all, in the scope of all of these accounts, the ointment is poured on Jesus' head, it is poured on His feet, and it is on His body for burial.

The other thing is that the Scriptures give different accounts of who reacted to it. Sometimes it says, “And the disciples did this.” Sometimes it says, “Judas did this.” Together, these passages give the reader a sense that there was a general feel going on. Now we are going to read some sayings and discuss how they relate to our story.

### **Weighing the Cost**

*“Pretty words are not always true. True words are not always pretty.”* So we have the story of the woman with the ointment. She had to weigh the situation. One of the accounts that we read says that Mary, whose sister is Martha and whose brother was Lazarus, the one who was dead, poured the ointment on Jesus for burial. But she did not pour it on Lazarus for his burial; she saved it for Jesus. How interesting! But she has to weigh the cost. This is very precious, very costly stuff! And she has to weigh the worth of Jesus against the worth of the highest possession that she has. She has to weigh that. Which is greater? She has to make that decision.

*“We cling to the box that keeps us from clinging to Jesus.”* We cling to that alabaster box, which keeps us from clinging to Jesus. Whether it is an alabaster box is not the issue; we find something that is more precious to us that we would not give up, not even to Jesus. We cling to it; we do not just choose it and decide we really like it better than Jesus. We are clinging to something, even as we are not clinging, and it keeps us from clinging to Jesus.

She makes her decision, and she is pouring out on Jesus. Matthew’s account does not say so, but other accounts say that she broke the alabaster box. And in the breaking of that box, we can see an illustration of her being broken, herself. She is broken. To really do something like that, you have to be broken. You are not just going to rashly do something like that. There has to be a brokenness that happens to you that causes a brokenness in what you do. In a sense, you could say that she is pouring herself out on Jesus. Don’t you get that feeling from the story that she is pouring herself out? She is taking her long beautiful hair, and she is wiping Jesus’ feet. She is weeping, and she is using her tears to put on her hair to wash His feet. She is poured out for one purpose, and that is for Jesus.

### **Arriving At and Keeping a Deep Level of Brokenness**

*“Remember, one small crack does not mean you are broken. Let the Lord finish what he is doing in you.”* One small crack. We can be pretty hard sometimes. We can be extremely hard. And if we are extremely hard for any length of time, we are really proud of that one small crack. We say, “Look, I am so broken!” It is just because we are so hard, it appears as though we have really arrived at brokenness when in reality, it is just the beginning. Nothing is poured out; it is just a little crack there. We are thrilled, and yet we have so far to go.

There was a situation that happened with me and someone else that was devastating to me because I had a reaction that was not Christ. It was devastating – it still is. I will carry it with me my whole life. Some people who are close to me were saying, “It is time to get over this.” And I said, “I do not want to get over it so fast.” Because we do that. “I just want to get over this real fast and then it is gone and then I am happy again.”

But there is something about Jesus. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (cf. Isa. 53:3). You get the feeling from that verse that it was not just an incident that Jesus lived

through. He is acquainted with grief. In light of that, I just did not want to let go of my situation too quickly because it was bringing me to a deep level of brokenness. That level of brokenness was precious to me because it is so hard to reach and keep. It is a place that is so hard to reach and keep, and I do not want to pass this up. I do not want to get over this.

“You need to get over it. It is finally our opportunity to minister to the pastor! You need to get over this.” I do not want to get over it. I want to remember forever that something came out of me that was so not Jesus, and it is hard to explain to some people. I still do not want to get over it. And I will not. I will forever savor the wound – not the action that I did – but I will forever savor the wound and hope and pray that it will always keep me low and humble. I have a lot of fun and stuff, but there are things inside me that I want to keep. That is not pretty to some people, but it is precious to me.

So about this crack, I want mine to keep going. Have you ever had a car windshield that got a little crack after a pebble or something hit it, and as time went on, that thing kept growing and growing? And you are thinking that your windshield is going to cave in! That is actually what I want to happen. I want this thing to keep growing. It is not out of the control of the Lord. It is definitely kept by nail-scarred hands. It is, and I know that it is, and I am grateful for it.

### **The Value of Our Afflictions**

*“If an egg is broken by an outside force, life ends. If by an inside force, life begins. Great things always begin from the inside.”* When I was young, Deb and I graduated from Bible school, and we got married right after we graduated. The leadership came to us immediately and said, “We would like to send you to Jamaica as missionaries.” So we went. Now, the real foundation of the revelation of Christ started for me in Bible school. So I am ready, I am graduating, I am going to go minister the Word on the mission field. Part of my job while I was there was to take care of the hogs and feed the chickens. I was raised in Oak Cliff, which is a rough neighborhood. There are gangs, and you are lucky to survive. I was not raised on a farm. And so I am taking care of the chickens, which were laying eggs. We were supposed to let some of them hatch, and we are going to use some of them to eat. One day, I hear this little pecking. And I am thinking, “Oh, it is a little chicky, and it must be his time. He is trying to get out.” He was just going at it and I am thinking that he would break out at any time. Then it just seemed like time was just dragging, and it was like this little guy is going to faint before he would break the egg open. He needed some help!

I broke the egg open, and he died pretty quickly after that. Because if an egg is opened by an outside force, life ends. Isn't that odd? If somebody breaks it from the outside, it will not live. But if he breaks it from the inside, life comes forth. Praise God! There is a value in brokenness. There is value in the things that we go through becoming our workers. *“Our light affliction... worketh for us”* (II Cor. 4:17). We say, “This is not a light affliction!” You know, somebody driving in traffic from Dallas to Denton and they finally get here, and they say, “Oh, it was horrible! It was like the trials of Job.” Come on! But that is us. We are such wimps. We are!

*“The Lord is near to the brokenhearted”* (Ps. 34:18). What does that mean? Come on! Because anyone who knows Christ in you goes, “Well He is always near, He is in here.” Right? “He is always in there, so He is near to me too! I got Jesus in me.” But you see, He does not draw

near to that attitude. But He draws near to you in your broken state, in your state of weakness, because He understood that His weakness changed the whole world. He was God, and His weakness changed the whole world. See if you can spot the wisdom of God in that statement.

### **God Places Value on Broken Things**

*“God loves broken things. We throw broken things away.”* When I was a missionary in Jamaica we did not throw broken things away. In fact, we did not throw anything away. We got there with a big crate that contained all the baggage that we brought. And we took all the stuff out, and we put it where we could, and then I created a dining room table out of it and a couple other things because everything was precious. And we used that table the whole time, and it was the best table you ever wanted to see because we could put food on it and eat. We learned early in our marriage that the Lord is good, period. The Lord will take care of us, and we do not need nearly as much as we think we do. So God loves broken things.

*“God uses broken things. It takes broken soil to produce a crop. Broken clouds to give rain. Broken grain to give bread. Broken bread to give strength. It is the broken alabaster box that gives forth perfume.”* It is Peter weeping bitterly who returns to greater power than ever. You talk about failing God! You talk about failing Jesus! Denying the Lord, “I do not even know Him,” and then cursing when he did it. There are all these things that God made from the very beginning that require brokenness to produce – all of these things in nature. *“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit”* (Jn. 12:24). We do not want to die because we do not want to bring forth much fruit. Oh no, we do want to bring forth much fruit. “Oh Lord, make me fruitful!” He goes, could you just pray, “Oh Lord, make me dead so that My Son could live in you and bring forth much fruit”? That is what He talks about with the Vine and the branches in John 15.

Abide in Him, and He will abide in you, and then His fruit comes through you as a branch because His life is in you as a branch. That is what keeps the branch alive, His life, but it is also the very life that is in within that branch that produces exactly what the Father desires. So imagine if we just ditched Christianity, and we started a new teaching called branch living. And we would include in that seed living, but it is seed dying, or what we call the law of the dying seed. And as branches we decided we did not really know anything else about being a Christian because that was not a concept. We were just supposed to be branches, and Jesus’ life is supposed to live in us. We were cut out of our old life, and now we are filled with a new life with which He will now produce everything that God wants. And so we just abode in Him. Would that work?

*“Broken crayons still color.”* “But I do not want anything broken. I want new and fresh.” So does God. He does not want old manna. He wants something new and fresh and alive.

### **The Goal of Brokenness Is the Fragrance of Christ**

*“A shattered heart mends but has incredible potential. In fact, the loveliest people are the ones that have been burnt, broken, and torn at the seams yet still send out a wonderful fragrance of Christ that fills the room wherever they go.”* We do not have to be perfect. The goal is not perfection in us. The goal is Christ out of us. And the Scripture says that we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us (cf. II Cor. 4:7).

So the point of being a broken vessel or a cracked vessel is so what is in it can flow out. But if you are just working on making the vessel beautiful, regardless of Jesus being in there, you are missing what God is looking for out of this. You just put rubies all over you. And you put gold trimming, and you just you slack lipstick along the edge.

I will tell another Jamaican story. I had to pastor three different churches, and one was called Brompton. We had to go way up a mountain, round and round. It had a zinc roof with no walls around it, just poles and it had boards lying on cut sawed stumps. And my first night – I do not know Jamaicans at all – and there was no light and no electricity and they put a lantern right over the pastor’s head so you could see what you are doing, but you had a hard time seeing the people. They had big old insects that would fly around and around that light. Anyway, there was this old woman there, and she was toothless. She was just your regular Jamaican living up in the hills. And she said, “I want to sing a song to the glory of God.” And I said, “Well you just sing, Sister.” And it was the most off-key singing I have most ever heard, but the glory of God fell, and she sang with all her heart to Jesus. I am a musician and had literally traveled all over the United States the year I graduated, just singing and playing. So my ideas about music were different at that time. When she sang, I fell to my knees and repented. And I said, “God, these people have more heart than a bunch of us. We are looking to our talent, and she is just wanting to love you and pour out, just like that alabaster box.” It changed me. So sing on, Sister, sing on!

So you see Mary of Bethany’s focus. Her focus is Him. She is not distracted by events or people or surroundings or any of that kind of stuff. Her focus is to pour out on Jesus, period. And we are going to see that this causes trouble.

### **Dealing with Criticism**

Mary was ministering to Jesus, but note what is going on around her. The people who are sitting there watching it are going, “What is up with this? This is not right.” They are just beginning to question. It has not moved into criticism yet, and this poor woman does not have a clue as to what is coming!

So next the disciples begin to accuse. They are rising up, and everything is getting bad. Remember the Scriptures that we read and some of the things that they said about her. It can cause an uproar, and this is what we will discuss shortly. It is important to see the mindset. How many of you if you were to see a picture of the disciples criticizing Mary would think, “Those Pharisees are really mean”? But those are the disciples! Those are not the Pharisees, those are the disciples! We always think that the disciples had sweet faces, but they had just as much stuff in them as we do.

*“If you live for people’s acceptance, you will die from their rejection.”* “I do not want to hurt my friends’ feelings.” Oh, they will hurt you. They will say every kind of foul thing against you if you do not do what they say because they want you to jump through their hoops. They do not want you to live free, meaning freely poured out for Jesus.

How do you get over that? I was maybe the worst of anybody, always wanting people’s acceptance. I wanted everybody to like me. And I did not really have a backbone to stand up against some of that stuff. Some incident happened where I should have spoken up, and I cried

out to the Lord. “God, I cannot be in the ministry if I am like this!” Meaning, I cannot serve Him. I am not talking about professional ministry, I am talking about truly being His minister. “I cannot do this, I cannot be this, if I cannot make a stand for You.” And I said, “Lord, if You do not change me, I am leaving the ministry.” And He said, “Well, I would like to change you into My image.” And He did that!

### **She Has Done What She Could**

*“Always remember that the crowd that applauds your coronation is the same crowd that will applaud your beheading.”* It is best just not to get drawn in by people who say things like, “I just really love you! You are just so special, and I will love you forever!” It is a fleshly kind of relating, and we should just love through Jesus – not try to gain more, or try to keep something from slipping away. Just give them Jesus. Just love them by Jesus, and they will be fine. Or they will go away, and they will carry their little ax with them, beheading as they go. And they will be mad at you because they did not get to use their ax.

All of this uproar is going on. People are coming down on Mary for one reason: because she had no other focus but Jesus. And she was willing to pour out the best she had, just for Jesus, not for the ministry. So she has a question: “Jesus, are you OK with this?” That is a good question, is it not? In the midst of all that is going on, all this uproar, she is thinking, “I need to get my eyes on Jesus. If He is not OK with this, I will stop. But if He is, then I will take what I have to take.”

She just wants to know one thing: “Jesus, how do you feel about this?” In response, it is as if He reaches out to her and says, “You just stay right here with Me. Do not wander off, do not get moved, you just stay right here with Me.” That would have been the look in Jesus’ face. If you were her, and you saw Jesus look at you like that, you would just go, “I love you, Jesus! I love you! I love you.”

She did what she could (cf. Mk. 14:6-8). She has done a beautiful thing. That is Jesus’ appraisal. She did what she could. What does that say? Does that say that everything has to be perfect? Or your heart just has to be right? And you just do what you can?

And you still have all these guys around the table going, “Well this is not right. I am a Christian, and I know stuff. This is not right! In fact, I am a disciple, and I know everything!” You are not trying to be something in the eyes of those people. You do what you can, and you do not regret it. If you start looking at someone else and you go, “Well they are doing more than me.” Do what you can. And Jesus will say, “You have done a beautiful thing.” Do what you can, and Jesus will say, “That is a beautiful thing to Me.” You just do what is in your heart. You just pour out what you have, be it ever so small.

### **Ascertaining the Manner of Your Response to Jesus**

*“Service that does not flow from lavish love is a waste.”* Wait just a minute! Jesus’ own disciples said what she did was a waste, and yet it flowed from lavish love. But it was not a waste, was it? In fact, it not only was not a waste, it was an eternal memorial set up by Jesus Himself. Do you remember in the Old Testament, there would be times when someone in Israel would set up a memorial? Often they would be altars made of rocks, erected to forever keep something special in remembrance. Well, those rocks got moved. But in Jesus’ heart, here is a memorial that

will never ever leave Him, and we need to understand why. At this point you may not fully understand this, but she uses herself as a cleaning tool. Jesus is clean – it is His body that needs help.

God chose you for salvation, but the response of your heart toward Him is something different. What is the manner of your response? Let us just say this woman was saved, but there is this response from her heart. And He responded from the heart to her. What is the manner of your response to Him after salvation? And I am not talking about because of salvation, I am talking about, ten years later, 20 years later. It is not about a certain length of time; it is about at what point you will come back to Jesus as everything. Because you felt when you first got saved. More than that, when will you be more ready to just be poured out for Him and to Him?

### **Her Action Is a Picture of His Actions in the Gospel**

*“An aroma steals from every man’s life. It is either like the spikenard of the alabaster box, or like the reeking of a dung hill.”* This is a quote from a famous old-time preacher. So “steals” does not mean you are stealing something. It means, “flows out from.”

To anoint Him beforehand is not putting oil on his body in advance of Him becoming a dead person. It is anointing Him who would become the Messiah, the Anointed, the Deliverer – the one who becomes this by means of self-giving loss, death. Anointing Him for His burial. The anointed Messiah did not come when Jesus arrived in a manger. He was truly a Messiah when He spiritually saved Israel from everything that He said He would. Her act is a picture of Him. It is a picture of His nature wastefully pouring Himself out on people like us. Somebody will say to Jesus, “Why this waste?” He constantly wastes Himself on us.

### **The Great Importance**

Her action was also meant to be to us a fragrance of something important to Him, something He could take down into His death with Him. The whole substance of this interchange between Mary and Jesus is that this was something important to Him. And this was something that He took down into His death with Him. It was meant to be a fragrance of our loving Jesus so much that we waste ourselves ministering to His body. But that ministry would be seen, just as she reached through Jesus’ physical body members to touch His heart. In other words, she was reaching to touch Jesus’ heart, but the oil was poured on the body. We will get more explanation of that, but there is a ministry that is not all about the body. It is about Jesus, but the body gets more ministry than it would have otherwise.

It could have just been a soothing salve that made His tired physical body feel better. Or it could be a picture of how to reach His heart and soothe it. How? Again, by our hearts so loving Him that our ministry is not to the body, but to Him. However, the body receives the oil, the touch, the precious ministry. This happens without our focus being on the body but on Him. This brings unimaginable joy to His heart in two ways. First and most importantly, our hearts become firmly focused on Him. However, we are not doing this as a minister but as a bride. This thrills Him. Second, the Lord’s very own body is getting ministry, and we appear as a wonderful minister to them as we waste our best on them, but really on Him – to touch Him, to reach Him.

For those who are ministry-focused and minister-focused, they will see neither of these things. They will only see a wasteful person who does not understand the greater good that could have been done for the poor of the body. To them, you have failed on every point. They do not see it. Do you remember all those angry faces? What has caused or brought about her ministry to the body? She has seen Him. She has seen His heart, His being, and she loves that. *Him*. She has not had a revelation of body ministry or how to make Jesus happy by ministering to the body. But this true revelation of His heart has unknowingly released a ministry of which she is completely unaware. Why is she so unaware of her ministry to Christ's body? Because she is completely focused on Him.

### **This Kind of Ministry Is Attacked**

This kind of ministry has also unleashed an attack by disciples that has not been so united and forceful up to the time when she poured the ointment on Him. This was the greatest attack because it was His own disciples. Not even the attacks set forth by the Pharisees or even Satan are as great as this attack. Why were the disciples united against Jesus? What would cause that? What would ever come into their mind that such a thing would happen, that they would actually unite together against Jesus? What in the world? This is important! There seemed to be a general mentality of ministry had by Judas and the other disciples.

### **The Kind of Ministry Jesus Will Defend**

This is what gets Him excited. This is what He will personally defend: this kind of ministry. This particular defense was not against an attack by the kingdom of darkness or by the religious elite. It was an attack from those who walked closest with Jesus – from those who should have already known and been functioning by this but were not. Jesus is not fighting against His body but against ministers who have an agenda that appears to be deeply from God, but is standing in the way of the Memorial Ministry that He longs for most. “Oh, I am doing the ministry! Oh yeah, and He is real proud of it. And He just loves my ministry. And He loves all that I do.” It is temporal ministry; it is not Memorial Ministry. It is not eternal ministry. Why? You can do the same thing and pour out. You do not have to change ministries. You have to change hearts.

### **Disciples Overestimate the Worth of Their Own Ministry**

There were things in the Tabernacle of old that were most holy things. They were not just holy, they were most holy. And that was to be a signal. There are things that are more holy, most precious to the Lord. We should take note. Well, this is the New Testament. In our present case, the ministers of God underestimated Jesus' worth and greatly overestimated the worth of their present ministry. Mary's action was seen as wasteful because she took what could have been used to advance the disciples' ministry and reputation and did something with it to Jesus, and they did not see the value of it to Him. They saw the ministry as being more valuable than Jesus, and therein lies the problem. They did not know the things that He holds as precious. You see, there are things that Jesus holds as precious. Jesus is a real Person. He exists. He is not just some sort of spirit being up there who just wants to save people and give us gifts so that we can have neat ministries. He has things that are important to Him. We were made in His image. He has a heart. We should know the heart of God and not just know the plans.

The disciples were still going by their own values systems. In one sense, you can say that they may have had Compassionate Ministry, but they knew nothing of Memorial Ministry. They

did not know anything of it. In fact, they were rejecting it. They were rejecting what Jesus was saying was the most precious thing to Him. So in one sense, you can say they had Compassionate Ministry, but they knew nothing of Memorial Ministry and were therefore willing to stand against Jesus' deepest heart on the issue, just to protect their God-given Isaac from loss.

### **The Disciples Eventually Became Carriers of This Spirit**

Well, did they go out into all the world and preach the gospel? Yes, but they were supposed to carry Memorial Ministry with them in spirit. All we see is that they went into all the world and preached the gospel. We do not see that they got it eventually and said, "Yes, we will carry this as an emblem, as a representation, of what pleases Jesus' heart in all that we do!" Peter said, "I cannot be hung on a cross in the regular way. Hang me upside down." I forget the number of them, but the vast majority of disciples died on crosses because that was the Roman way of killing people that they did not like. We think that it was something special for Jesus to have died that way. No, that was just how they killed people. But those disciples died, and they died for this.

At the time of Mary of Bethany, they were willing to shame ministry that deeply touched Jesus' heart and that would eternally reach beyond anything they were currently doing, just because they favored their own ministry. Could they not have joined with Mary and poured out upon Jesus' feet what was most costly to them? Could they not have joined in? But they stood against Jesus, and they stood against her. They said, "We do not accept this. This is not acceptable. Where is the practicality?"

Has anybody ever said that? "Well, this revelation of Christ stuff is real good, but where is the practicality of it?" Well, it is supposed to change everything. "No longer you" is where you start with the practicality. Somebody said, "You are so spiritual you are no earthly good." Well I said, "You are so earthly, you are no spiritual good!"

Like the disciples, we want to pursue a life laid down in ministry that brings others – the poor – the glorious reality of Christ crucified (In other words, this not what Jesus is looking for. This is Compassionate Ministry, this is the disciples' ministry.). Well, of course we do, but there is something greater than that, and that is Christ crucified. If we do not start with a heart, where are we? We are just the disciples that are standing there with them. We are just the same ones, and we ought to be pictured right there with them saying, "Well, I do not like this, or I do not think this is right," and not even listen to Jesus.

### **Becoming an Embodiment of the Good Work**

Jesus says, "*Let her alone. She hath wrought a good work on me*" (Mk. 14:6). "She has touched Me while ministering to My body. She has tried to reach My heart, and without even knowing it, has poured oils on everybody around. That is beautiful. To do that, to do our ministry even if it is Christ crucified to the poor who do not know the message, that is our passion. It is what we pour everything into. That is a very noble ministry, but not so if it is devoid of a life laid down at His feet. "I will lay down my life by doing this." Or, "I will do that," or, "I will fix this," or, "I will be involved with that," and, "I will do all this stuff."

We have a brother at our fellowship that is a true representation of this spirit. You know, he painted a couple of our buildings; he took off all the old paint and repainted them. And he does

not ask for anything in return. But if you get around him while he is working, it is just Jesus. He is loving Jesus. It is like he is outside over there, and Jesus is there, but our brother is not painting, he is pouring out on Jesus.

Think about the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-35. The Pharisee walks by, and he walks right past Jesus; he does not pour out anything. Then a priest walks by. “Where are you going?” “Well, I have my ministry.” It is not about ministry, it is about Jesus. Only the Holy Spirit can bring your heart there, but you have to want it. You have to want Jesus more than you want to be known or seen or have a reputation or have your name on something, or have people acknowledge your great ministry. They did not acknowledge her great ministry. They did not go, “Wow, I want to do that.”

### **The Value of Memorial Ministry**

It is like Jesus and Mary of Bethany are right there. And she looked up in fear at first, or questioning, and she looks up into His eyes and sees that face. And then she hears His words, and it is not to her. “Stop it, woman.” It is to them. “Let her alone. Let her alone. If you are not going to be here in this place” – You know, I am talking about those disciples – “If you cannot be here, at least let her alone. Because she is doing something that will last forever in My heart. I am taking this down into my grave. She has prepared Me for My burial. This is the kind of anointing I want.”

The women who came early on the first day of the week to anoint Jesus’ body had the right heart by that time, but it was too late. “What is our ministry now?” “Just go tell Peter and the others that I am risen.” It is a great ministry, but it is not that great ministry, it is not the eternal ministry or the Memorial Ministry, which is the word the Scriptures use. And so Jesus is taking that in His heart. He is saying, “This is it. This is the anointing I wanted. This is the burial I wanted. I will go into my death, forever seeing to it that this will be carried with every message somewhere. That what this woman has done to Me. Not for Me, but to Me.” To Him, not for Him. And there is a lot of ministry for Jesus. “I am doing this for Jesus. Do not knock my ministry! I am doing this for Jesus.” You will not get knocked nearly as much as if it is her because she is going to be looked down on. But do not worry, that is the kind of ministry that Jesus defends. Do not worry. He will defend it.

## **Chapter Two: Memorial Ministry Is From the Heart**

### **Jesus Resorts to Bethany**

*“And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.”*

Mark 14:3

Some of the other gospels say Mary poured the ointment upon Jesus’ feet, and I think both took place. The first thing to notice in this verse is that they were in Bethany, and this woman is Mary of Bethany. John 11:5 identifies her as the sister of Martha and Lazarus. She was the one who did this, and their home was in Bethany. And if you know anything about the Scriptures on that front, then you know that Jesus resorted to Bethany, which was just outside of Jerusalem. Jesus resorted there a lot and was in their home a fair amount of time. I think He found solace, rest, and peace there.

Reading the different accounts of Jesus’s times with them, you get the impression that there was something that this family drew out of Him. You get the impression that they took Jesus in, which is pretty great. Everybody took Jesus in as their Savior or Messiah as He had His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, which had actually happened right before this event takes place. So there were a lot of people shouting and praising. “Oh Jesus! Yes Jesus! We love you! You are the one.” And all that kind of stuff. But you get the impression that this family just felt that there was something more precious about Jesus, whether it was expressed by Martha in her desire to want to take Jesus in and feed Him in their home, to Mary, who sat at His feet, which was an event that happened way before this (cf. Lk. 10:38-39).

### **Martha’s House**

*“Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word.”*

Luke 10:38-39

Between that event and the one in Mark 14, Jesus went to many different cities and did a whole lot of things. So this earlier event that happened in Bethany at their house was a situation of Jesus being there, and He was invited in. We do not know how many days He was there, but we know that Martha was cooking. At that particular time it does not really mention Lazarus, but it does mention Mary. And Mary is at His feet at that time, which again is in Luke 10 before the

event where she breaks open the alabaster box in Mark 14. But there is something transpiring in this first event, and there is something else transpiring in the second event. In Luke 10:38-39, there is a flow, where Mary is at His feet, Martha is cooking, and Jesus was being the broken vessel, the open vessel. He was pouring into Mary that which was in His heart. And the story there really does not mention anybody else. It does not mention that the disciples were hanging out or that anybody else was listening. In fact, it does mention that Martha does not seem to be aware of what is really taking place between Jesus and Mary at that time and obviously has no clue where that is going to go in the future. She is only aware that Mary seems to be out of whack with the ministry, and the ministry here is, “We are trying to take care of Jesus.”

If you put these things into words, it sounds just like what Mary was trying to do. Some of us were reading out of Watchman Nee’s book, Why this Waste? And there was a phrase in that book talking about this event here, and it said something like, “We should be poured out to Jesus, and we should love Jesus supremely. The wording was just powerful.

Now, picture this scenario in Mark. Mary is at Jesus’ feet, and she is breaking the alabaster box. Jesus is responding as if no matter what else was going on, this right here was Memorial Ministry. This ministry right here is eternal, and it is going to go throughout all generations forever.

### **Disciples Agree with the Concept of Memorial Ministry**

Before this event, the disciples are walking to this home in Bethany. I am making this part of the story up. You will not find it in your Bible. Jesus decides just before He gets there, “We are a little bit tired, so we should rest. Peter, why don’t you share the Word with the fellas.” And Peter begins, “We need to be poured out. We need to be given to the Lord,” and so on. And the disciples are agreeing with all of that.

Now, every one of us has heard that on some level before, and most of us think that that is what we are doing. This includes the twelve – and we shall see when we read – who are indignant at Mary of Bethany’s actions and see no difference between their words earlier that day and their attitude toward her when they get there. In fact, they do not see her pouring out on Jesus as Memorial Ministry; they see this as a waste. They see the depth of someone who would recognize Jesus for who He is and honor that as a waste. But what Mary of Bethany did is different from these fellas, these twelve disciples who are following Jesus. Just ask them. Ask Peter. “Lord, we have given up all. Lord, we have poured out all. We constantly serve. We follow You. We do everything that You ask.” And so Peter would have said all that, and would have said that we need to be this way. Then he walked into this situation and asked, “What is all this waste going on here?” – And not even be able to recognize this as the thing that touches Jesus’ heart the most.

That does not mean that they are not following Jesus, obviously; these are the twelve disciples. But they have missed something. They have missed something that is important to Jesus. That right there should get our attention. They have missed something that is important to Jesus. In fact, it does not just sound like it is important. It sounds like this is some sort of momentous act that had not really taken place before amidst all the ministry that happened up to this point. There is a reaction from Jesus, and it is sort of a backlash against the disciples’ reaction.

## **What Led Up to Mary Pouring Out**

*“There came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.”*

Mark 14:3

Now, Mary has come to this place based on something that happened prior to this. And it had occurred a good long while before Jesus was in Simon the leper’s house in Bethany the other time Mary anointed Jesus (cf. Lk. 7:35-36). After that, Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary (cf. Lk. 10:38-39). And she was caught up in a pouring out that was taking place that nobody – the words are not recorded – nobody knew what was said. And except God and Jesus, nobody knew how deeply this touched Him. He made sure that this would be put into the Scriptures like this so that we would not just pick it up and say, “I got it because I can say these words.”

Have you ever experienced the Word just flowing out of you when you get around some people, but you get around other people and you want to share, but you cannot say anything? They do not pull the Word out of you. There is no explanation for it. When you get around some people, all you want to do is share. We share, and it just flows. But when you get around other people, there is just nothing. That has happened to me. I have felt bad and wondered, “What is wrong with me?” But sometimes, like in this case with Jesus, I think that there are just people who are open, who are so hungry for what is in you of Jesus, that they are just drawing it out. And it just flows.

I think that is what was going on here. I think there is something in Mary, and Jesus is just pouring; but He is not just sharing the Sermon on the Mount or all the other sermons. This is not a sermon. This is not, “Love your enemies.” Something is transpiring here as if there is an opening, as if He were an alabaster box, and He is opening His heart in ways He refuses to put in the Scriptures for us to discover by just being a Christian and reading. He left it out intentionally, and I am glad that He did. Now in the present scenario in Mark, she is breaking this alabaster box, and she is pouring it out on Jesus’ feet and His head.

## **Disciples Need the Money**

*“And there were some that had indignation within themselves (Some of the other accounts say it was the disciples!), and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.”*

Mark 14:4-5

This is just not a lack of recognition of ministry; this is an attack on something about which Jesus will say, “Leave her alone.” He is going to express that this thing is going everywhere for all time. This is important to Him. He also adds in these little words: “She did this for my burial.”

So the disciples love Jesus. Ask them if they are poured out. “Yes!” Ask them if they have not sat at Jesus’ feet before. “Yes!” Ask them if they do not believe that they are totally committed. “Yes!” Ask them if they know at all, what it going on here. And they would say, “Yes! Waste is going on here. Something that is just not of God. Why? Because we are trying

to reach people. Jesus has always talked to us and said, ‘You seventy go into all the cities.’” That happened right before this story where Mary was sitting there at His feet, with Martha cooking (cf. Lk. 10:1-9). “Go into all the cities and preach and do miracles and heal and all this kind of stuff.” “We need money.”

They could even say this. “Don’t you realize the poor we have with us? And there seems to be no end of it!” – Which is basically what Jesus was saying. There seems to be no end. There is always need. It is like a nest of a million baby birds going, “Feed me! Chirp, chirp, chirp! More!” The poor you have with you always (cf. Jn. 12:8). And the disciples are saying, “We have them here always. This ministry is not going to end. We need all the resources for this!” And up until this point, Jesus probably would not have said anything to the disciples because I do not think He had encountered anything like this. But in Luke 10, when Mary was in the house with Martha, sitting at His feet, and Jesus was pouring this way, she was not pouring out in return yet. Jesus was pouring this way. There had to be things that were communicated that were not doctrinal. They were not doctrinal. These were things of Jesus’ heart. And to discover things of Jesus’ heart is actually to discover Him. And Jesus apparently did not just open that up to just everybody.

And so there is this flow that is happening, and the only information we have on what that was is given to us in this story with the alabaster box. This is happening two days before Jesus’ death. Two days. In John it says six days. We can discuss that. But the other gospels two say two days (cf. Matt. 26:1-7, Mk. 14:1-13, Jn. 12:1-13).

### **Disciples Do Not Perceive the Cross the Way Mary Does**

Do the disciples know what is about to happen? Do they know the Cross? Right before Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, He said to them that the Son of man must go to Jerusalem and must die and be killed and badly or evilly treated. But then He shall rise on the third day. Immediately after that, it says that the disciples understood none of these things He said (cf. Lk. 18:31-34). None. It is like, “Uh, what was that?” “I do not know. You know how Jesus is so deep and spiritual. I am sure it will get into us about a week too late.” They do not know. They have no clue about the Lamb that they have been following. Have you ever read the Book of Revelation where it describes the followers of Jesus as the followers of the Lamb (cf. Rev. 14:4)? Well, the disciples have no clue of being a follower. What is their concept of following Jesus? What is it? Ministry – not Memorial Ministry, but what we are calling Compassionate Ministry. Having compassion on the poor, or on the sick or the needy or the lost or that sort of thing, which we cannot disparage at all.

In that sense, Jesus did not put down their ministry. He just said, “Let her alone.” It was a contrast of ministries in a very real sense. Do what you know to do – because He did not tell the disciples to stop doing that. He said, “Let her alone.” But Jesus describes whatever is happening here, whatever the deal is, Jesus attributes to her a tiny bit of information. She has more than a tiny bit, but He only lets a tiny bit slip out: “She has done this for my burial.” He implies that she knows what she is doing. Because it could have been worded differently. He could have said, “Well, she is ignorant as a stump, but I am going to count this toward my burial because I know that I am dying.” He could have said something like that.

Jesus is attributing something to her that He considers really big. “In two days I will be dead. And she is giving Me something right here for Me to take into My grave with Me, that I can carry with Me forever. She has given Me something right here.” And you say, “Yeah, that oil is pretty expensive ointment. She gave you something really costly.”

### **Focused on the Outward, or On Jesus?**

You see, there is the problem right there! That is the problem. We go by what we see. We go by what we read, and we do not delve. But we really do not cry out, “Lord, but how shall I see this, unless you open my eyes? I am blind to any meaning here in the Scriptures. I am a blind man. I admit that, and I keep it ever in the forefront that I do not have a clue until You open my eyes to each and every verse in Scripture. I live as a blind man.” And we go, “I see! And I am going to add this little piece to what I already know, and pretty soon I am going to know everything!” And we do not. We do not.

So we are reading the account and we pray, “Lord, I want Memorial Ministry. So I am going to check this woman out and see what she does and what she says.” But she does not say anything. This is great because Jesus is shutting off all the carnal Christians. The whole point is that we are looking at the wrong person. We are looking at Mary instead of Jesus, and we are saying, “I am going to get this.” If Jesus did not have feet, we would be out of luck! We would not know what to do. Nevertheless, Mary’s actions do signify something, and if you can see her heart in relationship to this, that is good.

A lot of times we do not see her heart, but we are trying to discover her heart. But what we see is what she is doing. So we go, “First of all, she took something very very expensive and very costly to her.” Hasn’t anybody here in coming to Jesus? Did you give up anything that you thought was really important? I know you gave up that CD that you loved, or several of them. And you just poured it out on Jesus’ feet. Jesus goes, “I don’t use CDs, so keep it.” And we are just so proud of ourselves, which is the exact opposite of the spirit that is going on there. “I really did something for Jesus. I feel so good!” And Jesus responds, “Good, I am glad it is all about you.”

We see that there is this focus. But our focus is on something else, and that is why we cannot get in on it when Martha is cooking and this interaction between Jesus and Mary is going on. See, most of the time, in that story, it does not tell us anything Jesus said and Mary never says anything. Nothing. She gives us nothing. Not in these stories.

### **Knowing Jesus as Healer Is the Same as Not Knowing Jesus**

There is an interim story between those in Luke 10 and Mark 14 where Mary did speak. Lazarus died, and Jesus was far away when it happened. When He got there, all Mary says was, “Lord, if you would have been here he would not have died.” And Jesus wept. Now just shortly after that, this story of the alabaster box happens, and the subject is death. Does anybody see a correlation where maybe Mary messed up here over Lazarus’ death or did not see Jesus, did not grasp this whole thing? Finally, she got it and she comes with the alabaster box, herself broken and crying and, “I heard Your heart and I heard what was in You and I thought I had it and I do not know how to apply it in circumstances, but there is this thing that had moved me.”

This is the key. You do not know Me. You think I am just what the disciples think: a healer, someone who does a miracle, someone who feeds everybody — Compassionate Ministry. You think that is what I am.” And He does all of that, right? We believe in that. But the disciples think that is what it is about. They do not know anything about the Cross, which happens to be about the biggest explosion about what the reality of God is, that was ever given to man. The Cross will forever be the symbol of it, the Lamb slain upon the throne. They do not know anything about that.

### **Mary Is Back**

They do know Jesus in the sense that they love Jesus. They serve Jesus. They have given up everything. Everything that you could say about this woman, they have done. Even so, they have not done what this woman did. They do not know this ministry, this reality. They do not know it. And even though she knew it, she needed to be kick-started. She needed to see something in relationship of a contrast between what she thought she had and what is in Him and then realize, “Oh my God! Oh my God!” And then the tears, His tears, Jesus’ tears!

How many times do we see that going on? And why does this woman’s comment affect Him like that? Because it was not just the comment. It is never about just the comment or the action. And when she broke the box and poured out the ointment, it was not just about the action then, either. It is never just the deeds. It is not! It is the heart, and it is the heart that is toward Him. I am sure the disciples are only murmuring against her in Mark 14:5 because they are trying to do something for Jesus. It did not say that they said, “You should not do that! Give us the money.” It says they murmured.

Why? Because they are entering into a time period, where it is like walking into a time tunnel that is filled with eternity. And they are just complaining, “Well, we could have used that. And she is just wasting stuff. If she just really understood this, she would have been with us, but no! She is just trying to make a big display” – Which clearly she was not. She was not focused on anything but Jesus when she poured out that ointment on Him.

We all focus on the alabaster box being broken and poured out, but to her it was Jesus who was the sweet savor, and she did what she could. That is what the Scriptures say. I want to say it like this: She is back! She is back with Jesus and with His heart. And she is focused. She is not pulled anymore. She is focused, and this is it. This is it. Somebody could have said, in a sense the disciples did say, “This ministry, what I am doing, is important. It is really important.” OK, good.

### **The Difference between Loving Jesus and Pouring Out from Your Heart**

There is this guy in Matthew 22:36, and he is a lawyer. Jesus is sharing and teaching, and you get the impression that they raised hands. And the guy raised his hand and asks, “What is the first commandment?” And he means what is the greatest commandment. “Jesus, what is the greatest commandment? Is it do not kill? Is it do not steal? Do not commit adultery? Do not, Do not...” That is what we think Jesus is always after. Do not do this. Do not do that. He wants your heart. Do not do this. “I will not give you my heart, but I will quit doing that.” “NO! NO! Give Me your heart.” That is what He was getting from Mary of Bethany, and that is why it hurt when He lost it. And that is why He rejoiced when He gained it. “I am taking this into my burial.”

Hallelujah! It is in Jesus' response to that lawyer that He says the first and greatest commandment is, "Thou shalt love." "Oh I love, I love, yeah. I really love. I love my brother and my sister, and I love Jesus."

We all love Jesus. The disciples, if you asked them as she is pouring this out, "Do you guys love Jesus?" They would go, "Yeah!!!! Why do you think we serve him the way we do? Why do you think we left our nets? Why do you think we joined this fellowship or went to Bible school? Because we love Him." But at that event there is a big contrast between the first commandment and second. At that event. There is a difference in loving Jesus and pouring out from your heart.

### **To Touch Jesus, Love Must Come from the Heart**

Ok, let us say that you are married. "Do you love your wife?"

"Oh yeah, I love my wife."

"Well do you show her?"

"Yeah! I work my job. I am a good provider."

In general, that is how men show that they love their wife and kids. It is a very common thing, and it is good. (Thank God for that, at least, because if you do not have that, you do not have anything. You are living in a van down by the river!) But if there is never any affection...

Being a counselor and having counseled many a man, I know this is a general tendency. I have had many guys come into me and go, "My wife wants me to be more and this and that." And I have had several say this, "Well when I get out of this meeting, because she knows I am having counseling with the pastor, I am going to go buy her some flowers and chocolates." And I have said, "That is the last thing that you should do right now. Do not do it." And one of them went and did it. And it was bad. Of course, his wife got upset. "You just throw some stuff in my direction and think, 'Ohhhhhh! Everything is wonderful!'"

Have you ever just picked a flower – even a dandelion or something and just given it and said, "Here. I am thinking of you"? I cannot even put it into words because it has to come from the heart. If it does not come from the heart, is it useless. And you say, "No, it is not. I spent good money on that!" See, you are useless, then, because love is not on that basis.

Guess what? Jesus feels the same way. And so the disciples can serve and serve and serve, but there has to come a day where the gospel is carried in this spirit, where everywhere you go, there is the fragrance of Christ – not just of your little broken box. That could be the second commandment in loving your neighbor as yourself. "But I am doing this for Jesus, and I am breaking the expensive stuff for them!" or whatever. Rather, you are carrying the brokenness of Christ, as it were, because He has communicated His heart to you.

And again, in the story of Lazarus when he died, you begin to see, "Oh, this means something to him deeply, and no one will really know." And they do not. Jesus wept. "Oh, how he loved Lazarus!" That observation was a swing and a miss – totally devoid of understanding His heart, or what are the important things.

Jesus said, "The first and the greatest commandment is to love." We see this happen between the Father and Jesus. So the Pharisees say, "Jesus, to you – not theologically or as God – tell us

what is the greatest commandment. As a master teacher.” No! “To You Jesus, what is the greatest?” “To Me, to love Him from the heart, with all my soul, with all my strength, and with all my mind.” And Jesus said do that. In other words, let that flow out of you to others, and let that be the fountainhead and source from which everything springs. All the law is fulfilled in that. That is Jesus speaking there. Again, that is not the master teacher, that is His heart. That is how He feels about the Father and not by commandment, but by the way it has been in eternity. God is love. God is selfless. God thinks of the other. He vaunteth not Himself (cf. I Cor. 13:4). All of the things we apply. Well, God is love. So all of what is written in I Corinthians 13 is how He is. So we say, “So if God is love and that is how He is, then I am going to be selfless.” How is that working for you?

### **Union of the Heart**

That same God, that same Jesus, that same nature has to be in us. There has to be a joining. There has to be a wedding, as it were. There has to be a union. There are two different kinds of covenants. There is a marriage covenant, and there is a business covenant. Some of you know that a business covenant is a contract. “You do this and I will do this.” It is an agreement: “I will give you this amount of money, and you give me this house,” or something. But there is a contractual agreement that says we will fulfill its requirements.

A true marriage covenant is of the heart. There is a commitment that is based on the heart and not on what is written anywhere. In most weddings they read I Corinthians 13. While going through the chapter the bride and groom are both agreeing, “Oh yeah, Amen.” And they look at one another and go, “Ohhhh.” And it is all this ooey, gooey, gushy, stewy. And it is not really from the heart. A marriage covenant is actually not really on paper because it is oneness. The two shall be one. It is oneness. And that is the only thing that God honors. That is all. Everything else we think: “This is so important! And that is so important!” No. It is only one thing. “Love the Lord thy God with all your heart.” That is what we are talking about.

## **Chapter Three: Memorial Ministry and Compassionate Ministry**

*“Then Jesus six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. 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 odor of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him. Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.”*

John 12:3-8

Now let us go to Mathew chapter 26, where we find Mathew's version of this same story.

*“And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, Ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.”*

Matthew 26:1-2

This event concerning Mary of Bethany – this anointing – happened two days before Jesus' death. Nobody knew about it, but she seemed to, and we will read that. Look at verse two again. *“Ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.”* Now the betrayal started before this because John tells us in his account that the supper at which Mary of Bethany poured the ointment on Him occurred six days before Passover. That account focuses on Judas, who was against this whole situation here and looked down on it. Immediately afterward is where the betrayal began, and it continued until Judas came to the garden of Gethsemane and took Jesus away to be crucified.

*“Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.”*

Matthew 26:3-5

*“Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?”*

Matthew 26:6-8

This account is showing the disciples’ agreement with Judas in their negative reaction to what is going on here. And the act of this woman who is pouring out on Jesus from her heart, they are calling a waste. In doing that, they are calling what is in her heart a waste because they do not see the value of it.

### **Ministering to Jesus, or to Someone Else**

*“For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.”*

Matthew 26:9

And so their view of ministry is not Jesus, to minister to Him. Their view of ministry is, “We take care of the poor, and we take care of the needy, and take care of the lost and everything.” Yet Jesus is going to respond here.

*“When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? For she hath wrought a good work upon me.”*

Matthew 26:10

Jesus received it and apparently did not just receive the work but what she wrought on Him from her heart. The thing that touched Jesus the most, and usually did, is something that comes from the heart. It is not about what we do. Two shall be grinding and one shall be taken (cf. Matt. 24:41). If that verse was about what you do, they would have both been taken. Two are walking down a road, and one shall be taken. If it is about what we do, they both would have been taken. But it is about the heart condition.

*“When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.”*

Matthew 26:10-12

So Jesus sees that what this woman is doing is coming from a place in her that recognizes that in two days He is going to be dead and buried. Nobody else, not even the disciples, ever got it. You know the Bible. Jesus tells them, “I am going to crucified, and all this stuff is going to happen, and we have to go to Jerusalem,” and they never got it. They never really understood it. She understands, and apparently she understands more than that because the way that she is doing this is honoring this sacrifice. She is honoring this Selfless One. She is honoring the true nature and spirit of Jesus and not just Jesus dying for our sins – because there is no mention of salvation here. Nobody even knows that part of it. But she knows there is something of Him, that He is going to give himself for others. And that is who He is, that is His spirit, His nature.

*“Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.”*

Matthew 26:13

So we talked about the difference between Memorial Ministry and Compassionate Ministry, two different kinds of ministry. One kind of ministry over here, Compassionate Ministry says, “Let us minister to the poor. Let us minister to the needy. Let us minister to the lost.” Just about every kind of ministry that you could name that the church does is Compassionate Ministry. But Jesus is memorializing this ministry, which is not going to the poor, or the sick, or the demon-possessed, or the lost or any of that stuff. It is going to Him. In the Old Testament there are two different kinds of priesthoods. One is the Zadok priesthood that ministered to the Lord, and the other one is the one that ministered in the things of God. Two different kinds that were going on at the same time. It is a big deal. So Memorial Ministry is that which pours out to the Lord.

### **Praise and Worship, or Memorial Ministry?**

It is also interesting that when David became King and set up the Ark of the Covenant in Zion, he was the guy who instituted praise and worship. We have taken praise and worship and “Charismatized” it. We make it Charismatic in nature when we think about it. But David’s heart – you know David’s heart. God said it. He anointed David because he was a man after God’s heart, not just after the things that he wanted (cf. I Sam. 13:14). Being after God’s heart made David completely different than everyone that had gone before him and completely different from Saul. David set up that ministry to be before the Lord constantly, that He would get hearts loving and honoring Him. It is Memorial Ministry. They never ministered in the things of God. And when he set it up, it was in Zion.

You say, “They were in the temple, they were in the tabernacle worshipping.” The only thing of the tabernacle left at that time was the Holy of holies, where the Ark of the Covenant was. They are in there with the real Him, the real Jesus. And taking from David’s heart and pouring it on the Lord. They had courses; they switched off so it could be given to the Lord 24 hours a day. Well, that is not Charismatic. That is heart ministry to the Lord. That is what David meant. If we change it, or pervert it, that does not change what David did. See, anybody can just stand there and say, “Thank You, Jesus. Thank You, Jesus.” But heart ministry is what these guys did. And it was not just, “Thank You, Jesus. Thank You, Jesus. It was to release something that David told them. “This is what we are going to set up here, and this is going to be eternal because it is going to go on and on and on.” And when David died, it kept going and they kept it going. Memorial Ministry is when maybe what is precious is not just used for ministry but is poured out on the Lord. And some people may see that as waste. “You are just wasting your time! It is just a waste to do that!”

### **Ministering to the Poor or in the Holy of Holies**

*“Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.”*

Matthew 26:14-15

Apparently if they had given that money to the poor, Judas might not have gotten upset and went and betrayed Jesus. Because this is our kind of ministry, this is what we do. We minister to the poor, we minister to the needs. Of course I am not against that. I am just saying there is a difference of ministry. And it is easy to understand giving to the poor. It is not as easy to comprehend singers in the Holy of holies. I bet somebody was standing there watching the choruses with David's people going into the Holy of holies and just pouring out on the Lord, and they are going, "We are wasting all these good singers, and nobody can hear them. There is just a piece of wood in there covered with gold, called the Ark of the Covenant. These men could be used for the greater ministry of the body."

### **Memorial Ministry Conceived in the Heart**

Jesus never asked for it – David came up with that idea. Jesus never asked for it – Mary of Bethany came up with that idea. But when it was done, He said to Compassionate Ministry, "Let her alone." Or, "Let these people alone that David has sent to do this thing. I did not ask for it, but if they are going to do this from their heart, then I am going to expose Myself a little bit to you and tell you this is a memorial to Me. I will set up a memorial in My heart, and it will go everywhere the gospel goes." The disciples fed the multitudes, they did all kinds of things, but all of that is not considered a memorial; they were simply events. But this was a memorial. And everywhere for all time this is supposed to be told so that people can know the Lord's heart – so that people can know the Lord's heart because we would not get it otherwise. If this never happened, we would think that it is only about ministering to the needs of a wretched world, a lost and dying world. But by this we get Jesus speaking out to a place that He did not feel to speak to us before. And He said, "This is going to be a memorial in My heart. I am taking this into My burial with Me. I will not forget this."

### **Memorial Ministry Recognizes the True Fragrance**

*"And the house was filled with odor of the ointment."*

John 12:3

Forget the fact that the perfume filled the room. From that point on it fills everywhere the true gospel goes and even fills the throne room with its fragrance. But Jesus was always the true fragrance. To her, she already smelled Jesus, and it brought her into a dangerous position where she was willing not only to look bad, maybe she does not know what is going to happen in two days, but she knows that this is a self-giving Being. And she just wants to honor Him, honor His way, honor His heart, and let Him know, "I see You. I think I know what You are really about, and it is not just all about the great things for which people are following You around like the multitudes do, trying to get healed or delivered. You do that, yes, You do that, but I do not just want to honor what You do. I want a moment, if I can, to honor the heart from which all this comes. If I may."

Well, no, you may not because the disciples did not like it. No, you may not. But she did, anyway. And she did it from the heart. We make such a big deal of the ointment. "Oh, the ointment! The alabaster box! Such a holy box!" Or, "The ointment that filled the room, such a lovely fragrance!" It was not any different from any other spikenard. But you say, "But it filled the whole room!" To her, Jesus' fragrance and beauty filled her whole heart and being and it moved her, motivated her. It moved her more toward Jesus.

Is it not possible that we could all get real busy for Jesus and really not be spending much time with Jesus at all? It is true, and we have all done it. You get so busy for the Lord, and you have lost that. And you say, “Well, I am doing it for Jesus. He ought to appreciate it.” But Jesus is something beyond that to her, He has filled her heart with His fragrance. And it is not about what she did, it is about who He is.

### **Preferring the Signpost to Jesus**

That would be like Jesus standing right there, and I am going, “It is about Jesus! Jesus is the whole thing! He is what it is all about! He is everything!” And the whole time you are sitting here looking at me. And somebody says, “Wow, that Randy is a good pointer! He can really point!” It is like somebody wanting to go to Disney World, and you see a sign that says, “Disney World” that has an arrow pointing down the road. You get out and grab the signpost and go, “Oh, what a gorgeous sign! What a wonderful sign!” Well that is all any of us are. We are just pointing to Jesus. It is not about us; we are just signposts. JESUS JESUS. But somehow people in the ministry look at other people who point to Jesus and go, “What a great signpost that is. That is better than a lot of signposts.” It does not matter if it has flowers or scrollwork on it, saying, “Jesus this way.” Then you get down the road, and there is a wooden sign that is worn out, and it is saying, “Jesus” with an arrow pointing that way. It is all pointing to Jesus. But we get our eyes off of Jesus because our hearts are not set like they should be. And that is not condemnation. That is an indication for us to keep going.

### **Too Focused on Jesus to React**

*“But when the disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?”*

Matthew 26:8

So here is my little note on that. How disappointed was she that this type of ministry was called waste by others, and especially others who were the most prominent of the disciples of Jesus? Probably not at all, seeing Jesus’ response towards her. She probably was not disappointed by their response. She was probably focused on Him. You know, imagine her kneeling before Him and saying, “I am here to honor You. I am here to love You. I am here to leave something eternal so You could go into death carrying the fact that we get it, what You are really like.” And somebody goes, “Well, look at that woman!” And she goes, “What are you talking about? I am doing something for Jesus. You do not get it, do you?” – Because they did not get it. Can you imagine her saying, “You do not get it, do you? I am of God, and you are not!” That would have been an ugly odor! I think she checked with Jesus. I think she looked at His face, and if He was all right with it, she was all right.

### **Perceiving What Is Really Happening with Jesus**

*“For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.”*

Matthew 26:12

He would not merely be refreshed at that moment by her act, but would take it down into His burial with Him. Though no one else knew, Jesus was aware of the great darkness to come shortly involving the Romans and the chief priests and God’s people who would condemn him to death as a heretic. Wow! This is what He is going to face in two days. It is going to get dark when He

is hanging on the Cross because the world is dark. And Jesus is getting one little drop of refreshment because only one person seems to really realize what is about to happen, and she is honoring that. And she is honoring His self-giving, right into the death. And He says, "Let her alone. This is for Me. This is mine."

Looking at Matthew 26:8 again. *"But when the disciples saw it they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?"* Worse still, these very same disciples would run and hide. In two days the religious leaders would come to kill Jesus. One of them was one that He chose to be with Him and close to him. And that person chose not to be but actually chose to be far from Him. We all make our choices, Amen? And we will all stand before God for those choices. But worse yet, that these very disciples would run and hide. And as soon as this thing happens, they are the opposite of Jesus in self-giving. They are self-protecting. "If Jesus is going down, we are not going down with Him!"

They knew nothing of where Jesus was spiritually during this time, what He was going through, what He knew. What if somebody told you that in two days you were going to be dead for certain? You are hanging out with everybody, and they do not know it. How would everything appear to you? People would be acting the regular way that they are with no thought of it, and you would look at everything and the things people put importance on, and you would go, "This is kind of weird." How much more Jesus, who is looking at it and going, "They are clueless. That is all I am getting."

But then this woman comes.

#### **"At Least Peter Made It!"**

The only thing that Peter would send down with Jesus into his burial was the fact that he denied him three times just before his crucifixion. "Here, take this into Your death." But even though he failed, we know that he made it, and that gives us relief. You see, that is our thinking. Peter did make it. Praise God! Peter made it! He made it later, but that does not take into consideration Jesus' heart at the moment, where Peter should have been with Jesus. Especially the guy who just said, "I will die for you."

Of course Jesus knew better, but what we are trying to bring out is that our consideration is us, and that is why we get upset with this woman. And that is also why we get happy when we go, "Peter made it home!" It is all about making it home. "Peter made it, so I will probably make it. So it does not matter what I do or how I violate His heart." We are all the same. We do not need to point anybody out. We are not thinking about His heart. We do not know what Memorial Ministry is.

So all we want to know is a prophetic word. "Does Peter make it? Just give me a prophecy. Just give me a word from the Lord." Yes, he makes it. "Then there is a good chance I will make it." It does not matter how we abuse the Lord. It is not about condemnation. I am not trying to condemn. I really want us to be ever more mindful of Him in all of this instead of us, and Him being mindful always of us. What we are aiming for is that the Holy Spirit could open up more of our heart to more of His heart, like David's heart.

### **It Takes a Moment for Jesus to Understand**

*“And when Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman?  
For she hath wrought a good work on me.”*

Matthew 26:10

Look at Jesus' response to these disciples. It says, “When Jesus understood it, He said unto them.” What a strange phrase is used just prior to Jesus standing up for her! It says, “When Jesus understood it.” It was as if He was so caught up and reveling in the actions and heart of this woman that to comprehend the angle that they were coming from took a few moments of adjustment. “When Jesus understood it.” How foreign at times must be our interjections, our words or things that we say to Him when we think we are adding something so important or spiritual. How weird, but how weird that it says, “When Jesus understood it.” “How dumb are you Jesus?” He is not dumb! He is Other. It is a big difference. He is seeing this situation with this woman as eternal and a memorial for all time. And they are going, “Well, she should have given us that money. We could have blessed some more people. Our ministry could have gotten bigger.” And Jesus had to adjust and go, “What? Ugh... Ok, now I get where you are coming from. It is hard for Me to go there. But that is how you think. I forgot, that is how you think.” We do not let this mind be in us that was also in Christ Jesus (cf. Phil. 2:5).

### **This Woman Ministered to his Body Also**

Let us read Matthew 26:12 now. *“For in that she has poured this ointment on my body, she hath done it for my burial.”* Again, there is a contrast here in ministry. Some understand that the application of Christ crucified on our part involves stepping down from a higher place in order to minister to the least – in this case, the poorer members of the body. But this woman ministered to His body also. What is the difference? Unlike her, we minister to members of Jesus's body, having a mentality that by ministering to members of His body and others, this will minister to Him. But her approach was just the opposite. Her first priority was Him, which resulted in ministry to His body. She is looking at Him, but she is pouring the ointment on His body. In other words, we really see it as separate. Here is Jesus, and here are a couple of members. And so we go, “Here is some food. I am going to pray for you and your sicknesses. Let me do this.” And it is like Jesus is way up there, and I am going to minister to members of His body. There is not a whole lot of thought about ministering to Jesus. It is just doing something that will make Him happy. “I am ministering to You.” That is different from what Mary did.

How do you explain that to the twelve disciples watching up against the wall, listening to this whole thing? “No, No, we need to take this and find some people and do!” She is ministering to His body, but she is not; she is ministering unto Him. But it ministers to His body, also. To her, that is not separate. You are actually ministering to Him, but we always see the vessels. For better or for worse, we see the vessels. “Well, I am not going to minister to that person over there! But I will minister to this person over here.” Well, is it Jesus's body?

### **The Type of Ministry Is Determined by Focus**

Her first priority was Him, which resulted in ministry to His body. And in one scenario, our focus is on the ministry toward others, but in the other, our focus is upon Him only. But can we see Him there? No, we do not because we are too busy taking care of them. Even if we call them His body, we see them. How many minister to Jesus in them? We say, “This is for You. I love

You. I love You!” And you are hugging His body, but you are not. You are hugging Him. “I am with You, Jesus!” And you are pouring out, and He is going, “You are drowning Me, here!” Because there is so much love, so much self-giving. How powerful is that? How powerful is the contrast? It is incredible. Because now it is only about Jesus in your heart. But you are still doing stuff to the body.

There is a concept where we can get back to this ministry instead of this Jesus. We can stay with the Jesus and still minister to His body. But you are going to have to start ministering to Him. You are going to have to start seeing Him. You are going to have to start thinking about Him. You are going to have to do it for Him. You are going to have to bless His heart, you cannot do it to His body – not and have Memorial Ministry. I did not say it was not good ministry over here, Compassionate Ministry, but do not call it Memorial Ministry because it is not.

In one scenario, the focus of the ministry is towards others, and in the other the focus is on Him only. The end result is that He might say, “It is a good work you have wrought upon Me. He would not say, “Thanks for taking care of My body down there. See the difference, down there. Thanks for taking care of My body down there. No, he will say, “You have wrought a good work on Me, which includes My body.”

## **Chapter Four: Memorial Ministry Is Bound Up with Death**

The theme of this sharing is, “It Is Not About Us or Others, or Us For Others; It Is About Him

*“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist (or held together). And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.”*

Colossians 1:16-19

### **Figuring Out Who We Are**

We will be in the gospel of John chapter 11. By the blessing of the Holy Spirit, we will try to show you Jesus’ heart a little more. I think that so much of the time when we are reading Scripture, somehow we are looking for us in there. This is the story of Lazarus being raised. In this story you have Jesus, the disciples, Martha, Mary, Lazarus, and people who are observing, that say some things in the process. You have all these people, and we are trying to figure out who we are. But the Bible says, *“For ye are dead and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then ye shall appear”* (Col. 4:3-4). And the verse does not say, “When the King appears;” this is not the Soon Coming King. This is your life, when He who is your life appears. This is the process. So when He gets to appear in you as life, you begin to realize, *“I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless... not I, but Christ liveth in me”* (Gal. 2:20).

You begin to read things, and you begin to identify with Him instead of, “I am like Peter.” Well, Peter was crucified with Christ, also. “I am like Paul.” Or someone else says, “I am like David.” We pick someone we really admire, and that is who we say we are like. Very few of us say, “I am like Judas.” And because of our viewpoint and seeing things from an “Us” perspective, we completely miss the heart of Jesus, and it is as evident as can be.

Matthew 6:19 says to lay not up things in the earth, but to lay up treasures in heaven. If someone broke in and took your most prized possessions, you would exclaim, “Lord, this is not right! This is not fair! This is wrong! Somebody offended me, somebody took my stuff!” And He would say, “I told you not to lay up treasures in the earth. Why are you disobeying Me? Why are you living contrarily to what I spoke to you?” We never see it like that. We assume that if

someone stole it, then we are the injured party. We are separate from Him. We do not really have His heart in the matter, so we miss Jesus. And that is just a silly example, but hopefully it is something you can remember, the things that the Lord has shared with me over the years. It is just sad that we miss Jesus.

### **Jesus Shows His Love**

*“Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)”*

John 11:1-2

I think there are some wonderful things in this story. Do we know who this Mary is? This is Mary of Bethany. This is one who is supposed to portray to us, this is the one who demonstrated the Memorial Ministry and gives us a clue to what it is all about. We have to keep that in mind because that is who is involved in the story.

*“Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.”*

John 11:3-6

Here we have two verses that say Jesus loved. It includes Lazarus, but He loves this family. He loves Martha, and He loves Mary. He loves them, and when He heard that Lazarus was sick – and this would affect the family and those whom He loved – He stayed where He was for two days. “He did not love them, then! Jesus did not love them! If He loved them, He would have been right there. Because His job is to minister to my every need. And when things go bad, He is supposed to show up!” So either He does not love them, which means the Bible is false, or He does love them and stays back. Stays back for what? Death.

### **Sickness That Is Not unto Death**

*“He abode two days still in the same place where he was. Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again.”*

John 11:6-7

The message comes from them and says, “Your friend is sick. The one whom you love is sick.” And Jesus says, “Well ok.” He turns to his disciples, and they say, “Let us pack up and go.” He goes, “No, let us wait a few days.” And the disciples, if you read the story, go back and forth. They do not even know it, and Jesus says, “He is asleep.” And they reply, “Well, if he is asleep, then he is ok.” It is like talking to us. “What?” “He is dead.” If they cannot get that, then they are not going to get Mary of Bethany. So Jesus says this sickness is not unto death. Well, he is dead.

So Jesus waits around for a good week, it seems, because He seemed like He was pretty far away with his disciples. When he got there, Lazarus had already been dead four days. So we are

talking a good week, possibly. Martha meets him before he even gets to Bethany. I guess she heard He was coming. And Martha is ready to do something, you know. Let us get this thing fixed! And she is going, “Oh, if You had been here he would have been raised.”

Now what I want to start with is the fact that Jesus says this sickness is not unto death. We know that Lazarus dies. I have told you many times before, do not pray over someone, “This sickness is not unto death” because they will probably die. I know Christians, pastors, and ministers who have been ministers for years, and they quote this all the time and yet never notice that Lazarus died, but he did. And he died because Jesus wanted him to die. I will let you wrestle with all the facts of this. But that is the context for the whole story that follows. It says that when Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, He stayed two days.

*“And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.”*

John 11:44

What we want to emphasize in this verse is the phrase, “He that was dead.” He died, so now we have to examine what Jesus meant when He said that Lazarus’ sickness was not unto death. We believe in the end that God intends that we live, that we have life, but Brothers and Sisters, it is supposed to be Jesus’ life! So the sickness is not unto death because it becomes Christ in you. It becomes Christ, His life, and then it is not unto death though it might include death. We are talking about physical death here, but it could be spiritual as well.

Jesus knows, and that is why later He says, “*I am the way, the truth and the life*” (Jn. 14:6). That is where that verse comes from because He knows what He is talking about, and the others do not. They do not understand His words, and they do not understand His actions because they do not understand the heart of the Lamb, which is that there would be a death, but there would also be a life after that – and not someday in heaven, but that Christ be formed in us now. This is the way the Lord thinks, so this is the way He talks throughout this situation. In Jesus, death is not unto death. It may include death, but it is not unto death. It is unto life, and He is that life.

Well, if His goal is life, then why does He allow this death? That is the question. That is the right question. Why does He allow this death? Why does He allow us to go through deaths? Why does He allow that? Paul says something about it. In II Corinthians 11:23 he says, “*In deaths oft.*” He had been thrown into prison. He had been thrown into the sea. In deaths often. In II Corinthians 6:9 he says, “*As dying, and Behold, we live.*” So there is something to this because the Bible just keeps emphasizing this reality. And most Christians, if they were put in this situation in chapter 11, they would not understand, either, because they do not know His heart. They are not going to tune into His heart in this situation, and it is going to be disastrous for Jesus. This will be explained shortly.

### **God Glorified by Death Is the Heart of Christianity**

*“When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.”*

John 11:4

The Son of God is glorified by death, unto life, His life. This is the goal, this is the heart of what Christianity should be about. He must increase, and I must decrease. Not I, but Christ. How does that come about? By death. I am crucified with Christ. He does not just say, "It is not you, it is Me." He says, "Not you – 'I am crucified.' That is how it is not you."

Self does not just say, "Ok, it is not me! It is going to be about Jesus." Good luck with that. You turn the flesh loose, and you can have a whole season of it being about Jesus, and you make it all about you, mostly. Thank God for moments. Thank God for precious moments that we turn and say, "It is about You! I see it." – Until you get outside the church, then it is about you. That is why death is so important in the economy of God, or in the way the Lamb operates. And the Lamb bought it all through death.

Jesus did not just pull out the big guns, blow Satan away, blow away all the demons, kill everybody He did not like, and say "I am King! Anybody have a problem with that?!" That is not the Lamb of God; that is how we are. Also, II Corinthians chapter four talks about this operation that works in him. "*Death worketh in us*" (II Cor. 4:12). "Worketh" means a continuous process. Death is constantly working in me, but life in you. That is what the Scriptures say. That there is a purpose for the Son of God to be glorified in this death. "Death worketh in me, but life is Christ to you." "*I bear about in my body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also...*" (cf. II Cor. 4:10). There is no life. I know we think, "Well, yes there is." Once you can say you have got life, well that life came out of death – Jesus' death. And we are supposed to be His body. And His body is supposed to bear a portion of this just like it did at Calvary. Just look at Calvary. Look at Jesus hanging there. A Roman centurion took a spear and shoved it into His side, and He is already dead. "He is already dead, do not worry about it." "Well, we should make sure. Shove a spear in His side!" (cf. Jn. 19:33-34). And a river, a river of life, a river flows down, and it reached all of us if we are born again. That same blood has washed away our sins.

But greater than that, that death was our death. That is what most people do not see. It is not just that He died for me so that my sins could be forgiven, and it could still be me. If you stood there at Calvary, if you could see, you would not just see an innocent man wrongly accused and horribly treated for nothing except for jealousy and fear – all this kind of stuff that is us. You would see Somebody Who gave Himself and took us into Himself so that it became my death, too. Thank you, Jesus! This thing of death is being worked on. We are the death, but Jesus is the Resurrection. – And the Life! He is also the Life. If there has been a death without Him becoming the Life also, it is just a fake death because the real death is us going down into death. You are dead, but Jesus comes up in you as Life. But if you do not acknowledge the death, then there is no Life because life comes out of death.

### **Death Stinks**

*"Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was."*

John 11:5-6

*"Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already."*

John 11:17

Later, in verse 39, Jesus says, “Open up the tomb, roll away the stone,” and they go, “He stinks already. He has been dead for four days. We are not Egyptians. We do not know how to embalm. This is not a good thing! It is not only death, it is stinky!” Has anybody ever been in a situation like that? There is a lot of death and stinkiness going on. But again, Jesus made sure that that death took place.

### **Disciples Miss the Purpose of Death**

*“Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?”*

John 11:7-8

They are worried about death. Are you following? This is right in line, and everything that is going to be said after this is going to be so incredibly right in line. The disciples had missed it with the alabaster box, and they miss it here, also. Somebody needs to get past their doctrines and press in. Somebody needs to pursue His heart. Somebody needs to care enough to press in.

So the subject is still death; there is no question about that. But this time they are talking about His death – and really their death. So now they are going to be worried. You know the story. Jesus says, “Let us go into Judea.” The disciples are fearful of death. Well, where is Lazarus? In Judea, just outside Jerusalem, in Bethany. It was about five miles away which back then would have seemed like a lot since they had to walk. So when Jesus starts talking about going there, they are appalled that Jesus approaches death like this. “Well, let us go.” They are going, “Don’t you remember? We could die. We would not want to die. Let us stay here and be safe. Let’s not put ourselves in a position where we may have to lay down our lives.”

### **Light Is Required to See Correctly**

Of course, Jesus answers, so the first two words John 11:9 are, “Jesus answered.” So Jesus answered. Listen to this. Jesus answered. He is answering their fears about death and what is about to take place down there with Martha and all of them. Jesus answered, and this is an answer.

*“Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.”*

John 11:9-10

Basically, He is saying that you have to see correctly. And to see correctly, you need to have light, you need to have the right view. It seems strange that this is brought up right in the middle of this story, doesn’t it? This is exactly what it is. He is saying that you have to have light. If you do not have enough light, you will stumble. If you do not see correctly, then you are going to miss it. And He is saying that. He is trying to communicate that. “Guys, you are missing it. Do not worry about it. I am going down to Bethany, and there is going to be somebody with Me and My view.” So Jesus sees this situation of Lazarus’s death as an opportunity. He sees every kind of loss or death or suffering as an opportunity. It is that the Son of God can be seen and glorified. Instead, we see only the work of the devil.

### **Confused over Jesus' Words**

*“These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.”*

John 11:11-12

Here is what the disciples are thinking: “We do not need to go down there; that is dangerous. If Lazarus is asleep, then he is not dead. But we will be, if You do not start thinking the way we think.

*“Howbeit, Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.”*

John 11:13-14

What? Lazarus is dead. The disciples are confused over Jesus' words. Sleep. See, Jesus is using that word because He knows that life is coming. Amen. Life is coming, and it is going to be I AM. Jesus said, “You will be with Me. You will be with Me and see what I see. And you will see the glory of God.

The word seemed too mild. “He is asleep.” “Jesus, this is a dire situation! Stop using silly mild words!” He says, “Look, you are getting more riled up over this death thing because you do not understand what is going on. That is why you guys are freaking out.”

### **Jesus Wants Us to Believe in Life Out of Death**

*“And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.”*

John 11:15

Interesting wording here. There is a bunch of stuff here. The first part is, “I am glad I was not there.” “What? You are glad he died?” “Yeah.” “You are weird! You love him?” “Yeah, I love him.” “You found out he was sick, and You stayed back two days, right? It took You two days to get there, so he was already stinky. And you are glad?” “Yep. I am with the Father and He is with me.”

This is Jesus talking. “I am with the Father, and I am real glad for this situation.” “Why are you glad? Why did you let Him die? Why? Why?” “Because it is an opportunity for death.” “What?” “Because this was an opportunity for death. This is an opportunity.” But He says, “To the intent.” There is an intention here. “To the intent that you may believe. I want you to believe in life out of death. I want this to become a regular part of how you see and proceed. Don't you worry, because I am going to be down there with Mary, and she knows I am going to be dead soon. She knows it. And she comprehends that this is the key, and this is what I came to do – selfless giving. Not self-centered living by my whole life for God: ‘Oh, Bless me, Father!’ But, ‘You do whatever you want with me. I love You, and I just want to know Your heart.’ Not rearrange this situation. It is an opportunity, to the intent that you should believe. You are not getting it, but when we get down there, it is going to be better.”

### **Thomas' View of Death Is Not Eternal Reality**

*“Then Thomas, who was called Didymus, told his fellow disciples, Let us go also, so that we may die with him!”*

John 11:16

We read that, and we are relieved. “Praise God, there is one willing to die. Praise God, there is at least somebody with Jesus, somebody that is ready to lay down their life.” That is completely wrong; that is not Jesus’ view. There is more than one reason why they call him doubting Thomas; he did not understand life out of death, and later he proved that when they said, “Jesus is raised from the dead just like he said.” Remember he said, “I do not believe in life out of death. I believe in puncture wounds. If He shows me the wounds in His hands, I will believe” (cf. Jn. 20:25).

Thomas is not looking forward to seeing eternal realities concerning the Lamb. “Let us go with Him, watch this really good thing.” In fact, he does not even speak of Lazarus’s death; he only resigns himself to their own death. “If we go with Jesus, then we are going to die. All right, let us go with Jesus. We are going to die. We will die with You, Jesus. We will be with you.” We have the wrong understanding of death and of what death with Jesus is about. Our death with Christ is so that it will be about Him, that the Son of God would be glorified.

That is all He is asking, and He is not asking much. But we have to drop our doctrines, and we have to drop our views. We have to become blind, just hold on to Jesus, and just say, “I cannot see, I do not see. I will never see unless You open my eyes.” And we must continue to pray that day after day. You have to have that spirit. Jesus said that because you say you see, you are blind (cf. Jn. 9:39-41).

### **Martha Wishes That There Had Been No Death**

*“Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.”*

John 11:21

Here we begin to see the importance of death, that God operates through death, and that is very important. In other words, Martha was saying that there would have been no death if Jesus had just come earlier. Now listen. “If You had been here there would have been no death.” Remember, this is the guy who stayed back intentionally so that Lazarus would die. But Martha does not understand that. She does not know what happened. Maybe it was traffic – bad camel traffic. A lot of camels on the road this week. No! It was not bad camel traffic. It was not, “Well, it took me forever to get out of Walmart.” No. What the Scripture says is that when Jesus heard it, He stayed there two more days. He did it on purpose. Why? Let us read a little further.

### **Knowing Jesus, but Not His Heart**

*“But I know, even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.”*

John 11:22

This is still Martha talking in. “*But I know...*” What do you know about Jesus, Martha? This is her knowledge of Jesus. She did not know His heart yet. She did not sit at His feet like Mary, her sister, did. “And God can give you, Jesus, and here is what I know: I know that God

can release through You miraculous power to reverse death. I have faith! We can stop this demonic attack against my brother.” Jesus is going, “There is no demonic attack going on here. I chose not to even put the name of the Devil in this chapter because if it were in there anywhere, even unrelated to this story, you are going to see that word “Devil.” All we see is that the Devil put Jesus to death. The Devil did not put Jesus to death. “Well then Pontius Pilate did.” No, Jesus said to Pontius Pilate that he had no power except it was given to him by God. Pilate says, “Apparently He has given it to me because I am about to hang You on a cross!” And he did, and Jesus died. “This is a tragedy! This is the same kind of situation that happened with Lazarus! This is a tragedy!” No, it is not a tragedy. This is, if you will stick with it, you will see the glory of God.

### **Our Doctrines Obscure the Lamb**

*“Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”*

John 11:23

Look at that. Our doctrines are obscuring the Lamb. Am I right or wrong? That is a typical doctrine being used to circumvent the reality of the Lamb and the reality of death. That through death, He destroyed him who had the power of death (cf. Heb. 2:14). That through death the old man is crucified (cf. Rom. 6:6). I am crucified unto the world, thereby taking care of the world (cf. Gal. 6:14). Everything is dealt with by death. But we pray, “I know even now You have the POWER to reverse what You did!” Except we do not know that He is working by that death. See, we do not understand His heart. I am not talking about theology. I will show you His heart in a minute.

Martha said, “I have faith. Well now, since Jesus is not going to work a miracle, I know that he will be raised on the last day.” And she is literally putting up a wall between her and Jesus, unknowingly putting up a wall of doctrinal truth that to her at that moment is greater than Jesus. It is especially greater than the thing that was in His heart right at that moment and why this was happening, why it had been released, and the glory that He wanted to see released. She does not know. “You are a miracle-worker; do Your thing! You have done it for countless others before this day. My brother is lying in that tomb. You need to get in there, and You need to do what You do because I believe.” If He does not do that, she would say something like, “Well, at least I have the doctrine, and I will use it to block any reality of You, that is in Your heart, this is You. The Real You.” Not the, “I want to use You,” but “You, the way You are.”

### **Christ Lives Because He Is the Resurrection**

Let us read John 11:25. Listen carefully to this verse. Everybody knows that Jesus says, “I am the Resurrection and the Life.” Let us look carefully. Let us read it the way it is written and not the way our silly minds take it. “*Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me...*” So here is what belief in Him is: “*Though he were dead, yet shall he live.*” But Jesus lives. He just said, “*I am the Resurrection and the Life.*” And He says, “If you believe in Me, though you were dead...” Is Jesus refuting what He just said? Let me try to help you here. Over here He says, “I am the Resurrection, and I am the Life that comes out of resurrection.” Over here He says, “He that believes in Me...” Believes in whom? “*I am the Resurrection and the Life.*” Believe that guy, what He said. “*He that believeth in Me, though he were dead...*” –

Because you are the death – “*Yet shall he live.*” Who is the life? Who is it talking about when it says, “*Yet shall he live*”? He says, “You are dead. I am the Resurrection. You are the death. I am the Life.”

Jesus says something about resurrection, and Martha says, “I believe in resurrection! I know he will be raised in the last days. I still have faith. But what about now?” Jesus says, “Now? I am the Resurrection and the Life.” And He really comes to be the I Am there. He wants to communicate something that is hard to communicate in words.

So we read this and think, “He is the Resurrection and the Life. I believe, and therefore even though I was dead, I am going to live.” No, you are not supposed to be the one who lives. It is supposed to be Christ living because He is the Resurrection! What does Galatians 2:20 say? “*But Christ liveth in me.*” That is supposed to be so real that we do not get tripped up by verses that have something that seems different, that seems more true. That he that believeth in Jesus, though he were dead, yet shall he live. “And I believe, and I am going to live. And I believe that more than He is the Resurrection and the Life. That is good. Doctrinally, I believe that. But what is important to me is that I live.” How wrong this mindset is!

If I am the one who lives, then Jesus would be literally refuting Himself in the same sentence. And that is what we see when Jesus said Lazarus’ sickness was not unto death because we do not understand how He thinks. Forget how He operates right now. This is the way He thinks. If we do not understand how He thinks, we are going to be confused, we are going to change His words and his meanings. And we are going to make them fit, what? Doctrines. And in so doing, we are going to wall off the reality of how Jesus operates and thinks while we all hold to some belief system that is only brought about by Christ but is not Christ.

### **Christ Is Supposed to Be Pre-eminent**

*“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”*

Colossians 1:27

It does not say, “Christ saved you, the hope of glory.” No. God’s desire has always been that in all things He might have the preeminence (cf. Col. 1:18). He put Christ in us so that He could be preeminent. But He put Christ in us so that we could understand our part. “I am ready to do my part!” Your part is to die – not to die because you are already dead, but to come into conformity to that.

But that preeminent feature of the death, that preeminent feature of the Lamb called death is obscured by our doctrines concerning death and resurrection. And our doctrine of resurrection really does not glorify Jesus as much as it glorifies us. “I will be glorified!” Right? “At the resurrection I will be glorified, I will be raised! I will be glorified!” We are thankful that He is doing the work, but we are the object.

Does anybody see that? But what does Colossians 1:18 say? “*That in all things he might have the preeminence.*” Shame on us. We should rebuke ourselves every time we read something in that light. “That is wrong, Buddy! You stop that right now.”

## **Our Understanding of the Resurrection Is More of Me**

In our understanding of resurrection, we see ourselves resurrected. Spiritually He is the Resurrection and the Life. That is a spiritual truth that will manifest outwardly in the flesh, but it is just that our bodies are going to be raised because we are going to be raised to live forever as His body. But I do not know that we really understand His body. We say this body here is Christ in his body. This body of believers, but we are not a body of believers. We are the body of Christ. What do we need now? Jesus as the Life. What else would we need? We are supposed to be dead. See, the only reason we are not called a carcass is that we have life. His name is Jesus. We are not the carcass of Christ.

Why are we going to be resurrected? “Well, it is because I have been in good standing with Jesus. I am going to be resurrected because I have been a Christian. I have been good. I have been living for God. You know what I do? I pray over some demons. And I read my Bible every year at some juncture. Therefore I am going to be raised.” How ridiculous is that? You are going to be raised because you died with Christ, and He is the Resurrection! And it says that we have been raised up and been made to sit together in Christ Jesus, that we have been raised up with Christ (cf. Eph. 2:6), so that is in oneness and accord with Christ.

Here is how we see resurrection. Let us say we are overlooking a graveyard. We would see all these people shooting up out of the grave, like little rockets. Is that greater in your heart than being one with Jesus and being raised when He was raised, and now He is your Resurrection? Are you solid in that, unlike Martha? “I know that one day Lazarus will shoot up out of the grave. Why do You get so excited, Jesus? Why do You make such a big deal about this?” Because it is the difference between Christianity and Christ. It is the difference between our doctrines that block us and make us see all these pictures about us instead of Him being glorified in the thing.

We think that are going to be glorified. This is going to be the big day. “You know, today I am going to be the rocket man. Just hope I have a cape when He comes back, and somebody beside me going up still has their camera. And when I get to heaven, I am going to post it on Faithbook.”

### **A Treasure for Jesus’ Heart**

*“And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.”*

John 11:28

Martha goes to Mary. She goes into Bethany, and she gets Mary. Mary is in there weeping, and she has all these people in there that are weeping, too. And Martha comes up and says, “The Master calleth for you.” Well, Jesus did not call for Mary. She was just waiting on the Lord. She was not doing anything; she was just waiting. And she did not want to move until Jesus moved her. So Martha says, “The Lord calleth for thee.”

I want you to see that Jesus’ approach and way with Martha is different than it is with Mary. Why am I saying that? Because relationships matter to Jesus. The Scriptures say that Jesus loved Martha and Lazarus, and they do not even use Mary’s name. They say He loved Martha and her sister. They do not say that He loved Mary more than the rest, but there is a treasure for His heart

that was taking place between the two of them, two different times up to this point. Both times, she was at his feet, and one of them is the alabaster box that we have spent so much time emphasizing.

### **Falling at Jesus' Feet**

*“As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him... Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.”*

John 11:29-30, 32

Two times before this she had fallen down at His feet, but this time it is so different. This time it is completely different from the other two times. The first time was when Jesus was in their house. Martha is cooking, and Mary is sitting at Jesus' feet and she is with Him (cf. Lk. 10:38-42). Even in that moment Jesus is planting seeds in her, and the way the Scriptures read, there could have been another 100 people sitting there at his feet. But it only mentions her. And you know why it does? Because she is the only one Jesus remembers. Because she was good ground. Because she was trying to tune into His heart and not just listening to words. She wanted to please Him, and she wanted to do this instead of running around serving.

The other situation happens where Jesus is in a Pharisee's house, and she comes in, breaks an expensive alabaster box, and pours its contents on Jesus. Then she cries and weeps over Him (cf. Lk. 7:36-38). Why? There is no way I can tell you why. I can only tell you that some reality of Him – not what He does, everyone knew what He does – some reality of Him really got to her, and she realized, “My Lord! He is not like other people. He is completely different!” And she started anointing Him – yes, there was an alabaster box, and yes, the fragrance fills the room. But Jesus was the true fragrance of God that day. I personally think those tears on His feet and her wiping His feet and cleansing them with her hair was more precious than the ointment He smelled in that room. It spoke more.

Oh sure, all the other guys go, “That is awful! You should not be using that expensive stuff like that. We have lots of ministry activity that money needs to go into. We have a world-wide ministry!” All they noticed was the anointment that cost a lot. Because we noticed the financial end of it, we noticed the business end of the thing, we noticed the ministry. But she is past all of that.

This time she comes to Jesus, falls at His feet, and Jesus has not heard a word out of her mouth yet. He just remembers her from the few times before. And then this comes out of her mouth. “Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.”

First of all, Jesus ordered Lazarus' death. So she had not said anything different from what Martha said. She is not any further along when the Word Jesus speaks applies to her personally. “Ok, if this is going to affect me personally, then my approach is going to be a soulish one. And I am going to forget everything I saw of You and heard from You.” I believe Jesus expected her to approach Him on a different basis. I really do. I believe with all my heart, and I believe what we are about to find out is the proof of that. Speaking these words here, she is saying basically the

same things that Martha said. And they are all spoken in grief over their loss and death, over their suffering and over their tears. That is all it is; it is just grief over their life down here. And I am going to tell you. I am going to say it again. Jesus ordered this death. He could have stopped it, but there are purposes at work here that are eternal. And we are supposed to be with Him in this. And yet we trample His heart, but we never know it. In fact, the next time you see Him, He will probably just bless you and love you, and you just won't know.

### **What Made Jesus Weep**

*“When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.”*

John 11:33

She brought trouble to the being of Jesus. Out of all of them, *she* brought trouble. *She* brought groaning. How are we to describe groaning? It can be a very deep mourning or disruption in your being that cannot be put into words. And now He is troubled. He came to show forth the glory of God through death, and she spoke, tearing down everything that He thought that she had.

*“And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept.”*

John 11:34-35

Now she has not just troubled Him; she has hurt Him. She has brought Him to tears. And I believe that He had hoped that she would open the eyes of others to His heart. I think that is true. I believe that He was hoping also that by this time she had opened the eyes of others to His heart, to Him, to the way that He is, to this spirit. That this was the bride. This was it.

### **Misinterpreting Jesus Because We Do Not Know His Heart**

*“Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him. And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.”*

John 11:36-38

One said, “Oh, how He loved him!” It is almost a soulish thing. You would never say that if you knew Jesus held back so that Lazarus could die. And this assumption is that Jesus loved him and came and found he was dead – not realizing that if they really understood what Jesus did, they would never have said that. You would probably say, “Jesus does not cry.” And some of them said, “Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? You would think with all the power we have seen in our lifetime since Jesus has been on the planet, that He could have circumvented death in someone that He loves. That they would not have to go through death, whether spiritual or physical.” – As Paul called it, “*In deaths often*” (II Cor. 11:23).

No, you would not think that, that is what they are saying. No you should not think that. You should think what He thinks. You should know Him. Even if you do not do it outwardly, you should ask always when it is about Him, “Where are you coming from? Where is Your heart?”

I am constantly running into Scriptures and think, “I have no clue what this means. And I am sure it does not mean what most of us think it means. I need to hear from You.” I need the Holy Spirit to bring my heart into Jesus’s heart. Not just teach me some stuff so I can say, “Hey, let me tell you how spiritual I am! Let me tell you what the Lord told me!” And miss His heart again, constantly missing His heart because I made it about me. And if it is not about getting me out of my circumstances, it is about making me spiritual, or something that is impressive.

That is the whole key to this woman with the alabaster box. She just wanted to see His heart. And she just wanted to communicate, “I have seen what You are about. I am preparing You for Your burial, and I am with You in it. I understand what You are like, and I am with You in it.” The disciples are complaining, “Look, we need that. We need that stuff. What do you mean, burial?” In two days, in two days Jesus is going to be dead. “What do you mean, burial? We have a long ministry, here. And it is going to be a good one. Because Jesus can not only heal me, He can raise the dead. He can feed huge multitudes. We have a guy, that if we die, He will raise us up. And if we do not have food, He will make it appear. We have a big glorious time ahead for us!” Two days later they are running away and hiding. “What? What did that girl say? What did that girl say? You are just messing with my mind.” Jesus does not want to mess with your mind. He wants to renew it.

### **Blindness Hides What Matters to Jesus**

So Jesus groans again (f. Jn. 11:38). No one is seeing this tragedy. It is not a tragedy, but no one is seeing this tragedy in the light of His view. His light is how He sees it. He sees by light, and we are darkness. We are darkness, we are blind, and we cannot understand any of these things unless the Holy Spirit opens our eyes. And the best way to get to that point is to say, “I am blind. I am totally blind, and if You do not open my eyes, I am going to read this like everyone else and be Martha.” Or worse, “I will be Mary and come in there and say something that rips at His heart.”

My point about Mary is that to Jesus, their relationship, the flow that happened between them and being able to feed her and to put seed in her – that was a big deal to Him. It was, or He would not have wept; He would not have been troubled. At what point did He get troubled? It does not say, “When He heard that Lazarus was sick, He got troubled and fell down on the bed for two days. He could not get over it.” No. It does not say that when Martha came to Him and said the same words to Him that Mary said, that He was troubled or He wept or He groaned. It does not say that about either of them. I am telling you, to the Lord, relationships matter! And we live like we are just people down on the earth. “I am a Christian. I am a church-goer. It meant something to Him so deeply that it brought Him tears. “They do not know what I am doing. They do not understand. They do not see what I see.” They are saying, “If You had been here... What took You so long? Why are You not with us where we are in this earth?” That is your typical Christian mindset right there.

### **Mary Showed the Jews Nothing of Jesus’ Heart**

*“The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.”*

John 11:31

But she is going to Jesus! Apparently, the Jews had been with her for awhile, and they followed her to Jesus. That is the progression right there. But when she arrived to Jesus, she showed nothing of Him to them. She showed nothing of His heart. The view of the Jews who followed Mary concerning why Jesus wept proves that she had shown nothing of what this whole thing of the alabaster box was about.

I have meditated on John 11 before. I thought that when Jesus showed up, Martha figured it out before Jesus even got there. She met him outside the town, or something. It does not say she had a multitude, it does not say she had a bunch of people with her, does it? It is funny that the Scriptures say that all these Jews are there with her, and they are comforting Mary. You have to remember, Mary of Bethany was a prostitute. A very holy or religious man would wonder, “Why are all these people comforting a prostitute, instead of Martha? There is something shady here!” Jesus made sure when His word was written, it is going to note that she had plenty of people around her, that she could have communicated this spirit of the alabaster box. It is about Him. It is not about us, it is not about us for Him. It is about his heart. It is about Him.

Jesus made sure that there was plenty of information and that when they spoke, they spoke the same kind of things that both she and Martha spoke, and that she did not communicate the things that she had seen of His heart. What could she have shown to them by this point, before all this happened? That He is a Lamb. “I did this thing for his burial a few days ago. That it is right to honor Him in his burial, or in death, or to understand death, to see death not as the worst thing that ever happened. I am pouring the most costly thing out upon Him in this alabaster box in joy because I am moved by His heart and His self-giving.”

*“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”*

John 11:25

### **Mary Did Not Know Jesus Yet**

Mary could have shown the Jews that death, when approached by the Lamb, equals life for others. She could have because this is a death situation. She could have showed that when Jesus orders death, it is so the Son of God can be glorified. Nobody is seeing Him or glorifying Him, but they are questioning Him. They are saying, “Why were You not here?” And their doctrines again are not only standing in the way of Him, they are somewhat accusing Him because, “You were supposed to be our King, You were our answer. You should have been here for my brother. Why were you not here?” There is a general view that everybody takes when they get into these types of situations, and those views are not with Jesus, not with his heart.

Jesus does not want you to believe circumstances and resurrection in that way. He wants you to believe in life out of death, that it is not about seeing that and believing. It is about this being the way that God operates

and us being with Him. The bonus is that we get to be with Him in the way that He thinks and He sees, with His heart. But if we do not, we miss it, and we miss Him.

But what is worse than failing? Jesus weeping. And the people said, “Oh how he loved Lazarus.” Well if that were the case, He would have hurried to get there and made sure Lazarus did not die. Right? He is not going, “Oh my God, he died? Darn it. I did not know that.”

No, He knew exactly what was going to happen. And He came as the Resurrection and the Life. His weeping came immediately when Mary opened her mouth and knew nothing about death and resurrection. She had been poured into, and Jesus opened His heart. Jesus gave of Himself, and He meant it, and it was all real. The next time He sees her, she should have been with Him where He is at, but for her, it is just about losing a brother. And it does not matter if she was blaming Jesus or just going, “If only You would have been here.” “The point is that after all of that and after Me opening My heart, you really do not know Me yet.

*“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things... ”* but now we are going to be before him... *“...And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.”*

Colossians 1:16-19

Father, You know that I have prayed long and hard for this day, this word that was shared from Your heart. I pray that it is not just another sermon. I have prayed and do pray and will pray that we can shake ourselves from our slumber, shake ourselves from our lethargic approach, that we could get up and break through the crowd of disciples and pharisees and reach Your heart – and stay with Your heart. May those Scriptures we read in Colossians not be some sort of doctrinal belief that we believe, but may we so yearn after You, that eventually in all things You will have the preeminence, and the Father be pleased that we would have recognized His preference that all fullness would dwell in Your Son, Jesus.

Father, may this word go out to many – many who have yearned, even people in other countries, other states, other cities that have been following along. May this word reach them. And Father, my greatest desire is that we could see these verses, and in it see Your reaction to Mary of Bethany, and the deep wound – the wounding of a heart that is so precious and so gentle, because she just was not with Him. The bride was not with Him where He was at. She wanted to make her own way at that point and weep and mourn. But if she only had known His heart! If she had known the resurrection life! If she had known what His burial was going to lead to! – And if she had known it in a true way. Father, we ask You to let us learn from these verses. Let us see that He truly cares. He deeply cares about a relationship with us. Show us. Through this sharing or some other time, show us. We ask in Jesus’ name.



## Chapter Five: Memorial Ministry in Nehemiah

We will now read Mathew 26:7-15 again, but this time highlighting some things. Take note of what is emphasized as we read because we are going to go to a place in the Old Testament, where we will find the same scenario going on that we find here with Mary of Bethany, the woman with the alabaster box.

*“There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. But **when his disciples** saw it, they had indignation, saying, **To what purpose is this waste?** For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? For she hath wrought **a good work** upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for **a memorial** of her. Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.”*

Now turn to Nehemiah chapter 2:17-20.

*“Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work. But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? (What is this waste? What is this thing? What is this Memorial Ministry that you do?) Will ye rebel against the king? (Meaning, we are called to Compassionate Ministry and you are just wasting your time.) Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.”*

## **Destroyed Jerusalem Is Christ Crucified**

In another series, we spent awhile going over how Jerusalem that was destroyed represented Christ himself. In the Old Testament before Judah was carried away captive, the people had sinned. Now, God built Jerusalem. God gave Jerusalem. God loved Jerusalem. *“If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my hand forget her cunning”* (Ps. 137:5). God loved Jerusalem because He loved Jesus, and it represented Him. Judah sinned and sinned and did horrible things, so God sends Nebuchadnezzar down. But instead of wiping them out, he carries them away captive. Jerusalem is burned, the walls are pulled down, and the stones are burned. All of this represents Christ dying for us. We should have died instead of being in captivity and then coming back.

The deliverance from that captivity is happening here in Nehemiah and Ezra. So Jerusalem here, had been given, had been burned, had been pulled down, had been basically as it were, the Cross for these people who had returned, who were there for God. Not everybody returned, but this in Nehemiah was the remnant that came back.

## **Nehemiah Ministers to the Poured-Out Christ**

Verse 17 says, *“Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste.”* This is almost like a picture of Jesus after the Cross, and yet we continue to have Him pour out on us. It is like Jesus is doing Compassionate Ministry for us. Can you see that? It is really like He is continually doing Compassionate Ministry for us. But Nehemiah has something incredible in his heart: He wants to pour out on the Lord. He wants to rebuild Jerusalem. He wants to take the burnt stones and clean them off and put them where they belong. It is as if his heart is saying, “Let us honor Jesus, let us pour ourselves out on the Jesus that gave Himself for us. We are still alive. He died so that we would not be destroyed.”

It is like Mary of Bethany, “We see Your heart. We see. We see what You did. We see what You have gone through for us, and we are so selfish, and we were wrong. And the worst sin was not the sins that we did that were rank sins that got us into captivity. The sin was, we were always the object instead of You. And I want my heart” – this is Nehemiah – “and I want my heart, I want those that came with me, this is what I want, I want us to pour out on Him now and take care of Him.” Nehemiah is saying, “You see the distress of the Lord, what He has gone through for us. Let us pour out, and let us build up. Let us do this thing for Him.”

## **Ministering to Jesus Is the Good Work**

*“Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said (The people who were there with Nehemiah), Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work.”*

Nehemiah 2:18

Do you remember what Jesus said of the woman? *“She hath wrought a good work upon me,”* (Matt. 26:10). No one with Jesus knows this is the same thing. And this is a good work. We do Compassionate Ministry and think, “Well, that was a good work.” And I am not knocking that, but that is the way we think. “I did a good work for the Lord.” But Jesus’ definition of a good work is Memorial Ministry: one who pours out what they have for Him, instead of Him pouring out what He has for us all the time. They said, “Let us build.” Nehemiah is saying, “God’s hand

is upon me.” It is like His hand is not on Nehemiah’s head like we always picture it, but on his heart. God’s hand is on Nehemiah’s heart. “God’s hand is on me to pour back to the Lord. I think we should do this in the way that would honor Him, that He would want, beyond what all we have done.

### **Sanballat and Tobiah Attack Memorial Ministry**

*“But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do?”*

Nehemiah 2:19

Does not that sound like the disciples, the way they were treating Mary of Bethany? They were laughing to scorn what is Memorial Ministry, what is of God, what is most pleasing to His heart. Sanballat and Tobiah had been living there a long time. They considered it their land. They considered themselves to be part of the Jews. Remember, they even said stuff like, “Hey, let us help you build!” Anybody remember that with Ezra? “Hey, we will help you!” (cf. Ez. 4:2-3). Thank God for leaders that can see! “We do not want your slimy little hands in Memorial Ministry!” “Well, we have been here, we have kept the place, and we are important.”

“They mocked us and despised us and they called this thing, waste.” “What is this thing? What is this thing that you are doing?” That is the problem. How do you explain this to anybody? Why shouldn’t everybody mock us and despise us? Why shouldn’t they look at Nehemiah, or at this woman, or David putting these people in there, raising up the Zadok priesthood, or anybody else that tries to touch Jesus’ heart? “We do not need two priesthoods! We do not need these guys. All we need to do is utilize all this for the ministry.” No, what we need to do is learn the difference between two people and calling that His body and Him, and seeing Him right there, and loving and ministering to Him and pouring out on His body, because we are doing that to Him because we love Jesus and because we know that is His body. That is Him. That is different. It is different.

It is hard because it is Memorial Ministry. You are going to get mocked. If nothing less, by stuff in your head that says, “Well they are idiots – Those two people.” Well maybe they are, but they are His body. And that is the issue. And again, how do you explain that? How do you explain any of this? Well, you do not, but you can release the seeds of it. The Holy Spirit can open our hearts to see the heart of the Lord that can see what Nehemiah saw and say, “This place is in distress.” He went through this 2000 years ago, and we are just now showing up and going, “You know what? Shame on us. Shame on us for never seeing through to that!” And the captives could have showed up and said, “Well, we screwed up, but thank God, like Peter, we made it. We are back!” But Nehemiah would not allow that. He is saying, “No! This is not about us. It is not about what we do. It is not about others. It is not about us for others. It is about Him. And we are going to make it about Him. It is what we are going to do. We will make it about Him.”

Sanballat and Tobiah and the people that followed them mocked Nehemiah and those who returned with him. They despised them. They called it waste.

## **No Portion in Memorial Ministry**

*“Then answered I them, (the guys that are mocking and despising) and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.”*

Nehemiah 2:20

Memorial Ministry. Jesus said of that woman, Mary of Bethany, “What you have done here will be a sweet savor that will go everywhere the gospel goes, not just now, but for all time. Not just here, but for all places. To anyone who captures this story and realizes it, it will be like a sweet fragrance that rises up and fills the room. And they will see the contrast of what they were compared to what they are now.”

And Nehemiah said to those guys, Sanballat and Tobiah, “You have no portion, the Lord is not your portion. The ministry is your portion. You have no right, you have no right here. This is holy ground, but you never take your shoes off here. This is holy ground. No memorial in Jerusalem, in building up Jerusalem. You do not understand that. You have lived here all this time, and you have never even thought to rebuild Jerusalem. You just said, “Oh God way up there, send down whatever we need.”

We will pour out. We will do like this woman. We will pour out on Jerusalem, on the Lord, on Jesus. But you have no memorial here. Nothing that you really care about. I am not giving up, I am not sacrificing. I am just trying to show how beautiful You are and the fragrance that You have and the richness that You are to my soul. So I break this just to let You know how much I think of You. It is not like, “You would not believe what I gave to Jesus.” That is not the right spirit. It is an odor.

Sanballat and Tobiah let Jerusalem – the Lord – pour out, but they will not pour out for Him in His distress. And then Nehemiah’s final words: “We will pour out. We will build. We will arise and we are going to take on this kind of ministry. We will pour out on Him. The God of heaven, He will prosper us.”

## **Memorializing Jesus’ Heart**

It is funny what we call prosperity today. It does not mean He will give you lots of money. Amen. It is going to bless Him to the deepest depth of His being because you saw Jerusalem in distress and you did not think of yourself. You thought of the Lord. And Mary is looking at Him, and she is going, “I know You are going to die. I know that You are going to give Yourself. I know what You are like. I heard it when I sat at Your feet when Martha was cooking. I heard You pouring into me, and I got it. And I sense You, and I know You now in this way. I do not know anything else. I do not know all that. But I know that You are a self-giving being that is about to give itself to the deepest degree. I have seen Your heart. And I am here to memorialize Your heart.” Not this event. She never thought about memorializing the event. She wanted to build Him a memorial.

*“The God of heaven, He will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build.”*  
Amen.

*Father, we know Your Holy Spirit is here, and He never gives up, wooing us to the heart of Jesus. He never gives up trying to point us and our heart, not just us, but our hearts, to your heart, to Jesus' heart. You are a faithful witness. And You are faithful in that You just will not stop. And we do not want You to stop. We want You to ever make Jesus bigger than us. Instead of us making ourselves bigger than Jesus. We want to learn from You, Holy Spirit, what Memorial Ministry means to Jesus because only You, like in the book of Esther, that servant, only You know the King's heart. And I do not claim to know it. But I claim that You know it, and You have breathed things that are turning me and making me desire to release things instead of gain things. To release things that will bless Your heart, Jesus. Thank You for David, who had a heart after You. We even know where that came from. We know that secretly, You, Lamb of God, are the root of David (cf. Rev. 5:5). You are the Root from where even that heart came. We believe that those priests, the sons of Zadok, how they prioritized their ministry to Your heart, how they made it their portion, their life's ministry. The thing that was most important. Thank You for the worshippers and choruses You set up with David. Thank you. Man of God, directed of the Holy Spirit, of course, of course, of course. But making sure there was always that ministry going on in the Holy of Holies. May You break ground in us, to that degree. Holy Spirit, break ground in us. Thank you Father, in Jesus' name.*



## Conclusion

We are talking about how Mary of Bethany came into something. And she came into something from His heart, and out of the abundance of His heart, whatever He spoke.

That is why I say that so much of what we think is important is not important. It is important when it happens to us, but it is not important to communicate those things. But what is important to know is that if Jesus says, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,” He is talking about what pours out of His heart. He could say, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,” and we can hear it thinking that He is just talking to us when He is actually speaking of something that is true of Him. That is the way it is with God. That is the way it is supposed to be with you.

And so out of the abundance of His heart, it is pouring. And it is pouring over her. And it is pouring into her. She had a period of time to get it together, but then this Lazarus thing happens — death. So Jesus comes along, and she says one thing out of her mouth that is contrary to Him, and it brings Him to tears.

That is not the end of the story, is it? We could say this terrible, horrible thing that I have done to Jesus is unconscionable and unforgivable. What if it was not first and foremost was not about forgiveness but about going back and finding His heart? What if that was it? And then being with Him, which she did. And she comes in there, and she has nothing else on her heart but Him. She does not have ministry, she does not have money, and she does not have loss on her mind. The disciples were all saying, “This was very costly.” In her mind she is thinking, “This is nothing. Look what is right here. Look at the heart in this guy. He is about to go give Himself selflessly for all of us. I heard it out of His mouth. He did not tell me that He is a Lamb. I just heard that spirit flowing, and I realized, this guy, this Being, this One.... We are on the verge of Him totally giving Himself for us.”

She did not understand the theology of atonement and all of that. She understood a nature. How do I put that in words? She understood a nature, and she was moved, and she was wanting to do what she could. And she is there, and she is trying to communicate without words, number one “I am back.” Number two “I see You, and I honor You with whatever I have. I pour it out on You, and I want You to know that I am with You. And I want You to know that as You go into this, I am anointing You for what You have to do because that is Your spirit.” And He is going, “I got it.”

When that spirit is real, you cannot miss that. He is going, “I got it.” And then the disciples looking on speak up, the twelve, the close ones, the great men of God. “What is this woman doing here? What is she going to do?” What she can. She did what she could. “What is she going to do? We have been with You three-and-a-half years. We serve You. We know what You are about. And this woman is actually doing things contrary to what we are trying to accomplish for You, Jesus.”

I do not think Jesus said, “Let her alone. She has done this for my burial” in a sweet, religious voice. I think He is going, “Oh my God, she is back.” And He just says, “LET HER ALONE! This is important. This is eternally important. This is Memorial Ministry. This is the true thing.”

In the Old Testament, they would set up a memorial, or the Lord would tell them, “Make a memorial.” This is marking something eternal and not just temporal ministry. It is not all temporal ministry, but it is temporal in that there is not going to be any sick in heaven. There are not going to be any demons running around in heaven. There is not going to be all of the stuff that we are trying to chase off now. That is still not eternal.

*“And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. And there were some that had indignation within themselves. (We do not get the idea that the indignation was outward as much as something that is in them. Does that bother anybody that this would be in them?) And said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been, (it could have been but now it is past) it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. And Jesus said, “Let her alone.” (See, that is immediate.) Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. (She has done a good work. “You and your ministry have...) the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.”*

Mark 14:3-9

And the beauty of this is that unlike the memorials that were set up in the Old Testament, just as with this one, the Lord is everywhere this goes. It is like the memorials that were built of rocks because that is how they did memorials back then. “So everywhere the gospel goes there will be a pile of rocks to My heart. I know what that means and there and there and everywhere.” And maybe people will go, “Why these rocks? What is this about?” See, they did not get that. But it is a memorial of her. Jesus has something that has touched Him so deeply that He is going to memorialize this act and this woman and this heart everywhere. And He is going to look from heaven and go, “It is there and there and there and there and there and there. There is the beauty: that someone first sat at His feet. And she drew something else out of Jesus that nobody else was participating in. Then she messed up. Then she came back with a vengeance, so to speak.

She came back even harder, which is the great story. Do you want to be written into the great story? The great story is not how badly you brought Jesus to tears. The great story was that seeing that was enough to crush your little heart and to drive you to His feet and to His heart, and not to just touch His feet or His head, but to touch His heart. And Jesus just says, “This earth is just going to be full of piles of stones, and every time I see it. That is how big it is to Me.”

