

2. But it was love "without hypocrisy" (Rom. 12:9).
 - a. An uncalculating love.
 - b. An active and abounding love.
 - c. A prompt or instantaneous love, given natural expression.
 - d. An amazing love.
 3. Each of us has an alabaster box if we will only open it.
 4. Are you willing to do what you can for Christ this year?
 - a. In Bible study? b. In praying and working for the lost?
 - c. In a financial way? d. In helping the distressed and needy?
 - e. In zeal for the faith? f. In visits & cards to the sick?
- IV. A LASTING MEMORIAL: "WHERESOEVER THE GOSPEL SHALL BE PREACHED" (14:9).
- A. Jesus declared Mary worthy of imitation by all men.
 1. Her deed was beautiful in its outcome: "Their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13).
 2. The world is much better because she lived.
 3. Pilate, Herod, the Jews and the disciples had opportunity to do Jesus good, but didn't.
 - B. Her good work has been embalmed in the gospel.
 1. The Holy Spirit has recorded it for all time to come.
 2. But is this so unusual? In one sense it is; in another, no.
 - C. Our works will follow us to judgment and eternity.
 1. Eccl. 12:14; 2 Cor. 5:10; Revelation 20:14.
 2. Are you willing to be judged now for your present works?
- V. THE BARGAIN OF JUDAS (14:10,11).
- A. Evidently peeved at the rebuke of Jesus, Judas went out immediately after Jesus washed his disciples' feet to bargain with the Jews about the delivery of Jesus (Matt. 26:14-16; Mark 14:10,11; cf. Luke 22:3).
 - B. How do you react to God's rebukes today (2 Tim. 4:1-3)?
- VI. LESSONS MARY TEACHES US.
- A. Love must be expressed (1 Cor. 16:14).
 - B. Love rejoices in sacrifice (Phil. 3:8-10).
 - C. Sacrifice makes selfishness uneasy.
 - D. What is spent on Christ is not waste but wise spending and safe, profitable and wonderful investment.
 - E. However, we may expect our best services to be criticized.

STUDIES IN MARK--LESSON FORTY

Jesus Anointed In Bethany: A Story That Will Live Forever
Mark 14:1-11; Matthew 26:6-13; John 12:1-8

INTRODUCTION -

- I. This is most likely the same incident recorded in Matthew 26:6-13 and John 12:1-8.
 - A. It is one of the most touching scenes in the life of Jesus.
 - B. The lesson taught could be a matter of life or death to anyone.
- II. The events recorded here grew out of a feast in Bethany, a village "just over the slope of Mt. Olivet from Jerusalem."
 - A. It was the home of Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha.
 - B. From near Bethany Jesus ascended to heaven (Luke 24:50; Acts 1:12).
- III. Godly women have had a prominent and vital part in God's religion in all three dispensations: Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Ruth, etc.
 - A. In the New Testament we find that women played a part in the development of God's plans: Elizabeth, Mary, Anna (Luke 2:36), Mary Magdalene, Susanna (Luke 8:3); women were the first to announce the resurrection (Matt. 28:7; Luke 24:8-12); Priscilla helped teach the eloquent Apollos the way of the Lord more perfectly (Acts 18:26); Philip's four daughters prophesied (Acts 21:9); and Christian women often aided Paul in the great work of the Lord (Phil. 4:2,3).
 - B. Though given a subordinate place in the church and home, by divine purpose and will, the role of woman is vital and absolutely essential.
 - C. The church in many places today would fail were it not for the devotion of women to Christ.

DISCUSSION -

- I. THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND SCRIBES PLOT THE DEATH OF JESUS (14:1,2).
 - A. With subtlety: "Now after two days was the feast of the passover and the unleavened bread: and the chief priests and scribes sought how they might take him with subtlety and kill him" (1).
 1. The feast in Bethany was just before the Lord's crucifixion or murder.
 2. Mentioned later by Matthew and Mark (14:1), "but without any note of time to show that it belongs specifically where they put it. But John does give us a note of time"--McGarvey. John 12:12 shows it occurred the night before the triumphal

entry. Hence, the supper was Saturday evening, following the close of the sabbath (John 12:1).

3. See Johnson, People's N.T. With Notes, p. 141,209: "The action of the Sanhedrin was taken on Wednesday, the Anointing took place the Saturday before, and is brought up here on account of its connection with the bargain Judas made with the chief priests."

B. Lest there be a tumult: "For they said, Not during the feast, lest haply there shall be a tumult of the people" (2).

1. Their conspiracy required subtlety, to avoid an uproar.
2. So many Jews were present during the passover, tumults were not uncommon and it was feared the arrest of Jesus would trigger one.

II. JESUS ANOINTED AT A FEAST WITH PRECIOUS OINTMENT (14:3-5).

A. The supper: "And while he was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat..." (3a).

1. The reasonable supposition is that Simon was a cured leper Jesus had healed, for it would have been unlawful otherwise. He was doubtless showing gratitude for great mercy received.
2. Jesus was sociable (John 2; etc.) and he appreciated the courtesies extended by his friends (Luke 7:36-50; etc.).
3. It was a marvelous gathering: A healed leper; one raised from the dead, Lazarus; two of his dearest friends, Mary & Martha; the apostles; Jesus.

B. The anointing: "There came a woman having an alabaster cruse of ointment of pure nard very costly; and she brake the cruse, and poured it over his head" (3b).

1. Mark doesn't give her name but John does: Mary (12:3).
2. It was an entire pound (John 12:3) of perfumed imported ointment from a rare plant which grew in the Far East, India and Arabia.
3. It was "very precious" and "very costly," worth about \$50, a year's wages.
4. She broke it evidently so it ran down freely "over his head" (Mark 14:3), and on his feet (John 12:3).
5. "The house was filled with the odor of the ointment (John 12:3), and "the world has been filled with it since."
6. A study of anointing in the Old Testament would be helpful here.

C. The critical reaction: "But there were some that had indignation among themselves, saying, to what purpose hath this waste of the ointment been made" (4)?

1. John reveals Judas as the main or leading offender (John 12:4).
2. He thought \$50 had been squandered or wasted.

3. Greedy and base men still think what is spent on the Lord is wasted.

D. To the poor: "For this ointment might have been sold for above three hundred shillings, and given to the poor" (5a).

1. A thief's pretense (John 12:6). Judas wanted the money in his bag.
2. If she had honored Judas instead of Jesus, his reaction might have been entirely different.
3. "How often does charity serve as a cloak for covetousness."

E. "And they murmured against her" (5b).

1. In murmuring against her, they spoke against an act of love for God's Son, properly motivated: "Stout words against God." Cf. Acts 5:39.
2. One leading murmurer can greatly damage almost any good work.
3. We wonder what effect Judas had upon the others.
4. What effect does such murmuring have today upon God's people?

III. THE LORD'S DEFENSE OF MARY'S ACTION (14:6a).

A. "Let her alone; why trouble ye her" (14:6a)?

1. They treated her as if she had committed a crime.
2. There is trouble enough on earth without murmuring against those lovingly engaged in bestowing honor and favor on the Lord Jesus.

B. "She hath wrought a good work on me" (14:6b).

1. It was good because a good motive prompted it and it expressed sincere gratitude and devotion to God's Son.
2. It was a timely, helpful and significant gift: "She hath anointed my body beforehand for the burying" (8b), just a few days before his death.

C. "For ye have the poor always with you" (14:7a).

1. And we must help them as we can (Gal. 6:10).
2. "But me ye have not always" (7b).
3. Sometimes opportunity knocks but once: Kings and rulers disowned and dishonored Jesus, but Mary gave him the honor he deserved!
4. Jesus knew the hypocrisy of Judas and could have exposed it; but he chose to let Judas expose himself.

D. "She hath done what she could" (14:8a).

1. Appropriate: "What she could," not "some great thing" (2 Kings 5:13).
 - a. In one sense perhaps it was not very great-- cost perhaps \$50.
 - b. We do not know how much this represented to Mary.