

Series: John

Title: They Made Him a Supper

Text: John 12: 1-3

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John 12: 1: Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. 2: There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. 3: Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

This was in the house of Simon the leper. Lazarus, which had been dead, who Christ raised from the dead, was there at the table. Simon and Mary and Martha and Lazarus and the other believers there were overjoyed at what Christ had done for them. So they wanted to show their gratitude for Christ, for God's grace given them. So they made a supper for the Lord. He was the guest of honor. It was not for Lazarus but for Christ.

Subject: They Made HIM a Supper

This house was full of joy. It reminds us of suppers we have had together with brethren. You can picture the room full of brethren laughing and talking and enjoying each other's company. They are all sitting around the table hearing Christ speak, each heart delighting to honor their Redeemer, delighting in him.

YOUR TOWN

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

The greatest blessing is when Christ comes to your town.

There were a lot of towns and cities throughout the land that the Lord never came to; the towns that were blessed were the ones Christ came to. And there were a lot of houses in Bethany that our Lord did not come to; but the house that was blessed was the house the Lord came to. There were people in that house who the Lord did not come to; but each individual sinner that Christ comes to is the one who is blessed. He came to this town, to this house, to his particular people because he everlastingly loves his own.

The Lord forbid Paul to preach in certain places but sent Paul right to his lost sheep.

Acts 16: 6: Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, 7: After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. 8: And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. 9: And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. 10: And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

The Lord directed Paul to Philippi. Then to a place by the river. Then the Lord called Lydia, in particular. He called her to faith in Christ through the gospel.

Later, the Lord had Paul arrested and put in prison. That appeared like Paul's mission was hindered. No that was part of it. The Lord put him in that prison because the Lord had an elect child who was the jailor. The Lord called the jailor and many in his house. That is how the Lord established the Philippian church.

What a blessing when the Lord comes to your town, to your house, to you personally! Never take it for granted. He passes by whom he will and saves whom he will. An eternity of blessings of grace is in that simply statement, "*Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, ...*"

THE TIME

“Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, ...”

Behold the Lord’s love for his people by considering the time of this supper. The Lord Jesus is all-knowing God. He set the hour when he would go to the cross. As God he knew all that was transpiring about him because he ordained it.

This was a dangerous, dangerous, tumultuous time. A lot had happened in that week and would happen. Christ raising Lazarus was the last straw. The Pharisees and Sadducees decided to kill him. Christ knew Bethany was near Jerusalem where the Pharisees were. He knew many who hated him would come to that supper. But he came to this supper

Arthur Pink said, “He seemed to find in the little company there a resting place in His toilsome path. It is blessed to know that there was one oasis in the desert, one little spot where He who “*endured the contradiction of sinners against himself*” could retire from the hatred and antagonism of His enemies. There was one sheltered nook where He could find those who, although they knew but little, were truly attracted to Him. It was to this “Elim” in the wilderness (Ex 15:27) that the Savior now turned on His last journey to Jerusalem.

Think on this. The Lord knew in a few days he would be betrayed. And he knew the betrayer was in that house at the feast. Yet he came to the supper. The Lord did not come to Judas in saving grace. But Judas could not turn Christ from coming to his elect whom he loved. There is always believers and reprobate, sheep and goats, gathered to hear the gospel. But they did not stop Christ from coming to the supper.

Think on this. Our Lord knew in a few days, he would be arrested, stripped, beaten, nailed to a cross. He knew he would bear the sin of his elect and suffer God’s wrath and be forsaken of God in order to satisfy justice and make his people righteous. And get this. He knew in that very house were some of the sinners for whose crimes he would suffer unto death. Some of his own even sinned greatly while at the supper. And the Lord Jesus knew their sins and he would bear those sins and suffer God’s wrath for them as he did for all the sins of his elect. Yet that could not keep him from this supper. Nor did it keep him from being merciful and loving his own. In fact, it was for their sakes that he came to the supper.

With all this on his heart, the Lord came not sullen and cast down. He drew no attention to himself. The Lord came to rejoice with his brethren who made the feast for him. He came to bless and encourage and comfort them because he loved them.

All of this gives greater meaning to Romans 8. Consider these words from Christ’s point of view. Consider them from what Christ knew he would suffer in a few days. Consider them from Christ to us.

Romans 8:35: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...38: For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39: Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Oh, the love of Christ for his people! Those God loves he loves everlastingly without a cause in us. The cause is in him. That is why we are not consumed in his wrath. He chose us by grace because he loved us. Therefore Christ’s love for his people knows no wavering. Those he loves he saves. Later in John we will see the very night he was betrayed,

John 13:1: Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

Ephesians 3: 18: [Oh that God might grant us that we] May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19: And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

None of us could have that much on our heart, knowing the crimes of one another against us personally, yet come to a supper with that love and composure and grace with which Christ came to them. Oh, for grace to

love as Christ loves us. Pray for grace to rejoice with them that rejoice and weep with them that weep. Ask God to make us patient, tender, longsuffering, compassionate, merciful, forgiving—to love fervently as Christ loves us.

THE SUPPER

John 12: 2: There they made him a supper.

Behold how the love of Christ toward and in his people constrains his people to love him.

Remember, this was a dangerous, dangerous time! We have seen the reports of Russia invading Ukraine. Bombs are going off. Men and women being killed. The time at which they gathered for this feast would be like God's children gathering in Ukraine to worship Christ while bombs are landing around them. Gathering together with Christ at this supper this close to Jerusalem when the Pharisees were seeking to kill Christ was more dangerous than that. This was an act of faith and love.

What made them do it? The Lord who provided everything for them constrained them to do this. As he does for all who he saves, they were moved toward him by his grace toward them.

Communion. There Lazarus sat at the table communing with the Lord Jesus. Christ raises his people from the dead spiritually in regeneration like he raised Lazarus from the dead. I can hear Christ speaking of what he had done for Lazarus and Lazarus saying, "Amen! Amen! Tell them how you spoke and gave me life!" We can hear Lazarus giving Christ all the glory, acknowledging Christ had done it all for him.

We must be born from above. The new birth is of our Lord through the Holy Spirit of God. He gives us repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ so that we have communion with him. A sinner who Christ brings into communion with him is a witness to others of God's saving grace simply by being where the Lord is. He is a witness by identifying with Christ and his people giving Christ all the glory. This was even greater witness because of the danger involved in sitting at the table with the Lord.

Worship. They made him a supper because Christ makes us behold how Christ healed us *personally, like he does all his people*. Christ took the place of his people under God's wrath. He poured out his precious blood for his people. God justified us from our sins. He made his people the righteousness of God in him. Through faith he makes us know our sins are forgiven, put away, and God remembers them no more. We are covered in Christ's righteousness, accepted of God in him. That motivated Mary to bow at his feet. She worshipped him. She kissed the Son. She poured out precious, costly ointment, anointing his head and his feet. It cost a year's wages. She did it because she knew how precious his blood is. The unsearchable riches of Christ—oh how costly! Nothing was too costly for her Savior!

Service. They made a supper for him in gratitude for him teaching them and continuing to teach us. He gently reproves us and grows us in grace. They all made him this supper. *And Martha served*. Some speak harshly of Martha because on another occasion the Lord reproved her. But the Lord did not reprove her *for* serving. He reproved her for being distracted from Christ *by* her serving. He reproved Martha for shaming Mary and for wanting to force Mary to serve. He reproved her for wanting to turn Mary from Christ to serving. That is the very Physical motive and means and methods the Lord saves his people from.

But at this feast the Lord did not reprove Martha because her heart was set on Christ. She had just seen her own unbelief over Lazarus' death and how merciful Christ was to her. She had just seen Christ raise her brother from the grave. Her heart was set on Christ as she served. She gladly served so Lazarus could sit communing with Christ. We can hear her saying, "Don't get up Lazarus. Keep listening to the Lord. I'll fill your glass of tea." We can hear her say to Mary, "You stay at his feet, my sister, I will take of the rest." This time she gladly served so Mary could sit at Christ's feet.

True service is done heartily to the Lord—not because of men nor to be seen of men—but constrained simply and solely by the love of Christ for such sinners as we are. True service is done in love to Christ and love to his people. Let us thank God for the Lord's Martha's. Each time we have a meal in this place you ladies serve. It does not go unnoticed. The Lord sees it. And your brethren see it. And we thank you for it.

Provision. And Christ provides everything we have so we can make him a supper. He provided them the house, the provisions needed for this feast. They knew Christ and these great blessings more now than they ever had. They had experienced the love of Christ for them—his power and grace to save them from all their enemies, including our greatest enemy, self.

Therefore, constrained by his love for them, they took the things he provided and, in the midst of this tumultuous time, they made a supper for him for his honor. It is experiencing Christ's power that settles our hearts to gather together to honor him in faith and love while the enemy's bombs are going off around us. Christ is the guest of honor when we gather together. And where Christ has produced this heart, Christ promises to come and sup with us as he did them that day.

Revelation 3: 20: Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

It is sad what will-worshippers have done to that verse. They say, "Christ is knocking—now it is up to you to exercise your free will to let him in." When Christ came to that house in Bethany that day and knocked on the door, do you suppose any sinner there who had experienced his saving grace was unwilling to open the door? I picture them all hastily trying to get to the door to open it. He made them willing by his power and grace and love for them! And I am certain whoever opened the door did not draw attention to themselves for opening the door. All eyes and every heart were on the guest of honor!

Honor. Christ promises to honor those who honor him as he did that day in Bethany. Christ used his saints who made him that supper to draw many of his lost sheep and Christ saved them that day.

John 12: 9: Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. 10: But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; 11: Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

Unbelief—self-righteousness—wanted to kill Lazarus as well Christ because seeing what Christ did for Lazarus many believed on the Lord. But the comfort is this. Christ honored that little assembly of believers who gathered to honor him. He did so by drawing and calling many of his elect among the Jews so that they went away and believed on the Lord Jesus.

Brethren, Christ has come to our town to our house to each of you in particular who he has given faith. He has drawn and called out some of his lost sheep. *They made HIM a supper.* Let us always make this feast to honor him: singing to his glory, honoring him in our prayers, preaching his glorious person and works, communing with Christ, worshipping Christ, and serving Christ. May it continue to be for his honor alone!

Amen!