

Filled with the Fragrance
John 12:2-8

Call to Worship: Psalm 100:1-2

Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 15:7-11

Sermon: Filled with the Fragrance John 12:2-8

Benediction: 2 Thessalonians 3:18

John 12:1-8 Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. 2 There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. 3 Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. 4 But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, 5 "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" 6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it. 7 But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. 8 For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

Fill the church with the fragrance of your devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. Serve the Lord from a Well-Informed Faith as Martha

A. see Martha when serving had been out of balance (Luke 10:38-42)

1. she was serving food, which is a necessary and good thing for her to do
 - a. God made us to need to eat, and often
 - b. Since mankind sinned, it has taken more work to get food ready to eat
 - c. Since the great flood, God has blessed us with meat to eat; meat takes more cooking, generally, than do fruits and vegetables
 - d. Doing the work to buy, store, plan, cook, serve, and clean up is a vital service to do for Christ
2. she was over-busy with that, however, to the neglect of the Lord Jesus Himself and His word
3. the Lord Jesus lovingly corrected her

B. see Martha in a state of mature faith in Christ (John 11:20-27)

1. She poured out her need to Jesus
2. She expressed her confidence in Jesus
3. She expressed her belief in the resurrection (John 11:24)
-this is a pretty sophisticated, advanced understanding
4. She confessed her faith that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God

5. She's doing pretty well here, isn't she!?
6. She went and told Mary Jesus was there
- C. see Martha again serving the food
 1. she is serving the Lord Jesus directly
 - a. which we cannot do during this life
 - b. but serving the least of His saints is the equivalent
 2. she is serving her brother
 3. she is serving the other guests
 4. this is not her house, so she is serving the host or hostess
 5. her sister Mary again leaves off serving the food and comes to the feet of Jesus; but this time Martha is not heard objecting
- D. See how the apostles will later commend this very kind of life
 - 1 Timothy 5:9-10
- E. APPLICATION: Dear women and girls, let your life be one of serving the Lord by serving other people. Let that service be done out of a well-informed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah, with a firm hope in the resurrection He will bring at the end

II. Worship the Lord with an Extravagant Devotion as Mary

- A. As we studied in Martha, serving the Lord by serving other people is right and good; but worshiping the Lord Himself is even more important; Mary grasps this and worships the Lord Jesus Himself
 1. He is the eternal Word of God
 2. He is the one who has taken on flesh
 3. He is the one who has died for our sins
 4. He is the one who rose from the dead
 5. He is the one we worship!
- B. She worships Him extravagantly; liberally; worships Him with all her wealth
 1. I don't know what all the financial arrangements of that household were; probably Mary did not have the family's money at her disposal
 2. But Mary had at least one very valuable possession that was hers
 - a. a flask of oil of spikenard, or nard, which was from the region of northern India
 - b. about a pound, or a pint
 - c. it was worth 300 denarii; about a year's wages; about \$20,000
 3. She poured it all out on Jesus
 - a. she broke the bottle
 - b. and poured it out on his head and feet
 4. the whole house was filled with the fragrance
- C. How did Mary know to worship Him like this?
 1. Do not miss what Jesus said in verse 7
 2. For help understanding this, see Mark 14:8b
"She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial."
 3. We know now that when Jesus had been crucified, and was ready for burial, it had to be done in haste; there was not time to anoint His body

with the spices or perfumes that these people considered necessary for a proper burial; so she was doing it ahead of time

4. this reaches back into Luke 10, which we consulted earlier

5. when Jesus was teaching, she sat at His feet listening

6. Jesus' 12 apostles were not grasping

a. who will be the greatest?

b. shall we strike with our swords?

c. no, Lord!

7. so, then, she was worshiping the Lord with understanding because she would sit at His feet listening to His Word

D. Let what Mary did here with the perfume be a guide to you in worshiping the Lord Jesus, whether in the gathering of the church or in private devotion

1. Sing to the Lord, and to each other of the Lord

2. Pray, whether aloud or silently

3. Help others to worship, including your own family

4. Take the Lord's Supper in gratitude

5. When there is baptism, observe in joy

6. Listen when the Word of Christ is read and preached (sitting at the Lord's feet listening)

E. Let your quiet worship be an example to the men

1. Mary is not recorded as saying anything

2. without a word, her worship of the Lord Jesus put the men to shame

3. the hypocrite was exposed and the disciples were corrected

see 1 Peter 3:1-6

F. Understand that how you worship will be remembered, and will serve as an example to your own children and to others, possibly for a long time

1. I will use my own mother as an example; I have been heavily influenced by her example of how to worship

a. when I was very little, she, a life-long Methodist, became convinced of believer's baptism, and was baptized

b. singing worship songs as she worked in the kitchen

c. helping me to enjoy the hymn singing

i. "try the other parts"

ii. "watch Brother Larry"

d. taking notes on the sermons (in shorthand)

i. bible open

ii. steno pad

e. being on time, even comfortably early

f. always being present to worship

i. she stayed home when someone was sick

ii. that's it; she never missed going to church on the Lord's Day for any other reason

g. when her husband died, she did not stop; it was not about him

h. now she has been diagnosed with cancer; however that disease runs its course, that diagnosis had reminded me that she will not be

- with us forever, maybe not for much longer
- i. but the example she set for worship will be remembered and practiced for generations
2. What about your example will be remembered?

So, dear sisters, women and girls, when the question arises in your mind, "What should I do for the Lord in the church?" answer with these ideas:

Serve the Lord from a Well-Informed Faith as Martha
Worship the Lord with an Extravagant Devotion as Mary

Let the church be filled with the fragrance of your love for the Lord Jesus Christ

From Matthew and Luke:

- in the home of Simon the Leper
- on His head as well as His feet

Mark 14:8b "She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial."

Mark 14:9 "Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."

NEW SERMON NOTES

Mt 26; Mk 14

JRY:

-of course a woman who is wholeheartedly devoted to Jesus Christ will be criticized by the corrupt

-concern for social problems is good; but worship of the Lord Jesus Christ is the priority

- see downright unbelief in Judas
- see corruption among the true disciples
- see Mary's focus on the Lord Himself, His death

-we cannot serve Christ bodily now; but He said that whatever we do for the least of His, we have done unto Him

ORIGINAL SERMON

Dear women and girls, what should God-fearing women and girls do in the church? As you look around at all the kinds of churches, you will see, on the one side, women taking inappropriate roles of leadership and authority in the church, and, on the other side, men demanding an extreme level of submission and silence from women in the church.

So, what are women and girls to do in the church? The Bible has many stories and instructions about this, which I recommend for your reading, so that you may develop a good, full, well-balance understanding of this issue. For today, let us take this story about Martha and Mary of Bethany, and how they served the Lord, to teach us this answer to the question:

Women and girls, let the church be filled with the fragrance of your devotion to Christ.

Read the text: John 12:2-8

Let the church be filled with the fragrance of your devotion to Christ.

I. Fill the Church with the Fragrance of Your Liberal Giving

A. Here a woman had the blessed opportunity of giving to Jesus Christ directly.

1. I don't know what all the financial arrangements of that household were; probably Mary did not have the family's money at her disposal
2. But Mary had at least one very valuable possession that was hers
 - a. a flask of oil of spikenard, or nard, which was from the region of northern India
 - b. about a pound, or a pint
 - c. it was worth 300 denarii; about a year's wages; about \$20,000
3. She poured it all out on Jesus

- a. she broke the bottle
- b. and poured it out on his head and feet
- 4. the whole house was filled with the fragrance
- B. Today a woman must give to Jesus Christ indirectly, but her giving is to Jesus Christ just the same

1. Jesus said, "the poor you have with you always."

- a. Mary gave to Christ Himself; you can give to the poor, knowing that Jesus said, "Whatever you have done to the least of these, my brothers, you have done to me."
- b. Some of what you put in the church's offering box goes to relieve the poor in the church
- c. you may also find many other ways to give
See the example of Tabitha, Acts 9:36-39
- 2. Jesus has called many believers into His service, and called the church to give generously for their support; women have a part in this
 - a. by giving money see Luke 8:1-3
 - b. by showing hospitality see Acts 16:14-15

II. Fill the Church with the Fragrance of Your Fervent Worship

A. Here a woman had the blessed opportunity to worship Jesus when He was physically present

- 1. Do not miss what Jesus said in verse 7
- 2. For help understanding this, see Mark 14:8b
"She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial."
- 3. We know now that when Jesus had been crucified, and was ready for burial, it had to be done in haste; there was not time to anoint His body with the spices or perfumes that these people considered necessary for a proper burial; so she was doing it ahead of time
- B. Consider how it was that she knew what was appropriate to do

- 1. this reaches back into Luke 10
- 2. when Jesus was teaching, she sat at His feet listening
- 3. Jesus' 12 apostles were not grasping
 - a. who will be the greatest?
 - b. shall we strike with our swords?
 - c. no, Lord!

[In John's account, Lazarus raised from the dead on one page, Mary pouring out the perfume on the next page]

C. See how Mary's sister, Martha, prayed (John 11:21-28)

1. She poured out her need to Jesus
2. She expressed her confidence in Jesus
3. She expressed her belief in the resurrection
 - this is a pretty sophisticated, advanced understanding
4. She confessed her faith that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God
5. She's doing pretty well here, isn't she!?
6. She went and told Mary Jesus was there

D. Today you do not have the privilege of worshiping Jesus in His physical presence, of praying to Him face-to-face, but you may worship Him all the same

1. Sing to the Lord, and to each other of the Lord
2. Pray, whether aloud or silently
3. Help others to worship, including your own family
4. Take the Lord's Supper in gratitude
5. When there is baptism, observe in joy
6. Listen when the Word of Christ is read and preached (sitting at the Lord's feet listening)

E. This woman's act of worship is now remembered and held up to the church as an example

F. Consider that your worship is also remembered and held up as an example, whether good or bad

1. I will use my own mother as an example; I have been heavily influenced by her example of how to worship

- a. when I was very little, she, a life-long Methodist, became convinced of believer's baptism, and was baptized
- b. singing worship songs as she worked in the kitchen
- c. helping me to enjoy the hymn singing

- i. "try the other parts"
- ii. "watch Brother Larry"

- d. taking notes on the sermons (in shorthand)
 - i. bible open
 - ii. steno pad
- e. being on time, even comfortably early
- f. always being present to worship
 - i. she stayed home when someone was sick

ii. that's it; she never missed going to church on the Lord's Day for any other reason

g. when her husband died, she did not stop; it was not about him

h. now she has been diagnosed with cancer; however that disease runs its course, that diagnosis had reminded me that she will not be with us forever, maybe not for much longer

i. but the example she set for worship will be remembered and practiced for generations

2. What about how your example will be remembered?

a. if the children in the church today follow your example of how to worship, will that be good?

III. Fill the Church with the Fragrance of Your Quiet Service

A. Notice that both women mentioned in this story are remembered for what they were doing, not what they said

1. Martha was working to serve the food; despite how she got in trouble for overdoing it last time, this is a very important and wholesome way to serve Christ

a. God made us to need to eat, and often

b. Since mankind sinned, it has taken more work to get food ready to eat

c. Since the great flood, God has blessed us with meat to eat; meat takes more cooking, generally, than do fruits and vegetables

d. Doing the work to buy, store, plan, cook, serve, and clean up is a vital service to do for Christ

2. Mary was doing this amazing act of worship, which we have already talked about

B. In the case of Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus, it is the same thing

C. But the Bible does record what Mary and Martha said, in their conversations with Jesus, including the beautiful statements of faith in Christ and the resurrection that Martha gave

D. Later, when Jesus had died and risen again, and ascended to heaven, He gave apostles to the churches, to write these principles down for us, so we would know what to do

1. 1 Timothy 2:11-15

2. 1 Peter 3:1-6

3. 1 Timothy 5:10

See the contrast: a worldly woman will be loud, showy, bossy, and either idle, or busy doing worldly things; a godly woman will be quiet, modest, submissive, and busy doing good works in the Lord's service