

# Three Pillars of the church life

Serving the Lord, testifying of the  
Lord, loving the Lord

# John 12:1-19

- 1 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,

12:1 Six jours avant la Pâque, Jésus arriva à Béthanie, où était Lazare, qu'il avait ressuscité des morts.

12:2 Là, on lui fit un souper; Marthe servait, et Lazare était un de ceux qui se trouvaient à table avec lui.

12:3 Marie, ayant pris une livre d'un parfum de nard pur de grand prix, oignit les pieds de Jésus, et elle lui essuya les pieds avec ses cheveux; et la maison fut remplie de l'odeur du parfum.

12:4 Un de ses disciples, Judas Iscariot, fils de Simon, celui qui devait le livrer, dit:

- 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.”
- 9 Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus’ sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.

12:5 Pourquoi n`a-t-on pas vendu ce parfum trois cent deniers, pour les donner aux pauvres?

12:6 Il disait cela, non qu`il se mît en peine des pauvres, mais parce qu`il était voleur, et que, tenant la bourse, il prenait ce qu`on y mettait.

12:7 Mais Jésus dit: Laisse-la garder ce parfum pour le jour de ma sépulture.

12:8 Vous avez toujours les pauvres avec vous, mais vous ne m`avez pas toujours.

12:9 Une grande multitude de Juifs apprirent que Jésus était à Béthanie; et ils y vinrent, non pas seulement à cause de lui, mais aussi pour voir Lazare, qu`il avait ressuscité des morts.

- 10 But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also,  
11 because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.  
12 The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,  
13 took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' The King of Israel!"  
14 Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written:

12:10 Les principaux sacrificateurs délibérèrent de faire mourir aussi Lazare,

12:11 parce que beaucoup de Juifs se retiraient d'eux à cause de lui, et croyaient en Jésus.

12:12 Le lendemain, une foule nombreuse de gens venus à la fête ayant entendu dire que Jésus se rendait à Jérusalem,

12:13 prirent des branches de palmiers, et allèrent au-devant de lui, en criant: Hosanna! Béni soit celui qui vient au nom du Seigneur, le roi d'Israël!

12:14 Jésus trouva un ânon, et s'assit dessus, selon ce qui est écrit:

15 “Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey’s colt.”

16 His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him.

17 Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness.

18 For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.

19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, “You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!”

12:15 Ne crains point, fille de Sion; Voici, ton roi vient, Assis sur le petit d`une ânesse.

12:16 Ses disciples ne comprirent pas d`abord ces choses; mais, lorsque Jésus eut été glorifié, ils se souvinrent qu`elles étaient écrites de lui, et qu`il les avaient été accomplies à son égard.

12:17 Tous ceux qui étaient avec Jésus, quand il appela Lazare du sépulcre et le ressuscita des morts, lui rendaient témoignage;

12:18 et la foule vint au-devant de lui, parce qu`elle avait appris qu`il avait fait ce miracle.

12:19 Les pharisiens se dirent donc les uns aux autres: Vous voyez que vous ne gagnez rien; voici, le monde est allé après lui.

# Three pillars of the church life

- Represented by Martha, Lazarus and Mary
- Characters that have already been introduced in chapter 11
- We know quite a bit of their background, character and personality

# Serving

- Martha served
- We must appreciate Martha
- Martha is the initiator. She makes things happen
- She is full of ideas
- She is aggressive
- In another gospel, she rebukes Mary for not helping her to serve

# Service is mentioned first

- We must serve
- Serving is a way to bring us into the church life, to exercise what the Lord has given us and put into us
- Serving is with a burden from the Lord who puts the desire in us to serve
- It is the serving of the Lord
- When we serve, we must serve primarily the Lord
- All our serving, while outwardly meeting the needs of people, must be with the Lord as the center, must be with some kind of spiritual burden
- Every service must be accompanied with prayer, with dependence on the Lord, seeking the Lord for His leading and burden

# Testifying

- Lazarus was a living testimony of resurrection
- One who has been dead, but who had been raised by Jesus
- We know nothing about his character or disposition, mainly because he was dead in chapter 11
- Now reclining at table with Jesus
- On account of Lazarus, many Jews came to believe in Jesus
- Lazarus drew many crowds who came to see him, and not only Jesus

# Testimony accompanies service

- Our service must be a testimony
- Not just a service, to get the job done, but a testimony of the Lord's resurrection life operating in us
- Our service becomes a living testimony of Jesus Christ
- My service is not just something I do, but rather a testimony of the Lord's freshness, the Lord's burden, and the Lord's commitment
- What I do becomes who I am
- My service eventually affects other people's lives, as in the case of Lazarus

- The Bible does not record that Lazarus spoke
- However, with testimony, our word is crucial
- In our service, the Lord's word to us (in Lazarus' case it was the word to come forth from the dead) operates in us and becomes a living word to us, making our service living and full of operation

# Loving

- Represented by Mary
- Mary is not a doer like her sister Martha
- In chapter 11, she does not go to meet Jesus like Martha, but stays at home
- She seems to be more emotional than Martha
- That is why the Jews, when they saw Mary leaving the house to go to meet Jesus in chapter 11, assumed that she was going to the tomb to weep for her brother

- All our serving and testimony must be in the sphere of love, motivated by love, out of love, for the Lord
- Love is the capstone of service and testimony
- Love is the fragrance of service and testimony
- Love is what fills the house (the church life) with a sweet fragrance
- Love is expressed in an action by Mary in chapter 12
- Such an action is based on Martha's service and Lazarus' testimony
- Mary's action is done purely unto Jesus, to no one else, and for no other motive or reason
- Her action does not « help » anyone, like Martha's serving, nor does her action « gain » anyone, like Lazarus' testifying
- Rather, her action is wholly towards Jesus, practically « useless » and « wasteful, » of no economic value, and pretty much a total mismanagement of assets

# Why would Mary pour expensive ointment on Jesus?

- Judas Iscariot reacted
- The ointment should have been sold and the proceeds given to the poor
- Judas was a wise businessman, a good economist
- Of course, the Bible tells us that he was a thief, so the money would not have really gone to the poor, but into his pocket
- Mary seems to be quite foolish, not realizing the value of hard earned money

What would cause someone to  
be so foolish as to waste  
precious ointment?

# What does Mary actually do?

- She takes a pound of ointment, of very valuable pure nard
- It is an oil extracted from the root and stem of the nard plant, which grows in northern India
- Very expensive



- She gave her best
- She broke what was precious to her
- At a cost
- She did not give the leftovers to Jesus
- She did not give second or third best to Jesus
- She did not weigh the consequences
- She was almost crazy
- She did not wait for Jesus' death to anoint Him
- Rather, she took the initiative

- She seized the opportunity

- Seize the opportunity

# How long will we have the Lord?

- Now is the time
- When the Lord returns, we will be forever with Him
- Now is the time to serve Him, to testify for Him, to love Him crazily, without counting the cost
- We may think that we will love the Lord when we graduate, or when we are less busy

**No**

- When we think we will have more time later, we may not have the Lord then
- Our heart may be far away, or occupied with other things
- There is no guarantee that we will love the Lord five years later if we wait
- Every opportunity we miss is gone
- Seize the opportunity to love the Lord today
- Seize the opportunity to be close to the Lord today, to pray to Him in the midst of midterms and projects
- Seize the opportunity to come to the meetings, to read the Bible

- You do not  
always  
have Me

# Have we ever given too much to the Lord?

- Have we ever exhausted ourselves for the Lord?

# How much do I love the Lord?

- How much is he worth to me?
- My love will be according to His worth
- He does not force me to love Him
- The more He attracts me, the more I love Him
- The more He draws me, the more I will waste myself on Him
- The more He draws me, the more I am broken so His preciousness can pour out and fill the church life

- Il n'y a pas de limite à cet amour
- There is no limit to this love
- Je dois apprendre à dire au Seigneur:  
« Seigneur, cela m'est égal ce qui m'arrive. Je n'aime que Toi, et Toi seul. »
- I must learn to tell the Lord, « Lord, I don't care what happens to me. I only love you, and You alone. »
- Mary's act shows us that service and testimony must have the Lord Himself as our goal and our reward, and nothing else

Serving: first pillar	Testifying: second pillar	Loving: third pillar
Typified by Martha. Service must be to the Lord and for the Lord	Typified by Lazarus. Service must become a living testimony of the Lord's resurrection life operating in us	Typified by Mary. The capstone of service and testimony. Service and testimony must be in love. A matter of who we are
Service must also be with spiritual burden and commitment	Not just something I do, but something that can change other lives	Not required, but voluntary. A costly breaking and outpouring that causes the church life to be filled with fragrance