

Believe

JOHN

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Martha and Mary: Dimensions of Discipleship

Bible Reading: John 12:1-11

- 1 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany where Lazarus was, the one Jesus had raised from the dead.
- 2 So they gave a dinner for him there; Martha was serving them, and Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with him.
- 3 Then Mary took a pound of perfume, pure and expensive nard, anointed Jesus's feet, and wiped his feet with her hair. So the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.
- 4 Then one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot (who was about to betray him), said,
- 5 "Why wasn't this perfume sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?"
- 6 He didn't say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief. He was in charge of the money-bag and would steal part of what was put in it.
- 7 Jesus answered, "Leave her alone; she has kept it for the day of my burial.
- 8 For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."
- 9 Then a large crowd of the Jews learned he was there. They came not only because of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, the one he had raised from the dead.
- 10 But the chief priests had decided to kill Lazarus also,
- 11 because he was the reason many of the Jews were deserting them and believing in Jesus.

I. The Lazarus Story Continued

A. The narrative returns to Bethany

B. Chapter 12 is tied to chapter 11

C. The raising of Lazarus is the pivot point in this Gospel

D. The structure of this narrative

1. Chiasmic Narrative

- A – Threat of Lazarus dying 11:1-16
- B – Martha & Jesus 11:17-27
- C – Belief and Unbelief of ‘Jews’ 11:28-37
- D – The raising of Lazarus 11:38-44
- C – Belief and Unbelief of ‘Jews’ 11:45-52
- B – Mary & Jesus 12:1-8
- A – Threat to Lazarus from chief priests 12:9-11

2. Sandwich Narrative

- E – Plotting to put Jesus to death – John 11:45-53
- F – Mary anointing Jesus – John 12:3-8
- E – Plotting to put Lazarus to death as well – John 12:9-11

E. Indication of the structure

1. Lazarus at beginning – facing death – 11:1-2
2. Lazarus at end – facing death – 12:10

F. Three characters; three models of discipleship

1. Martha believes – 11:27
2. Mary loves – 12:3-8
3. Lazarus lives – 11:44; 12:1

II. The sisters – Martha and Mary

A. Both sisters are the main characters – both are needed

B. Martha; her confession of faith – chapter 11; Mary; her anointing of Jesus – chapter 11:2; 12:3-8

C. Both are committed disciples

D. John does not portray one more favorably than the other

E. Application:

1. Martha and Mary are different personalities
 2. We are all constituted differently
 - a. The way we live out our discipleship should look differently
 - b. Recognize the opportunities and respond in a timely way – don’t wait until...
- Mark 14:8 “She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand

III. Mary versus Judas

A. Mary

1. John names her
2. The account in Luke 7 is a different time and person
3. Mary shows her loving devotion in an unconventional way
 - a. As a servant, washing Jesus’ feet; humble
 - b. Extravagant in her anointing
 - c. She illustrates to us how we should respond to Jesus

B. Judas

1. The writer exposes Judas for who he is and what was in his heart
2. He is a lover of money and a thief
3. He will betray Jesus

C. The contrast

1. Mary acts without words
2. Judas only has words of criticism

IV. Jesus’ response

A. Leave her alone

12:7 Jesus answered, "Leave her alone; she has kept it for the day of my burial.

1. Mary tenderly prepares for the death of Jesus without knowledge of his coming death
2. She does this when she can, not withholding and without waiting – a sense of urgency

B. You do not always have me with you

12:8 For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

1. Jesus is not saying don't care for the poor.
2. He is indicating that he will soon not be there.
3. Take the opportunity while you have it.