

Happy Saint Patrick's Day to you all! Hope you had a good green weekend! Can you believe it is mid-March already? Spring starts this week! Yeah! Be sure to check out our web site [www.pricescreekcob.com](http://www.pricescreekcob.com)

We will be having a joint Sonrise service again this year. The Monroe Township council of churches will be gathering at West Manschester UCC on Good Friday Evening at 7pm and on Easter Morning at 7am at Wares Chapel with breakfast following. Hope to see you there!

God bless you all!

Pastor Don

12:1-8                      March 17, 2013                      "Anointing at Bethany"                      John

A lady was walking down the sidewalk when she was approached by a homeless woman. The homeless lady asked the woman for \$10 so she could buy her some supper. The lady said no, if I give you \$10 you will just buy wine with it. The homeless lady assured her she would not. Oh no mame, I gave up wine years ago. Well if I give you the money how do I know you won't go shopping with it? Well mame, I need everything I get just to live; I don't go shopping. Well, how do I know you won't just take the money and go get your hair done? Mame I haven't had a hair appointment in over 20 years. Well I tell you what I'm going to do said the lady, I and my husband are going to take you out to supper. But mame, your husband won't want to be seen with me, I am dirty and smelly. I know said the lady. I want him to see what happens to a woman who gives up wine, shopping and hair appointments.

A Baptist went to the race track and even though he prayed before he bet, he still lost. Then he noticed a Priest bless a horse. That horse won his race. He saw him blessed 2nd horse. That horse also won. He saw him bless another horse; this time the man bet on that horse again the horse won. So the man bet on each horse that the priest blessed. Then came the final race of the day. The man watched as the priest blessed the final horse. The man bet everything he had on that horse. This time however the horse finished dead last. This made the man very angry he approached the priest and asked what happened. the priest replied that is what is wrong with you protestants; you can't tell the difference between a blessing and the last rites.

A man took his wife and mother in law on a trip to the Holy Land. While they were there, the mother in law had a heart attack and died. The undertaker made the man a good deal. He told him he could bury her there for \$2000 or he could ship her home for \$10,000. The man said he'd ship her home. The undertaker said why spend the extra money. The man replied well, over 2000 years ago a man died here and was buried but he did not stay dead and buried, I can't take that chance.

People are anointed for various reasons; operations, healing, service, ministry. When a new Christian is baptized, they are anointed with the Holy Spirit. He leads, guides, instructs and directs them. Do we follow Him? All Christians have been anointed and appointed a ministry. Are we carrying ours out? Are we fulfilling it? (Pray)

This chapter begins Jesus' last week of life on earth. It is Saturday night. This was the last Sabbath day for Jesus. He spent it at the home of his good friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Because Jesus raised him from the dead, Lazarus was now a big man in Bethany being raised from the dead will make you famous. Jesus sat at the table with Lazarus and many others. Jesus always attracted a big crowd, but tonight a lot of people came to see Lazarus as well. He was a big witness for Christ. In fact, he was such a good witness that the chief priests were plotting his death too. Because of his resurrection, many believed in Jesus and stopped following the Jewish leaders. This made Lazarus a target for the Jewish leaders. John 12:10-11 "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."

When we make a stand for Jesus, we might make some enemies. Are we willing to make a stand for Jesus anyway? Are we willing to throw a banquet for Him? Would we attend one given in his honor? Do we stand for Jesus?

John begins this chapter by telling us that Jesus arrived in Bethany 6 days before the Passover. Before partaking of holy events, Christians should purify & prepare ourselves. Jesus did this. John 11:54 tells us that Jesus went to a wilderness town called Ephraim with his disciples. We aren't told exactly how long they were there or exactly what they did, but we can imagine they spent much time in prayer as Jesus prepared himself for His suffering which lays directly ahead of Him. With loving determination, Jesus left Ephraim and set his face towards Jerusalem and the cross. On the last Sabbath day of his life, Jesus finds himself in Bethany, a small town about 2 miles south east of Jerusalem.

6 days later Jesus spent His last Passover with his disciples in the upper room, where He washed their feet and instituted Holy Communion with the bread representing his body which was broken for us and the cup representing his blood which was shed for us. Later that night, Judas

Iscariot betrayed him into the hands of his enemies and the next day, Jesus died for the sins of the world. In chapters 12-19 John describe the events of Jesus' last days on earth. Chapter 19 ends with a dead Jesus being buried in a borrowed tomb. Chapter 20 begins with the good news of Jesus' resurrection; of his victory over sin and death. Chapter 21 tells of his restoration of Peter and his fellowship with his disciples. It serves as an example of what the resurrection of Jesus means to us: forgiveness of our sins and fellowship with God Himself.

Jesus started the last week of his life with a banquet. John says they made Him a supper. "They" could have been the town of Bethany because Jesus put them on the map so to speak. John 11 tells us the miracle of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. This miracle brought honor and popularity to their tiny village. The feast was held at Lazarus home and Martha served. Martha was always serving Jesus, are we? They gave this feast as a show of love, respect and gratitude for Jesus. A feast is a sign of friendship and fellowship. Are we Christ's friend? Do we fellowship with Him?

Jesus told Martha in John 11:25 "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, yet shall he live. And who ever lives and believes in me shall never die." Jesus ends this statement with a question. Do you believe this?

Martha said yes she believed and Jesus raised her brother from the dead. Do we believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life? Many of the Jewish leaders were Sadducees. They did not believe in the resurrection; that is why they were sad you see. Now here is Lazarus resurrected from the dead; living proof that there is a resurrection. Jesus truly is the life and the resurrection! There sits Lazarus, living proof of the resurrection; how could anyone who saw him fail to believe? In 8 days, Jesus himself will be resurrected. Still the Jewish leaders will refuse to believe. In fact, they will concoct a story that the disciples stole Jesus' body while the Roman soldiers guarding the tomb slept.

Now Roman soldiers do not sleep on guard duty! The body of Christ was not stolen away in the middle of the night, it was resurrected!!! The stone to the tomb was rolled away not so Jesus could get out, but so that we could get in!!! Every person has to answer that question; do you believe Jesus is the resurrection and the life? Well, do we?

Raising Lazarus from the dead was the last straw as far as the Jewish leaders were concerned. They decided to get rid of Jesus once and for all. Caiaphas was the high priest and he was used by God for the glory of God. He prophesied through the Holy Spirit. He said in John 11:50 "nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man shall die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish." It is easy to prophecy when you are plotting on doing the very thing you are prophesying will happen. Caiaphas feared the Romans. He felt that if they left Jesus alone, everyone would believe in Him and the people would make

Him their king. Then the Romans would come in and destroy the temple and wipe out the whole race as enemies of Rome. Caiaphas did not realize that he was actually prophesying for God. He was a prophet in spite of himself. God can and will use any means He chooses to proclaim his message. Jesus would not just die for the Jewish nation but for each and every person ever born. John 11:52 "He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad." Isn't it ironic that the Jewish leaders thought that they could kill a man who raises the dead? They did not succeed in killing their enemy; they did succeed in starting a new religion. Yes, they successfully had Jesus executed, but 3 days later he was resurrected by the power of God and Christianity was born.

Because of his hard heart, Caiaphas did not realize the world changing implications of his prophecy. He just wanted to keep things as they were. He was not interested in showing the Messiah to the world; he didn't believe Jesus was the Messiah in the 1st place. He simply did not want the temple or the Jewish nation destroyed. But they were anyway. Rome did indeed destroy the temple in 70 AD and Israel was scattered among the world. Do we want to show the world the Messiah? Do we believe Jesus is the Messiah? Are we worshipping Him and telling others about Him?

John tells us that Martha served the supper. That Martha was a worker; she was always serving someone. Are we workers like Martha or worshippers like Mary? You see while Martha was working, Mary was worshipping. She got down on her knees and poured out a very expensive pound of oil of spikenard on Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair. The fragrance filled the entire house. It was customary in those days to anoint the head of your guests. This was a sign of honor. To anoint one's feet was a display of devotion. The act of anointing Christ's feet showed Mary's love and humble devotion to Christ. Some people were highly offended by this display of love and devotion to Jesus by Mary. They criticized her openly. Among them was Judas Iscariot. He tried to claim righteous indignation, claiming he was upset because this expensive oil could have been sold and the money given to the poor. This oil was worth about one year's salary.

But Judas did not really care about the poor; John tells us that Judas was the treasurer and he had sticky fingers. We know he liked money, after all he did betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. After Jesus was crucified, Judas gave the money back and went out and hanged himself. That money was used to buy a potter's field to bury strangers in. Isn't it ironic that Judas really did help the poor after all?

Jesus knew Judas' heart. He knows everybody's heart. He came to Mary's aid. He said "let her alone for she has kept this for the day of my burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always." Mary anointed Jesus out of devotion to Him; but whether she knew it or not, like Caiaphas, she also was making a prophecy. 6 days from now, Jesus was going to die; there would not be a lot of time for a proper burial, so this was it. Jews did not embalm their dead, they simply wrapped them in linen clothes to which perfumes, oils & spices have been added. By saying Mary did this to prepare His body for burial, Jesus was again telling what would happen to Him in Jerusalem in just a

few days. Over and over he told his disciples he was going to die for the sins of mankind, be buried and then rise again, but they did not understand. Do we understand? Do we believe? Does our belief cause us to help others?

Note that John tells us that the beautiful fragrance of the oil filled the whole house. When we do something to honor Jesus, more often than not, it benefits others as well. Jesus says the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always. We are always allowed to help those less fortunate than ourselves. As a matter of fact, it is our duty. And we can always find somebody worse off than we are. Jesus wants us to help out others. He tells us in Matthew 25:40 "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it unto me." When ever we help some one out, it is like we helped out Jesus. What ever we do for someone else, it is like we did it to Jesus Himself. By the same token, when we fail to help some one when we have the ability to help them, we fail to help Jesus. There are plenty of times to help out others, do we look for them? Do we recognize them? Do we allow God to work through us? Do we give God our best?

Mary gave Jesus the best she had. She humbled herself and knelt down in front of Him and with everybody watching, anointed his feet with this expensive oil of spikenard. When we think about what Jesus has done for us, how much he suffered for us, can there be anything do hard, or too demeaning for us to do if it brings glory to Him? What are we willing to give God? What are we willing to do for Him? Is there anything we won't do for Him? Sometimes people use pious words to hide their true motives. What are our true motives? Are we willing to publicly display our love and devotion to God no matter what anybody else says, does or thinks?

Jesus does want us to be wise with our money. We are to use it for His glory. This was a unique act for a specific situation. Jesus was not teaching us to neglect the poor or be wasteful in our spending. Quite the opposite; He said the poor will always be with us. Mary would have lots of opportunities to help the poor; this was her only chance to anoint Jesus for his funeral. Like Mary, we will have numerous opportunities to help the poor; do we watch for them? Do we meet them? Deuteronomy 15:11 "For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you saying, "you shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy in your land."

One way to worship God is by helping the less fortunate. Are we wise and prayerful when it comes to spending God's money?

Worshipping Christ empowers us to serve Him by doing His work in this world. When we miss Sunday morning worship, we miss our energy boost for the week. 7 days without prayer defiantly makes one weak. We all need to spend time alone with Jesus.

We all need to spend time together in worship. Sunday morning worship is very important in our Christian walk. For some people, it is the only time all week they hear the word or spend time in prayer. Far too many Christians today are malnourished spiritually. If church is not on your spiritual diet, you need a new diet.

Ideally the Christian needs a balance between worship and work. Christians can get so caught up in serving the Lord; we don't have time to worship Him. Too much service and not enough worship and we hurt our walk with Christ; too much worship and not enough work and we hinder the walk of others. How do we find and define this fine line between worship and work? We have to know ourselves. We have to know and use our gifts and care as much for our own walks as we do the walks of others.

After worship comes service! 1st we praise & glorify God, then we spend time alone with Him, listening to His voice, feeling His presence, learning His tasks for us to do; then we go out and do it! What God calls us to do; He will equip us to do! Worship is part of that equipping!

Are we prepared to serve the Lord? Have we been in worship? Gordon Dahl once said "Our problem is that we worship our work, work at our play, and play at our worship." Mary was not playing when she worshipped Christ. She knelt down in front of everybody and anointed His feet with her very best and wiped them off with her own hair. She totally humbled herself at the feet of Christ. She praised Him with every ounce of her being. That is the definition of worship; to humble ourselves at Christ's feet and praise Him with everything we possess. Is that what we do? Only true worship will prepare us for true service. Are we workers for Christ this morning or are we worshippers of Christ? We need to be both, one at a time. 1st we worship, then we work. Amen. Let's pray.