

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

THE ODOR OF THE OINTMENT

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.

John 12:3

To say that we live in a celebrity crazed world would be a gross understatement. All you have to do to confirm this conclusion is stand in a grocery store checkout line for a few minutes while your senses are bombarded by the magazines displayed; announcing juicy tidbits of gossip about the pathetic lives of this “star” and that. Evidently, this kind of publication is swallowed up by the adoring public who must be living vicariously through these debauched souls. Many seem more concerned about the opinions of these ignoramuses than that of “seven men who can render a reason”. (see Prov. 26:16) Sadly, the “mega-church” mentality which has gripped our nation is fed by the same love of having “kings” to prance about and entertain the masses with “religion” of many types and flavors. There is no shortage of “Diotrephes(s)” to fill these positions and their egos at the same time. The disturbing thing is that multitudes of those who call themselves “Christians” clamor after these “celebrities” and hunger for such “professionalism”. They feel most comfortable being entertained and mindlessly led along by these “trained and sophisticated” leaders. Seminars and conferences are taught across the land to train “worship teams” so they can go back to their churches and properly “lead” the folks there.

This is quite a departure from the “worship” which we see displayed here in this gathering in Lazarus’ house. Mary took a container of precious ointment and poured it on the LORD’s feet. The LORD was pleased with this offering and act of worship. In this act, we can see the nature of true worship illustrated:

THE OBJECT OF WORSHIP WAS THE LORD JESUS.

If a man will worship the true and living GOD HE must worship JESUS CHRIST. The LORD said “*no man comes to the FATHER but by ME*” (Jn. 14:6) The central figure in everything we say and do concerning the gospel, is CHRIST. The gospel is not about CHRIST the gospel is CHRIST.

THE ACT OF WORSHIP WAS PREPARED FOR.

This was not a spur of the moment decision on the part of Mary. She had to procure the ointment and then apply it at an appropriate time. It is a sad commentary on the coldness of men’s hearts when they have to be prompted and choreographed to worship the LORD. GOD’s people should prepare themselves for the time and opportunities they have to come into HIS presence with love and devotion.

THE ACT OF WORSHIP WAS NOT WITHOUT COST.

This was costly ointment. David said *"Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing."* (2 Sam 24:24) The cost of true worship cannot be measured in dollars. In fact, men often think they are worshipping GOD by giving of their money when they give out of their abundance, but they are mistaken. There is usually very little "cost" associated with giving monetary gifts. What have you ever actually "given" to the LORD? Worship is a total commitment without regard to the cost. When David danced before the LORD he was so desirous of worship that he gave no thought to possible embarrassment.

THE ACT OF WORSHIP WAS JUDGED EXTRAVAGANT AND IN EXCESS BY RELIGIOUS MEN.

Religious men are content to go through their liturgies and "orders" of worship and grow incensed when the program is interrupted. The LORD is always pleased by that worship which comes from a pure heart even when it disrupts the decorum of the meeting. The scripture admonishes us to do all things decently and in order but it does not define order as some rigid schedule which cannot be disturbed. (see I Cor. 14:26-33)

THE ACT OF WORSHIP IS ESSENTIALLY A DISPLAY OF HUMILITY.

The publican worshipped aright when he smote upon his breast and did not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven. Mary humbled herself at the feet of the LORD, taking upon herself the form of a servant. Such must be the attitude of all who will truly worship. There is no self seeking in true worship nor is it a display or performance meant to be seen by others. Though worship may be performed in a public setting it is basically a private endeavor.

TRUE WORSHIP IS A SWEET SMELLING SAVOR NOT ONLY IN THE COURTS OF HEAVEN BUT TO ALL THOSE PRESENT AS WELL.

The passage says that the odor of the ointment filled the house. There is no more blessed place on earth for the children of GOD than gathered with the saints in worship. The LORD said, *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."* (Matt 18:20) The LORD inhabits the praises of HIS people (see Ps.22:3) But those most personally involved will always receive the greatest blessing. Mary wiped HIS feet with her hair, no doubt the fragrance of this ointment stayed with her for days to come. True worship is never wasted nor soon forgotten.

TRUE WORSHIP IS THE RESULT OF THE LORD'S WORK IN HIS PEOPLE.

The LORD prepared the heart of Mary to worship HIM by the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead. How foolish we are to think that men can stimulate us to true worship. They can teach us to be like parrots, repeating choruses, raising hands, quoting bible verses, etc. but only GOD can stir up a man to truly worship HIM. The religious world can supply tantalizing counterfeits and somewhat fulfilling substitutes, but only GOD can humble a man's heart and bring him before him with genuine adoration and devotion. *"Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."* (Isaiah 66:1-2)