

(continued from Part 1)

There has to be some who hold out for nothing but the headship of the Lord and who will so stand against all the attacks of the enemy. We have the ground, the land, the place, the position, and the practice. We will not give in to you, foreigner, who has come into God's city and set yourself up to rule; you, alien, whether it be the alienness of man trying to rule God's kingdom or the satanic rule of angels ruling the city, we shall not be ruled by man.

Now, we have a picture of this in the gospels. It's so beautifully unfolded. Martha received him. Brothers and sisters, God wants a place; Jesus Christ wants a place where He is received. I don't know if I can express the simplicity of that. When Jesus Christ comes in and sits down, He is received as Lord, and there's no question who's Lord, who's head, who's king. He's received. Martha opened her home and said, "Lord, come in." He came in, and He sat down, and this was His place. That is a picture of the church receiving Christ; Christ received.

Well, now, a little bit of the story. The Lord Jesus came in, and there was Martha, and there was Mary. This passage is very graphic in presenting Mary. It said she sat at Jesus' feet and just stayed there. Well, in Jerusalem, how was the church built? The disciples just sat down and said, "Alright, we receive." How did Corinth begin? There were many people in that city. How did Thessalonica begin? Because a woman said, "We will receive you."

Mary just sat down at the feet of the Lord Jesus. This is the attitude of the church - that Jesus Christ is in our midst, and we are just going to receive Him. We are going to sit at His feet, under Him, and receive from the Lord. And she persisted. Praise the Lord for sister Martha. Don't disdain sister Martha; she was as much a part of that receiving as Mary was. She opened her doors and received him in, but at first, she was a little confused about what service was.

We've all been through this. Here in our midst is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Who has ever had Him in her home before? There's got to be a meal worthy of Him. Suddenly, this is all that Martha can think about: doing the proper thing toward preparing something for the Lord and serving Him. She begins to work, and Mary is with her, and then Mary runs out to listen for a while. Martha comes to her; Mary comes in, but she's got one ear. She comes back, and in a minute she's gone.

Martha finally gets very frustrated and comes out very accusingly and says, not to Mary, but to the Lord...can you get inside of Martha? The frustration... I am doing the Lord's work, and nobody else cares. The Lord doesn't even care. The Lord hasn't noticed the neglect of me. Then Mary hasn't cared a bit, and she's frustrated. She comes in, and she says, "Lord, are you going to let Mary just sit there and listen to you? She persists in listening to you. Will you not have her come help me?" And you know what the Lord said. He said, "Martha, your commitment is in the wrong place. You are tied up with the wrong thing. It's not what you're doing, Martha; it's that your commitment is to it. Mary

had chosen the better thing. After all, what was Martha doing? She was fixing a meal, and Mary was learning under the Lord Jesus.

Brothers and sisters, be very careful. The Lord could not tell Martha to stop serving. He said, "Move the commitment." It was almost as if to say, "Either come in and join us or do something very simple that will not get you complicated. We'll eat later; there will be something provided, but this is the main thing. The main thing is to not be distracted into something else, but that there might be a people who sit under the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now that's the first one. This is the first lesson the church so frequently learns. We do not get frustrated and become utterly committed to our service, but to sitting under the Lord Jesus Christ.

This next passage, Matthew 21, I would like to go back to again. Jesus Christ has been in a city: Jerusalem. During the day, He saw the money changers. During the day, He saw the sin of that city. He walked out of it and went to Bethany with a heavy heart. He spent the night in Bethany. He is not welcome in Jerusalem, but there is a place where He is received.

Then the next morning, very disillusioned -Jerusalem will not hear, and Jerusalem will not receive. He walks by a fig tree full of leaves, but no figs. Christ looks at it and says, "You no longer feed me. Let you be cursed forever. You shall never again bear fruit." What is that tree? That tree is Judaism. Here is a fig tree that will no longer feed its Lord or bear His fruit. That night, the Lord Jesus Christ came back to Bethany, and He fellowshiped there, dined there, was received there, rested there, and was fed there.

Do you know what Bethany means? What does the word Bethany mean? Bethlehem is the house of bread; Bethany is the house of the figs. The church is a house of figs to the Lord. It is a place where He can come in and sit down, where He is received, and where He can eat, and where He can rest, and the Lord has cursed all else. It cannot feed him. The Lord wants a place where He can come in, rest, and be received.

"I stand at the door and knock, and if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me." This is a similar picture of what the Lord wants: a people. It's not to the church, but to a people where He can come in and sup with them and they with Him. I believe this is addressed to the overcomers, is it not? Am I mistaken? He wants a place where He can come in, rest, and be fed.

Okay, let's turn now to Matthew 26:6 again. A little principle, but an important one. This is not Mary. As far as I can tell, this isn't Mary; it is someone else. Maybe Mary got her idea from this one. I may be wrong. Jesus comes into Bethany. A woman takes an alabaster box of ointments and pours it on the Lord's head. The room is filled with the smell of it. They said, "Why this waste? Why this waste?" Were they saying, "Why this waste?" They weren't saying, "Why this waste? as much as they were saying...brothers and sisters...when you say, "Why this waste?", do you realize what you're really saying?

You're saying, "Lord, you're not worth it." Now you think about it. That was spilled out and poured on the Lord Jesus, and it was very, very pure and costly.

Well, 2,000 years later, as we look back, if we had the privilege of being in the same home where the Lord Jesus was, you know, it would be no waste at all to pour something upon his head. But they said, "Why the waste?" Christ is not worthy of something so precious. Now, this is subjective, I realize, but I am saying to you: when the head is not honored, someone is saying, "He is not worthy," or "He is not trustworthy of this; it should not be done." I don't know if you understand what I mean, but I have watched with my own eyes, and the centuries of the years, where Jesus Christ is not finally and completely received. I mean, He is received in some part, but He is not totally received, because it costs too much.

Unfortunately, I have seen this with my own eyes. It costs so much to anoint the head of Christ. I have watched this. We have tried, and we have tried, and we can't make it. I can almost hear the voice of the children of Israel in the wilderness – "Take the cloud and the smoke and the fire from us and give us something that will keep moving, something we can see, hear, and talk to, and that will show us the way! Give us a man." It takes so much cost to anoint the head of Christ, that the oil might fall forth upon his body and down to His feet.

Along the way, so many have said, "It's not worth it." I don't want to draw any close parallel examples because there aren't any, but I can give a poor example. This never got started right, but nonetheless, let me show you where it ended. You know, the Quakers were raised up, and they got so clear, so crystal clear and certain that things were wrong in the organized world of religion. They left it, and they wouldn't go to the meeting; they wouldn't do anything. Fox really saw something. He made a real contribution to restoring the city of the Lord. He said, "There is a light inside: follow it."

You've heard how the Quakers met, and here's where the poverty was. He said, "Drop all forms, all everything. Come in and sit down and don't move until you get a light." Well, he didn't see so much. They just sat there, and once in a while someone would get up, and some of it was precious, and for a long time there was a great power with the Quakers. Well, they got started on the wrong foot. They could not have fully recovered from this. They got started wrong, but I want you to see where they are today. Where are they?

Brothers and sisters, it costs too much to anoint the Lord as Head. Have you ever been in their meetings? I have not, but I have a dear friend who left them to come and take a stand with the Lord for the church, and he was a pastor of one of their churches. I asked him about this. He said, "We have church buildings, and we have pews, and we have a pulpit. And when you walk into many of our churches, they have a bulletin with an order of worship. You come in, and you sit down, and there's a man to direct the order of worship, and you sit there in a meeting with singing, and then he gets up and preaches. It costs too much. The Lord is not worth it. To anoint His head, to have Him as everything; only the Lord Jesus Christ knew that that woman had properly received him.

Do you think it's easy to restore this matter? Well, let's look at what has happened up until now. Has it been restored? It will cost. It will cost you everything to pour the precious oil upon the Lord's head. It will cost...everything. Hallelujah. Praise God. It has been said for too long, "He is not worth the effort." Somewhere, someday, a group of people has got to sit down and say, "Lord, we are going to meet together, and we are going to stand for your rule on this earth, and you are still among us in spirit, and you will rule us by your Head. Right now, right here."

Let's go. John 11 - What is Bethany? It's a place where Jesus Christ is received. What does God want? He wants some Bethanys all over this earth. What is Bethany? It is a place where Jesus Christ can come in, rest, and be fed. What is Bethany? It's a place where he's worth everything. Where his head is anointed with oil, and he is worth everything. What is Bethany? It is a place of death and resurrection.

It was here that Mary anointed the Lord Jesus with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. Verse 15. *I am glad for your sakes that I was not there to the intent you may believe; nevertheless, let us go unto them.* Well, that's a small thing, but it was not the Lord Jesus alone who was received there, but there was the fellowship of all the brethren. Here is a place where the Lord Jesus Christ and the disciples had fellowship one with another. It was a place of love. It was a place of fellowship, and now, it is a place of death. Here is a picture of the church: people receiving the Lord. Here is an assembly. Here is some within a little village standing for the Lord, and death has come.

Now that is a very sad hour. When death comes to a group of the Lord's people, and it is a sad hour, and it is a heartbreaking hour, and it is a heart-rending hour, and it's a lonely hour when the church experiences death. Am I right? I believe some of you brothers and sisters are beginning to learn a little about the Lord's dealings in death. The first thing that happens when it comes is you start looking at everybody under creation to blame except the Lord. "Why do this to me? This isn't fair. You're the cause of that. You started that." We cannot see the Lord. Or maybe we see the Lord's hand in it; maybe our eyes are open, and all we can see is death.

Oh, how will we ever get out of this? Praise God for the death. The hour will come when men shall see that when the church goes through death, it is the church's greatest hour. Throughout the centuries, the churches have been beaten and battered and stomped and thrust down, and it has always fallen out for the glory of the Lord, for out of it has sprung something far better. They looked at the Lord Jesus Christ, and they said, "Oh, he's dead. You mean he's dead." And Jesus said, "Never mind. This death is for the Lord's glory."

Brothers and sisters, I speak to you frankly. I have not seen, with the possible exception of a group of brothers and sisters almost identical to you, in another nation, meeting almost under the same circumstances as you, who have so known and have so been a receiving place for the Lord for his Headship, Lordship, and Kingship. Praise God for

that. I stand with Brother Paul: I say that to you for your encouragement. Nonetheless, I would say that the church must go through death. It must go into death.

I think you were more or less ready for this. Well, don't sit there like that. I think you have seen the problems that come from receiving the Lord fully and not knowing what to do. It has all been so proper and so correct, and I believe so under the hand of God. I would say to you now, "Let us fully taste the death." I would even go so far as to say, "I believe the Lord is going to give us resurrection." In this, I would say to you now. In the first part of this chapter, Paul said, 'I stand with you; You have received the precepts. In the latter part of the chapter, he says, "There are some things I cannot abide." And I know that when that letter was finished, Corinth was dead.

Well, you read it. You try to figure out what they could have done. Well, they couldn't have the Lord's Supper anymore, not the way they had been. Why? Have you not read that far? Some brother got drunk and passed out. Well, could they keep on speaking in tongues the way they did? That was all gone. Let everything the Lord has done among you up to this day go into death. Otherwise, you won't be able to bear the next few days anyway if you don't. Let it all die. It has had its place, and it has had great lessons, and I want to say right now that there are some things that will be resurrected, that God has already given you that are just so precious. But other things will stay in that grave forever.

Out of death, much death, much suffering, much sorrow, comes much resurrection. You will see, not only now but for the rest of your life, that the darkest hour of death you cannot abide is the Lord's precious work of bringing you into a whole new experience.

Chapter 12. Two more pictures. In chapter 12 is perhaps the same story recorded in Luke, but much fuller, or it's a different story. I frankly don't know, and truly it doesn't matter. But here now is Mary breaking the jar, and the attention is given to the jar. This time it is the jar that is being broken, that is moaned. "Oh, that you would take such a lovely jar and break it and pour it on the Lord's feet and wipe His feet with your hair. Oh, that could have been kept in that beautiful jar, taken out, and sold to the poor."

Have you ever wished to save a sister or a brother from suffering? Oh, do not misunderstand; I do not mean we go around trying to get a brother into a position where he suffers. Oh, brother, I'm going to tell you off; you need a little of the cross. No, I mean when God circumstantially brings someone to the cross, do you try to save the alabaster dish? You take it, brothers, from the Lord's hand. I don't mean you shouldn't comfort. To stand, to pray, to love; that's one thing. But oh, to try to go and save the brother or sister from it, or to guide them in it.

We can get so busy going around, "Oh, you've been going through the cross; I've come over. I realize you've been having troubles lately. Could we have some scripture together? Let's talk." Or "Here I am, and I'm the one to come see when you've got problems." You'll be busy going around helping brothers and sisters, saving them from the alabaster dish. The broken dish. Your body will just be going here and there. "Oh, did

you hear that Mary is having a problem? Let's go see Mary. Comfort Mary. Oh, Mary, if you'll do such and such, you won't even have to bear this cross. Your body will just be shooting here and there. You'll be so busy until, finally, brothers and sisters, you'll be a *busybody*.

Would you save the alabaster dish? Why save the alabaster dish? Let it be broken. Let it crush. Let it break. It will look like that moment when it crushes: all that precious ointment that should have been preserved and kept, and the clay that mingles with the oil, and it looks so improper for a moment, and all of that just crushed out. Wasted. A dish that could have been preserved. Brothers and sisters, wait just a little while, and you will smell an aroma that will fill the house of God. You will see an ointment on the Lord Jesus Christ that will enrich His church. That's what he said. That which Mary did - the breaking of the precious dish, the oil was poured out on the Lord, the room was filled - and for two thousand years the breaking and the crushing have been a testimony and a blessing to the assemblies of God, wherever the Lord's gospel has been preached.

Well, go, brothers and sisters, stand before that empty cross. You know what happens when the Lord puts the cross up in front of you. The first thing you do is you don't look up to see it. You never give any consideration that maybe that is the way. You immediately put it into high gear. You have not yet seen it. You assume it is there, but you haven't seen it yet. The first thing you do is you get out your road map. "Let's see now, where is a good place to go from here? Don't let anybody tell me I was headed that direction. Oh, yes, there's a good road. I'll take that one." Without looking up, we try this way or that way. Suddenly, the way we go won't work too well. So we come back this way, and that doesn't work either. The Lord keeps forcing us back.

You remember the story of Balaam's donkey? The donkey finally said, "I've never been hard to get along with before. Obviously, you're headed in the wrong direction." You won't look up. You won't see the obvious cross. So you begin reasoning, logicing. With no place to turn, you constantly realize you have to come back, or you realize that when you top a hill and go down the valley, if you don't look up, God moved the cross right in the middle of your new road. So you have to back up and start down another road.

If you're not careful, you'll see it again, until finally you get so worn out you look up and find out you're right back either in the same place, or at least for all practical purposes, you are in the same kind of a mess. And there you are, in front of the same cross the Lord has been wanting to deal with in you all along. And there's nothing to do but look up at an empty cross and say, "Lord, that's where I belong." To go to it and through it.

Brothers and sisters, I'm a little fearful to ever even mention this among you. Your hearts are so ready for the Lord. I am so afraid you're going to go out and start looking for a cross. I've corrected myself so much. When you go out looking for a cross, it ain't a cross. It's when you go like this...that's a cross! Can you see the difference? Do not go looking for a cross. If God has given you joy, stay in your joy. The Lord has lifted the load; walk that way.

But when you feel circumstances closing in all about you, and you've got two thousand roads to pick and fifty brothers and sisters to throw chunks of rock at because of some mess they've gotten you into, or your boss, or the world, or your school, or your friends, or me, or someone else...then...there's a cross there to bear. And you won't have to look for it. It's right there, standing in front of you. Let the body be broken. Let the assembly be broken. Let the individual be broken. Under the sovereign hand of the Lord, precious ointment will pour forth from it.