

THE ADULT TEACHER
LESSON 2 ~ TRANSFORMED BY BEHOLDING GOD'S GLORY
OCTOBER 11, 2020

Background Scripture: 2 Corinthians 3

Lesson Passage: 2 Corinthians 3:7-18 (NIV)

Introduction: Paul agrees, in our lesson, that the Old Covenant, characterized by the Ten Commandments ("engraved with letters on stone") was glorious. He refers to Moses' experience of encountering God on Mount Sinai and his practice of talking to God in his tent of meeting and then emerging with the glow of God's glory on his face (Exodus 34:29-30, 33-35). Moses had prayed, "Show me your glory," and God had answered in this unique expression of God's glory on Moses' face. That's how the law was given. That's how Israel was led through the desert, by a man who sought God and spoke with Him face to face. But, Paul argues, that however glorious its origins, the law didn't bring life to God's people as the Spirit does. In Paul's analogy, the glory of the law fades or passes away, while the Spirit of God continues with us to this day.

Scripture Reference: 2 Corinthians 3:7-18 (NIV)

7 Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, transitory though it was, 8 will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? 9 If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! 10 For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. 11 And if what was transitory came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts! 12 Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. 13 We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. 14 But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. 15 Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. 16 But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Topic Explored: "Transformed by Beholding God's Glory" ~ Having the truth of God's Word, proclaiming that truth, and reflecting on that truth in our own lives, letting that truth change us to be more like Christ all work to *increase* our reflection of God's glory. We grow from one stage of glory to another ("being transformed" is a present passive indicative, so it emphasizes a process), until we come to our bodily resurrection (Philippians 3:21); (1 Corinthians 15:40), and the full attainment of reflecting God's glory (Romans 5:2, 8:18, 8:30, 9:23); made like Christ, (1 John 3:2), the one human who never failed at being the express image of God, (Hebrews 1:3), as God originally designed humanity to do in being made like Him (Genesis 1:26).

Memory Verse: *18 And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit* (1 Corinthians 3:18).
NIV

Lesson Focus: 2 Corinthians 3:7-18 (NIV)

Verse 7 ~ Previously in verse 6, Paul has just introduced a contrast between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, between the letter of the Mosaic law and the leadership of the dynamic Spirit of God. He continues this contrast by showing the basis of the Old Covenant as the work of the Spirit through Moses, the Spirit that “under the New Covenant” works through all believers. Ministry of the Spirit is more splendid than ministry of death (7-8); Ministry of righteousness is more splendid than the ministry of condemnation (9-10); and permanent ministry is more splendid than that which passes away (11).

The giving of the Law, which brought death, was a glorious thing, but the glory from Moses's face was not from receiving that Law, but from being in God's presence during that giving, from having "talked with [YHWH]" (Exodus 34:29, 34), and so reflecting God's glory out to the people of Israel.

Paul is comparing two covenants between God and His people. Paul had lived under both covenants, first the Old Covenant of God's law for Israel and then the new covenant of God's grace for all who come to Him through faith in Christ. In fact, Paul had been a minister of both covenants. First, he was a Jewish religious leader called a Pharisee, then an apostle of Jesus Christ. He is especially qualified to call out the differences between the two.

He starts by describing the Old Covenant as "the ministry that brought death, engraved in letters of stone." That may sound harsh, but Paul is careful never to dismiss God's Old Covenant with Israel. It was instituted by God, after all. Instead, Paul shows how it served the purpose of making all who attempted to live under it aware of their own sinfulness and inability to obey God. Since our sin deserves eternal death and separation from God, the Old Covenant provided the awareness that those who followed it lived under a death sentence (Romans 7:10-11).

The Old Covenant was delivered with the glory of God, however. That glory was reflected in a supernatural glow on Moses' face after he had been talking to God (Exodus 34:29-30). That reflected glory terrified the people even as it was fading away from Moses' face. Why? They recognized themselves as being unworthy to look at God's glory because of their own sinfulness.

Verses 8-13 ~ Verses 8-10 ask a rhetorical question and answer, if the "ministry of death" brought such glory, how can the "ministry of the Spirit" (which is life, v.6) not be more glorious, since it is comparing the glory of condemnation to that of righteousness. So much so, that it makes the first glory pale in comparison (v.10). Verse 11 indicates that the former glory (Law/Death) is fading, but the latter, greater glory (Spirit/Life) will remain.

This ministry of the Spirit is a "hope" that is worth boldly proclaiming, and not something to be hidden as Moses was having to do when Israel could not look upon his reflection of God upon his face for the lesser glory that will pass.

Verses 14-17 ~ Paul has made his main point, that the New Covenant was more glorious than the Old. Now he takes this concept of the veil over Moses' face to symbolize the darkness of the Jews who can't grasp the New Covenant. How sad! The Israelites are dull to the truth. Who has made their minds dull? The reason Israel could not look upon the glory reflecting off Moses was that their minds were blind to wanting to see truth, and that same blindness to truth affects their reading of the Old Testament until faith in Christ comes and takes it away, because then one has the Spirit (the greater glory) within them and this brings a freedom from the blindness to truth. It is clear that the Holy Spirit is the source of spiritual light, revelation, and freedom from the Law. What kind of freedom is this? It is freedom from the letter of the law that comes when a person begins to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. (Galatians 5:1, 18)

Verse 18 ~ "We all" (believers, those that are "in Christ"), are "made ... sufficient as minister of the new covenant" by the Spirit in us and working through us. So we have an "unveiled face", we do not suppress the truth of Christ and the life we have through Him (Romans 1:18), but reflect it back upon ourselves, "beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord", and in looking upon that truth, "are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.

The greatest characteristic a Christian can exhibit is the completely unveiled openness before God, which allows that person's life to become a mirror for others. When the Spirit fills us, we are transformed, and by beholding God we become mirrors. You can always tell when someone has been beholding the glory of the Lord, because your inner spirit senses that he mirrors the Lord's own character. Beware of anything that would spot or tarnish that mirror in you.

Let's talk about it. . .

- **Why is the Holy Spirit essential to help people see truth clearly and be able to grasp it? What enables people to come to Christ at all? What kind of freedom does the Spirit give us when we become Christians? *Possible Answer:*** The Holy Spirit takes away spiritual blindness by opening our hearts and minds to the Word. It is the Holy Spirit that enables us to come to the Lord at all. Then He helps transform us little by little so that we eventually resemble our Savior Jesus Christ. The freedom we enjoy on becoming Christians is freedom from bondage to the law; freedom in understanding Scripture; and freedom in coming to the Lord.

Making it personal:

- Those whose minds are hardened, whether they are Jews or unbelievers (2 Corinthians 4:3-4), have minds blinded to the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. Like the Israelites of old, who could not gaze at the glory of God in Moses' face, they have a veil over their hearts.
- When our face is unveiled, we behold the glory of the Lord and the Lord progressively transforms us into a closer image of Himself (Romans 8:29).
- Because of this wonderful hope we can confidently approach God (Hebrews 4:14-16), we don't need a veil to hide the glory of God. We have freedom from serving sin and death (Romans 8:2), if we have the spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9)
- We need to make sure we keep our hearts unveiled, so that the light of the knowledge of God will shine in our hearts, that we truly will be transformed by the renewal of our minds to become like Jesus mind. We need to think and act like Jesus (Romans 12:1-2).

Closing Prayer: *Dear Heavenly Father, we know You are here with us. We feel Your presence. Still, Loving Father, even though we are just tiny specks in Your great universe, reveal to us Your splendor and majesty. Open our eyes and hearts, oh Lord that we might see Your greatness. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen!"*

THE ADULT TEACHER
LESSON 3 ~ THE DILEMMA OF OBEDIENCE
OCTOBER 18, 2020

Background Scripture: I Samuel 3
Lesson Passage: I Samuel 3:10-21 (NASB)

Introduction: God never speaks to us in dramatic ways, but in ways that are easy to misunderstand. Then we say, “I wonder if that is God’s voice?” Isaiah said that the Lord spoke to him “with a strong hand,” that is, by the pressure of his circumstances ([Isaiah 8:11](#)). Without the sovereign hand of God Himself, nothing touches our lives. Do we discern His hand at work, or do we see things as mere occurrences? Get into the habit of saying, “Speak, Lord,” and life will become a romance ([1 Samuel 3:9](#)). Every time circumstances press in on you, say, “Speak, Lord,” and make time to listen. Chastening is more than a means of discipline—it is meant to bring me to the point of saying, “Speak, Lord.” Think back to a time when God spoke to you. Do you remember what He said? As we listen, our ears become more sensitive, and like Jesus, we will begin to hear God all the time.

Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the vision. Should I tell my “Eli” what God has shown to me? This is where the dilemma of obedience hits us. We disobey God by becoming amateur providences and thinking, “I must shield ‘Eli,’” who represents the best people we know. God did not tell Samuel to tell Eli—he had to decide that for himself. God’s message to you may hurt your “Eli,” but trying to prevent suffering in another’s life will prove to be an obstruction between your soul and God. It is at your own risk that you prevent someone’s right hand being cut off or right eye being plucked out (Matthew 5:29-30).

Scripture Reference: 1 Samuel 3:10-21 (NASB)

10 Then the Lord came and stood and called as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for Your servant is listening.” 11 The Lord said to Samuel, “Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. 12 In that day I will carry out against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13 For I have told him that I am about to judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons brought a curse on themselves and he did not rebuke them. 14 Therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.” 15 So Samuel lay down until morning. Then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. But Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. 16 Then Eli called Samuel and said, “Samuel, my son.” And he said, “Here I am.” 17 He said, “What is the word that He spoke to you? Please do not hide it from me. May God do so to you, and more also, if you hide anything from me of all the words that He spoke to you.” 18 So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, “It is the Lord; let Him do what seems good to Him.” 19 Thus Samuel grew and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fail. 20 All Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the Lord. 21 And the Lord appeared again at Shiloh, because the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the Lord.

Topic Explored: “*The Dilemma of Obedience*” ~ We don’t know how old Samuel is when he begins to minister with Eli; but he is probably an adolescent or a young man. The last we heard was that he “grew on, and increased in favor both with Yahweh, and also with men” (2:26). There are two significant phrases in this part of this verse. First, Samuel is ministering to the Lord—doing what Hannah promised God that he would do. Secondly, he is doing so under Eli’s supervision. Eli is a deeply flawed priest and his days are numbered, but he is still the priest in charge of the temple at Shiloh. Eli and his sons have not been faithful, so God has withheld His word. But God has not

absented Himself permanently. He is about to appoint Samuel as prophet, and Samuel will (reluctantly) bring the Word of the Lord to the people.

Memory Verse: *15 So Samuel lay down until morning. Then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. But Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli* (I Samuel 3:15) NASB

Lesson Focus: I Samuel 3:10-21 (NASB)

Verse 10-14 ~ Once again the Lord calls Samuel's name twice. This time Samuel answers, "Speak; for your servant hears." It is the right response. Samuel acknowledges his servant status before the Lord. He also acknowledges the Lord's right to speak and Samuel's need to listen. The Lord promises to do something stunning—something that will get every Israelite's attention—something so dramatic that people will later remember where they were when they heard the news.

Verse 12, refers back to the man of God who rebuked Eli for dishonoring his office and who told Eli that the Lord would soon "cut off your arm, and the arm of your father's house, that there shall not be an old man in your house" (2:27-36). The prophecy was made in the last chapter. Now the Lord intends to fulfill it.

God's intent was that Eli and his family "should walk before me forever" (I Samuel 2:30), but Eli's unfaithfulness has transformed a forever blessing into a forever punishment. It does not appear that Eli was guilty of misusing his office or blaspheming God personally, but he was guilty of allowing his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, to do these things. Hophni and Phinehas "had no regard for the Lord or for the duties of the priests to the people" (2:12-13). They treated the sacrificial offerings as their own personal feeding trough (I Samuel 2:13-16). They "despised the offering of Yahweh" (I Samuel 2:17).

This contempt constituted blasphemy. Torah law prescribes, "he who blasphemes the name of Yahweh, he shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall certainly stone him" (Leviticus 24:16a). If Eli had inflicted proper discipline when they were small, they would not have lost their way so completely. If he had confronted them earlier, no harsh discipline would be required now. Because Eli's sons "despised the offering of Yahweh" (2:17).

Verses 15-17 ~ We can imagine Samuel lying awake all night—troubled by the terrible word that he has heard from the Lord—troubled by the part that the Lord has called him to play in this drama. When morning comes, Samuel begins his day as if it were any other. He opens the doors of the house of the Lord. He no doubt finds solace in his routine. Routines often comfort us in troubled times.

This is Samuel's first experience as a prophet, and he has been given an especially difficult mission. Eli occupies a position at the top of Israelite society. He has charge over the Shiloh temple and its furnishings. He handles the things of God on a daily basis. He performs the sacrificial ministry called for in the law. But, more than that, he has been a surrogate father to Samuel—a good father—a better father to Samuel than to his own sons. It is no wonder that Samuel is afraid to tell Eli of the terrible things that God has revealed to him. It is no wonder that he seems paralyzed.

But Eli, to his credit, is not paralyzed. He hears Samuel stir. He hears the doors opening. He knows that something significant has happened, so he initiates a conversation with Samuel. He wants to know what Samuel has learned in his encounter with God. Eli has heard the rebuke and devastating prophecy of the man of God. He knows that the Lord has revealed something to Samuel, and can imagine that it has to concerns him. A thousand possibilities must be going through his mind—all of

them fearful—but he needs to hear the truth. He pronounces a curse on Samuel if Samuel fails to tell him everything.

What enables this letting go is Eli had profound trust in God. Following God's revelation to Samuel, Eli requests that the young Samuel inform him of all that had been spoken by the Lord, holding nothing back. Samuel shares all, including the ending of Eli's house. Eli responds, "It is the Lord, let him do what seems good to him." (1 Samuel 3:18) Eli's trust in the Lord was perhaps one of his greatest gifts to the young Samuel. At this point, everything Eli had been about was negated yet he is able to offer this profound statement of trust in the Lord. In the end, the most important thing is that God's will be done.

Verse 18 ~ This is the great test of Samuel's prophetic calling—the most difficult thing that he has ever been called to do or will ever be called to do. Young Samuel rises to the occasion, telling Eli everything that he has heard. Eli knows that his sons have committed terrible sins, and he knows that he shares their guilt. He has failed as a father and as a priest. His conscience is weighing heavily on him. He is therefore able to accept God's judgment as just and right. It is a graceful note at the end of a sadly flawed life.

Verse 19-21 ~ God is present in Samuel's life and in his words. Samuel has been faithful to God, so God blesses his words and his works. Dan and Beersheba are respectively the northernmost and southernmost cities of Israel, so from Dan to Beersheba is a conventional way of saying "throughout the whole land."

Let's talk about it. . .

1. What positive mentoring characteristics do we see in Eli? *Possible Answer: First, consider how Eli passively got out of Samuel's way. Once it was established that it was God calling Samuel, Eli gave simple instructions and let the boy encounter God on his own. Eli demonstrated masterful mentoring by not intruding. He stepped out of the picture. He sent Samuel back to listen to God alone. Second, Eli made no attempt to re-state, interpret, re-interpret, or control the negative message Samuel heard from God. Even though God's message to Samuel, and the boy's own growth in leadership, ultimately undermined Eli's leadership, Eli let God's plan play out. Nothing in the text indicates that he resisted God's new direction under Samuel's leadership. Eli is a mentoring hero – he reminds us that the key to mentoring is not always in what we do, but it is sometimes in what we don't do!*

2. What are some other things we see about Eli that is worthy of reflection? *(Possible Answers: 1) Eli was a man of prayer who was able to eventually recognize what was occurring and then give good instruction to the young man. 2) Eli put what was in Samuel's best interest before his own. 3) Eli trusted in God.*

Making it personal:

Closing Prayer: *Lord God, Almighty Father, we thank You for Your care and love. Please allow us to let Your love surround us and cast out any fear or doubts. Help us to live in love with You, accept Your will for our lives and give us obedience to Your revelation. May we trust in the way You direct us to go. In Jesus' Name, we pray, Amen!"*

THE ADULT TEACHER
LESSON 4 ~ EXTRAVAGANT LOVE
OCTOBER 25, 2020

Background Scripture: Mark 14

Lesson Passage: Mark 14:1-9, 22-25 (KJV)

Introduction: Have you in your life as a follower of Jesus ever made a sacrifice of extravagant love?" Can you recall a time when you did something for Jesus that really cost you? You actually went without something you really wanted because of a sacrifice of extravagant love for Jesus? The sad fact is we are good at giving Jesus our leftovers and hand-me-downs. Do we donate old, worn, ratty couches to the less fortunate? Do we purchase new couches for our homes and donate our old, worn couches to the church and in the process got a tax break, and felt good that we have done something noble?

In our lesson we seek something totally different, something truly remarkable, an indisputable sacrifice of extravagant love by a woman Mark allows to remain anonymous. And we also see the tale of two lives that could not stand in greater contrast when it comes to true and unreserved devotion to our Lord: an unnamed woman who gave her very best.

Scripture Reference: Mark 14:1-9 (KJV)

1 After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. 2 But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people. 3 And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. 4 And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? 5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. 6 And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. 7 For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. 8 She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. 9 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her. 22 And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. 23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. 24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. 25 Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

Topic Explored: "Extravagant Love" ~ Our lesson is a story of a person named Mary who beautifully showed the importance of devotion over mere religious duties. Mary was so appreciative of Jesus that she took a most precious, if not the most precious item that she possessed, and poured it over Jesus. The event signaled an overwhelming spirit of thankfulness and joy in Mary's heart to know Jesus' blessings in her life. Love is costly. Love means a willingness to use all that we have to pursue the needs of another. The vial of perfume seemed like a strange demand, but it stood for what was most supreme in her heart. The love she had for Jesus!

Memory Verse: *24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many* (Mark 14:24). KJV

Lesson Focus: Mark 14:1-9 (KJV)

Verses 1-2 ~ The Feast of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were two different things. The Feast of the Passover fell on 14th Nisan, that is, about 14th April. The Feast of Unleavened Bread consisted of the seven days following the Passover. The Passover itself was a major feast and was kept like a sabbath. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was called a minor festival, and, although no new work could be begun during it, such work as was "necessary for public interest or to provide against private loss" was allowable. The really great day was Passover Day.

The Passover had a double significance. It commemorated the deliverance of the children of Israel from their bondage in Egypt (Exodus 12:1-51). It also had an agricultural significance (Leviticus 23:10-11). Not until after this observance, could the barley of the new crop be sold in the shops or bread made with the new flour be eaten.

Every possible preparation was made for the Passover. For a month beforehand its meaning was expounded in the synagogue, and its lesson was taught daily in the schools. The aim was that no one should come ignorant and unprepared to the feast. The roads were all put in order, the bridges repaired. It was compulsory for every adult male Jew who lived within 15 miles of Jerusalem to come to the Passover, but far more than these came. It was the one ambition of every Jew to eat at least one Passover in Jerusalem before he died. Therefore, from every country in the world pilgrims came flocking to the Passover Feast. The Jewish authorities knew that in an inflammable atmosphere like that, the arrest of Jesus might well provoke a riot. That is why they sought some secret stratagem to arrest Him and have Him in their power before the populace knew anything about it.

Verses 3-9 ~ Here we have a wonderful account of the love of this woman. Mark does not give her name, but John tells us it was Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus, who seized this occasion to anoint the head of Jesus. There are three movements in this brief account.

The first is the act of loving sacrifice. You can picture it in your imagination: Mary coming into the room with the jar of expensive ointment as Jesus is reclining on the couch. John tells us that she anointed both His head and His feet, which were both easily accessible to her as He lay, oriental fashion, on the couch beside the table. She breaks the jar and pours the whole contents upon His head and feet. It is a beautiful act, one which captures the attention of all those present. *Second*, it awakened a response. Mark tells us the first response was one of indignation that she should waste this ointment. John says it was Judas who raised this objection. This is characteristic of Judas -- that he was concerned only about the waste of money. John says he was a thief.

Now, *third*, our Lord takes this beautiful incident and shows us the true value of it. He says five things about it which mark it an extremely valuable act. First, he says, "She has done a beautiful thing to me." The beauty of it lay in its very extravagance. This woman did not spare any of the ointment but broke the flask and poured the whole quantity out upon Him. Now, it was costly ointment. Judas, with his practical, computer mind, reckoned it up as worth three hundred denarii. A denarius was the day's wage for a laborer. In these inflated times, three hundred days' wages would be a tremendous sum -- probably at least \$10,000. But in those days, a denarius was worth about 20 cents, so that would make this ointment worth approximately \$60.00 -- almost a year's wages. In the eyes of Judas, this woman wasted an extravagant amount of money when she poured the ointment upon Jesus. It was such a lavish act, and therein lay the beauty of it. Jesus said, "That's beautiful! She hasn't held anything back, but has simply poured it all out. It's a beautiful thing she has done to me."

Second, he said that it was a timely thing she had done. "It was something that could only be done now. Anytime you want to do good to the poor you can, because they are always around." And it is right to help the poor. But there are opportunities which come in our life which must be seized at the moment; they never happen again. Mary had sensed this and had seized the moment to do this which

could only have been done then, for such a time would never occur again. It was out of the sensitivity of her heart that she realized that the timing was right, that Jesus recognized.

Then, she did that which was feasible. That is, she did what she could. It was all that was open to her. She could not fix Him a meal; there was no time for that. She could not make a garment for Him; there was no time for that. There was nothing else she could do to show her love but this, and so this is what she did. She did what she could. I am sure our Lord has called our attention to it because it is so practical for us.

This is really the attitude the Lord asks of all of us. You cannot do everything. You cannot feed the starving world, but you can feed one person. You cannot comfort all the lonely hearts on earth, but you can comfort one or two. And Mary did what she could. Everywhere in Scripture, this is all God asks of us -- that we bring Him what is at hand. Some of you think that you live dull lives, and that you never have an opportunity for real service. But you do! This is what this story tells us. You have something that you can do today. And in doing it with the expectation that God will take it and enlarge it, you will find that tremendous results can follow. We are to bring our loaves and fishes -- a simple little meal -- and Jesus will feed the multitude. We must fill the jars with water, but He will turn it into wine. When we do what we can, when we bring what we have, God will use it, what a beautiful expression it is!

The fourth element of this act was that it was insightful. Our Lord says, "She has anointed my body beforehand for burying." Time and time again Jesus warned them that He was heading for death. Not one of them believed Him -- except Mary of Bethany. She believed Him, and understood that He was here for that very purpose. This was what motivated her. She understood that He was heading for burial. And just as love would long to do some act of service for Him since she could not be sure she would ever have the opportunity later to find His body and anoint it for burial in the Jewish custom, she did it now. Jesus knew she did this deliberately for that very purpose. What a comfort this must have been to our Lord!

Finally, what she did was memorable. Jesus said, "The story of this beautiful act will be told in memory of her wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world." Here we are today, 2000 years later, fulfilling this very word, telling again of the act of Mary of Bethany, when she anointed our Lord's head and feet.

Verses 22-25 ~ Our Lord is teaching again by means of symbols, and the symbols are very significant. We might call them "symbols" of extravagant love. He took the bread, and said, "This is my body," and he broke the bread, symbolizing how His body would be broken. And He took the cup, and said, "This is the blood of the new covenant," i.e., the new agreement that God makes with men by faith, and not by works; by believing, and not by performance. That is the New Covenant. Then He reminded them that this was the end, that He would never drink of the cup again until He drank it new in the fulfillment of the kingdom of God.

Now we can understand why Mark has put this account alongside the story of Mary of Bethany. For here our Lord is showing these disciples that He was doing to them what Mary had done to Him. She brought a beautiful alabaster flask, and she broke it. He said, "My body is that flask, and I am going to be broken for you." She poured out of the flask all the ointment that was in it, so that the fragrance of it filled the room, as it has filled the earth in the centuries since.

God came to this earth, and became one of us, and He suffered with us, was crucified and died. And He did that out of His extravagant love for us! That is what this story is saying to us. This is love's

extravagance. When you and I partake of the table of the Lord together, Jesus is saying, "Look, it is I who break the flask of my own body, to pour out upon you all the precious ointment, so that you may understand that it is no longer law which governs your life; it is love."

Let's talk about it. . .

Making it Personal:

- Extravagant love never calculates the cost. Genuine devotion never considers the investment. It simply and spontaneously acts and does all that it can, disappointed only in the fact that it could not do more! This is exactly what we see in Jesus and Mary.

Closing Prayer: *Our Father, we thank You for this beautiful lesson, so wonderfully exemplified by this sacrifice of this woman. We pray that You will help us to understand that she is depicting a far greater sacrifice, a more beautiful act of love which can never be forgotten which will grip our hearts and teach us and strengthen us all the days of our life. May we rejoice in this, Lord, and give thanks at this moment to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. We ask in His name, Amen.*

*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross
When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.
Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, Save in the death of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most— I sacrifice them to His blood.
See, from His head, His hands, His feet, Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

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4th Quarter

October-November-December 2020

Lesson	Date	Subject	Scripture
Lesson 1	October 4	Is My Sacrifice “Living”?	Genesis 22:1-12; Romans 12:1
Lesson 2	October 11	Transformed by Beholding	2 Corinthians 3:7-18
Lesson 3	October 18	The Dilemma of Obedience	I Samuel 3:11-21
Lesson 4	October 25	Extravagant Love	Mark 14:1-9
Lesson 5	November 1	Christ’s Ambassadors	2 Corinthians 5:11-21
Lesson 6	November 8	Dressed for Spiritual Warfare	Ephesians 6:10-17
Lesson 7	November 15	A Compelling Example of Ministry	I Thessalonians 2:1-13
Lesson 8	November 22	The Source of Abundant Joy	Romans 8:31-39
Lesson 9	November 29	The Discipline of Obedience	Deuteronomy 4:1-10
Lesson 10	December 6	The Messiah’s Mission	Isaiah 49:1-7
Lesson 11	December 13	In the Fullness of Time	Galatians 4:4-12a John 8:12-18
Lesson 12	December 20	The Season of Wonder-Jesus is Born!	Luke 2:1, 4-14
Lesson 13	December 27	Jesus’ Birth and Our New Birth	Luke 2:6, 7; John 3:5-7, 16