

Dinner with Jesus

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 26 May 2024

Preacher: Rev. Murdo M Campbell

[0 : 00] I'm now going to read the Word of God, to read in the Bible, in the Gospel according to John, and chapter 12.

John chapter 12, if you're using the Church Bible, it's on page 898. Page 898 in the Church Bible, John chapter 12, we're reading from the beginning.

And we're reading down to the verse marked 19. John chapter 12, from the beginning. Let us hear the Word of God.

Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom he had raised on the dead. So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table.

Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment, made from pure nard. And anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

[1 : 08] But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, he who was about to betray him, said, Why was this ointment not sold for 300 denarii and given to the poor?

He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief. And having charge of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

Jesus said, Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.

When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came not only on account of him, but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised on the dead. So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, because on account of him, many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

The next day, the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying, Hosanna!

[2 : 13] Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel. And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion, behold, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt.

His disciples did not understand these things at first. But when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him.

The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they had heard he had done this sign.

So the Pharisees said to one another, You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him. And so on, may the Lord bless that reading of his own holy word.

But before we consider that passage and their dinner with Jesus, we'll come before the Lord in prayer. Let's pray together. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks this morning that we are able to come aside and rest a while, to rest at the feet of Jesus, and to know that when we come to him, he is one who speaks to us gently, and he speaks to us graciously.

[3 : 40] He speaks to us lovingly, because he knows us. He knows us even better than we know ourselves. And it is a wonder to us that we are invited at all. And yet the glory of the gospel is that Jesus bids us to come.

He bids everyone who thirsts to come, to come and drink of this living water. He bids everyone who is hungry to come and taste and see that he is good, and to trust in him and be blessed.

And so, Lord, we pray that as we have come to church this morning, that we would come thirsting after righteousness, that we would come hungry to taste and see Jesus, that we would come as those who are longing to be filled.

And, Lord, our prayer is that we would be filled, filled with the manna from heaven, that we would hear the very voice of Jesus speaking to us, speaking to us not just in our head, but speaking to our heart, reminding us that he promises never to leave us and never to forsake us, that he is with us every step of the way, that whatever is going on in our home or in our family or among our friends or in our workplace, that whatever is our experience, Lord, we give thanks that everything is known to thee and that thou art the one in whom we can trust, one in whom we can cast all our cares upon, one in whom we can lean upon day by day.

And so, Lord, we ask that even today we would learn to trust thee more and more. We confess, O Lord, how often we trust ourselves. And, Lord, we realize how foolish that is, how often we seek to trust other people, and yet how thy word reminds us and how our experience teaches us that often vain is the help of man.

[5 : 29] But, Lord, help us, we pray, to trust, to trust as thy word teaches us, to trust in the Lord with all our heart, and to lean not upon our own understanding, but in all our ways to acknowledge thee, for thou art the one who shall direct our paths.

Lord, direct us, we pray. Lead us ultimately to the rock that is higher than us, that we may lean upon him day by day, that we would lean upon him in all that we go through, the sins that we commit, the sufferings that we experience, the sorrow that breaks our heart, the separation that is continually seen in our homes and in our families.

But, Lord, in the midst of it all, we would keep leaning upon Jesus, because he is there to be our shepherd, to lead us and to direct us day by day.

Lord, remember us then, we pray. Remember, Lord, those in different situations and circumstances today, those who are mourning, those whose hearts are heavy, that they would know the peace of God that passes all understanding, that they would know the help and strength of that shepherd who remains faithful even when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

Remember others, Lord, in our congregation, those who are confined to their homes, those who are unable to be with us today, maybe due to old age or infirmity, or those undergoing treatment, those who are struggling, Lord, struggling mentally or physically, that they would know the peace of God, or that they would know, as Jesus says, peace with you, peace in you and peace with you.

[7 : 05] Lord, we pray that we would know it, the Prince of Peace, ruling and reigning in our hearts. Lord, encourage us, we ask. Remember our children as well, those who have gone to the Sunday school, that we give thanks for them, for those who teach them diligently week by week, for those, Lord, who are looking after our children in the creche today.

And Lord, we pray for them. Remember the YF, Lord, as it meets tonight as well. We pray, Lord, that the young that come, oh, Lord, that they would give their best years to the Lord, seeking him while he may be found, and calling upon him while he is near.

Lord, remember us, we pray. Remember our governments as well, even as we have gone through another week, and we have seen the uncertainty of governments, and how these things can change so quickly.

And even as we now head towards another election, Lord, we pray for wisdom. We pray for direction. We pray that whoever is our next prime minister, that ultimately he would have the fear of the Lord in his heart, which alone is the beginning of wisdom.

Lord, we look at our day and generation, and we know what the Bible teaches us, that righteousness alone will exalt our nation. And Lord, how we need it, in our day and generation, we need the righteousness of God to be seen and to be shown to those in government, to those in council, to those who rule over and overrule in things, that they would see that heaven remains thy throne, and the earth is thy footstool.

[8 : 38] Lord, remember us, we pray. Remember us as a congregation in all our different activities or outreaches. We pray, Lord, for our Back to Church Sunday. We pray that we would be willing and wanting to invite people to come to church, and that that would be our heart's desire.

And Lord, that if they say no, help us, we pray, to keep praying for them, to keep bringing them to the throne of grace, and to know that thou art the God who is able to do in us and for us, exceedingly abundantly above all, more than we could ask or even think.

Remember those, Lord, who attended Christianity Explored over the past number of weeks. We pray that it would have been a blessing to them and a benefit for them to teach them and to encourage them to walk with Jesus, because to be with him is far better, to seek the narrow way.

For as thy word teaches us, and as Jesus reminds us, that straight is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it. But broad is the way, and many that go in thereat.

Lord, help us, we pray. Help us, we pray, to see that the way of destruction, it is broad, and there are many going to it, but we are called to walk this narrow path that leads to life.

[9 : 58] Lord, teach us, we ask. Speak to us, we plead. Work in our hearts, work in our homes, work in our families. Lord, we know how we cannot do it ourselves, that vain is the help of man, but salvation is of the Lord.

And Lord, with all these things, they are impossible with man, but possible with God. Help us then, we pray, to leave it with thee, to leave our children in thy care and keeping, to leave, Lord, our family members, and those whom we pray for often, wondering when they will come to Christ, wondering when they will be saved, or if they will be saved at all.

But Lord, help us, we pray, to trust in the Lord who is sovereign, who is in control, and who promises to work all things together for good to those who are the called according to his own purpose.

Bless us together then, we pray. Lead us and guide us by thy spirit, we ask, for we ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this morning, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read, the Gospel according to John, John chapter 12.

John chapter 12. It's on page 898 in the Church Bible. John chapter 12, and we just read again from the beginning of the chapter.

[11 : 33] Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. So they gave a dinner for him there.

Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. So they gave a dinner for Jesus there.

Now, as you know, it's nice to go out for dinner because it's not something, I suppose, you do often. We do it on special occasions, whether you're celebrating a special event, such as a birthday or an anniversary, or you're meeting up with friends that you haven't seen for a while, or if you're going out on a date.

Sometimes going out on a date with your wife is a great thing to do, or your husband, if you have a husband. But you know, it's always good to get dressed up and then go out for dinner. But it's also nice to be invited to someone's home for dinner, whether that's dinner during the week or whether that's Sunday dinner.

It's nice to be invited to someone's home for dinner. And you know, coming to this passage, I was thinking, well, what does a 21st century dinner look like?

[12 : 47] What does a 21st century dinner look like? Is it a TV dinner where there's silence from everybody in the room, but the only sound is the TV?

And the focal point during dinner time isn't really the food or having a conversation. The focal point is the favorite channel. What does a 21st century dinner table look like?

Is it a TV dinner? Or is the 21st century dinner table, is it a separated and segregated dinner table where family members, they're eating at separate times and in separate rooms?

You know, I read an article recently which said, studies have shown that families who eat together tend to be closer and have better communication and conversations with one another.

And the advice given in the article was, when you're at the dinner table, turn off your screens and speak to one another and share with one another about your day around the dinner table.

[13 : 53] What does a 21st century dinner table look like? But you know, the question I want us to think about this morning is what does a 1st century dinner table look like? What does a 1st century dinner table look like?

Because, as you know, we're continuing this short series called Eating with Jesus. Eating with Jesus. And we're looking at this short series because in the Gospel, Jesus invites us to eat with Him.

He says, Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and eat with him and he with me.

So Jesus invites us to eat with Him. And as we're saying to the children, we've had breakfast with Jesus, we've had lunch with Jesus, and now, this morning, we're having dinner with Jesus.

And in this passage, John, the Gospel writer, he focuses our attention on a 1st century dinner table. And he draws our attention to five people who are sitting around this dinner table.

[14:53] There are five people sitting around the dinner table. And the first person we see at this dinner table is Martha. Martha, we'll call her Martha the Cook.

Martha the Cook. We read there in verse 1, Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

So they gave a dinner for Him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with Him at table. So John introduces this dinner table to us by telling us that it was six days before the Passover.

Now, as you know, the Passover, it was one of the highest and holiest days in the Jewish calendar. But John tells us that it was six days before the Passover because he's giving us this timeline for us to see just how long Jesus has left.

Jesus is now entering into His last week, the last week of His life and ministry. Because as we read, we read into the next, the few verses on, verse 12, where it says, the next day, so the next day was Palm Sunday.

[16:06] Because as we read on in the chapter, Jesus, He rides into Jerusalem on a donkey. And as He rides into Jerusalem on a donkey, John tells us that they were laying palm branches in front of Jesus.

And they were singing, Hosanna, salvation belongs to the Lord. So the next day was Palm Sunday. And you remember that the crowds, they were singing Hosanna on Palm Sunday.

Then by Good Friday, they were shouting, crucify Him. Crucify Him. And then by the following Sunday, the angels were saying, He is not here, for He is risen.

And, you know, you follow John's timeline and you see that from one Sunday to the next, as we said before, from one Sunday to the next, everything changed. From Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, everything changed.

Which is how we often see things in our own lives too. We see that from one Sunday to the next, things can change so quickly. And they can change quickly because of sin or sickness or suffering or sorrow.

[17:09] From one Sunday to the next, everything can change. But the glory of the gospel is that Jesus never changes. Jesus never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

But as John wrote and as we read, the events of this passage, they took place six days before the Passover. And when you work it out, it was the Jewish Sabbath. And on the Sabbath, Jesus, we're told, He was in Bethany.

He had been invited into the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Now, this wasn't the first time that Jesus had been in the house at Bethany. He had been there many times before.

He'd been there on many occasions in the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. But on this occasion, Jesus was there, you could say, for Sabbath dinner. And as we read, Martha was serving.

Martha was cooking. Martha was the cook, which seemed to be the norm because every time we come to the house at Bethany, wherever you read it in the Gospels, we always find Martha cooking.

[18:15] She's cooking a meal and she's serving her guests. And that's because you could say that Martha loved serving. Martha loved serving. Martha was someone, you could say, that had an open heart and an open home.

Martha wanted her home or her house at Bethany to be this hospitable home. And she wanted it to be a hospitable home, not just for Jesus and His disciples, but for anyone and for everyone.

And you know, that's what I love about Martha. Martha often gets a hard time because she speaks to her sister about not serving and we'll come back to that in a moment. But what I love about Martha is that she was someone with an open heart and an open home.

Martha had an open heart and an open home. Martha had a heart for showing hospitality because she liked to serve. She liked to be in the background where she found fulfillment in cooking and providing food for people.

But you know, you look at Martha and she was someone who had an open heart and she wanted an open home. She had a heart for showing hospitality, which is actually one of the marks of a true Christian.

[19 : 35] It's one of the marks of a true Christian. Do you know when Paul gives a long list, it's a really long list, of the marks of true Christianity in Romans chapter 12?

Paul gives this long list of what it looks like to be a Christian. And he gives this long list in Romans 12 and he says, of one of the marks, he says that seeking to show hospitality is one of the marks of a true Christian.

Seeking to show hospitality is one of the marks of a true Christian. And you know, I believe that our isolated and individualistic culture that we live in today, it has had such an impact and such an influence upon the church that hospitality has become secondary for Christians.

But you know, when you read the New Testament, when you read what Paul writes, when you read what Jesus does, you see that hospitality was primary. Hospitality was a mark of grace.

It was a mark of your Christianity. Because if you were a Christian in the New Testament church, you opened your heart and you opened your home to show hospitality to one another.

[20 : 49] And not just to your friends or to your family whom you know and love, but to your congregation and your community, to your neighbors and to strangers.

In fact, when you read the writer to the letter of Hebrews, when you read what he writes there about hospitality, he says, do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers.

Why? Because by doing this, some have entertained angels without knowing it. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers.

So it's good to open your heart and open your home to show hospitality. Because that's what Martha the cook did. So as we look around this table, we see Martha the cook.

Then we see, secondly, Lazarus the cured. Martha the cook and then Lazarus the cured. We read there that, verse 2, so they gave a dinner for him, Jesus.

[21 : 52] Martha served and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. So the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, the house of Bethany, it was not only a home for showing hospitality, where Martha was there with her open heart and her open home, but it was also a home that had seen heartache.

It was a home that had seen heartache. In fact, the name Bethany, that's what the place is called. The name Bethany means house of affliction. House of affliction.

And we don't need to look far to find heartache in this home or this house of affliction because if you just go to the previous chapter, we read of Mary and Martha's brother, Lazarus.

We read about him being terminally ill. And he was terminally ill to the point that they didn't even bother calling for a doctor or a general practitioner because they knew that it was too late.

Instead, they call for Dr. Jesus, the great physician. The sisters, these two sisters, Mary and Martha, they send word to Jesus. And you read it right at the beginning of John 11.

[23 : 04] They say, Lord, he whom you love is ill. But instead of responding and rushing over to the bedside of Lazarus, what do we read? Dr. Jesus diagnoses that this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God.

And yet, that's not how Mary and Martha saw it. Because when their brother Lazarus, when he actually died, and Dr. Jesus then turns up at their home four days too late, these sorrowing sisters, Mary and Martha, they weren't best pleased with Jesus.

You could even say that they blamed Jesus for not being there on time. Because both these sorrowing sisters, they went out to see Jesus and speak to Jesus and say to Jesus, they wanted to say their peace to him in a way, they said, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. And yet, Dr. Jesus, you read through John 11, it's a wonderful chapter. Dr. Jesus went on to display and even demonstrate to these sorrowing sisters that he has power and authority over death because he has the power of the resurrection.

In fact, Jesus declared to Martha, Martha the cook, he said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. Whosoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.

[24 : 33] But of course, Jesus knew the power and pain of death. He knew that this home had been a home or a house of affliction in Bethany. That's why he wept at the tomb of Lazarus.

The shortest verse in our Bible, Jesus wept. He wept at the tomb of his friend Lazarus because he loved Lazarus. But even though Jesus watched and witnessed the power and the pain of death, he knew that he alone possessed the power of resurrection and restoration and renewal.

which is why Jesus, you read it in John 11, he stood at the tomb of Lazarus and shouted, Lazarus, come forth. And when Lazarus came out, many of those were told had been standing by weeping and watching.

They believed in Jesus. They were weeping and watching, but when they watched Lazarus come out of the tomb, they believed in Jesus. And now to see Lazarus the cured, he's there cured of his disease and his death and he's sitting now at the dinner table again.

And it would have brought great happiness to the house of Bethany. Because the house of Bethany, you could say, it was no longer a house of affliction. It was now a house of adoration.

[25 : 57] It's no longer a house of affliction where Lazarus has died. It was now a house of adoration because Lazarus has been risen. Lazarus the cured is there. He's now sitting back at the dinner table.

And yet, you know, I'm sure there were many other homes in Bethany and there are many other homes in Barvis too who never got to experience and enjoy the same happiness they did in the house of Bethany.

I don't know any of the other houses in Bethany that were houses of affliction and heartache. But I do know many of the houses and many of the homes in Barvis that are like the house of Bethany. Homes of affliction. Homes of heartache. Homes of brokenness. Homes of sorrow. Because unlike Lazarus who sat around the dinner table after he had died, there are many homes of heartache in Barvis where their loved one is no longer seen, no longer sitting, no longer speaking at the dinner table where they once sat.

Their space is empty. Their voice is silent. And yet, you know, we're reminded here of who we need to come to.

[27 : 24] And hard as it is, we need to come and keep coming to this same Jesus that came to these sorrowing sisters. And we need to keep coming to him and casting all our cares and all our concerns upon him.

Because the wonderful thing about this Jesus is that he alone has the words of eternal life. He alone is able to bring comfort and consolation even when we're sitting at the dinner table.

And so we see around this dinner table, Martha the cook. We see Lazarus the cured. Then thirdly, we see Mary the committed. Mary the committed. We're told there in verse 3, Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair.

The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. A wonderful moment. But as you know, siblings, siblings can often be very similar but they can also be very different.

And in the house of Bethany, those siblings, Mary and Martha, they were very different because as we said, Martha was someone who had an open heart and an open home for showing hospitality.

[28 : 42] She loved to serve quietly in the background. But Mary, you could say, was the opposite. She liked to sit in the foreground. She liked to speak to the guests who came into their home.

Martha liked to serve. Mary liked to sit. And because of their differences, sometimes as siblings and sometimes as sisters, there were probably squabbles.

And I say that because on another occasion when Jesus was there for dinner, Martha was stressed. She was stressed about serving. She wanted her sister to come and help her with all the serving.

But instead, Mary, well, she was sitting at the feet of Jesus, which created some conflict. It caused Martha to put down all the pots and all the pans and then come into the room and plead with Jesus, saying, Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?

Tell her. Tell her to help me. To which Jesus, you remember, he responded, Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things.

[29 : 46] But one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion. which will not be taken away from her. And you know, what these squabbling sisters were being shown is that it's good to serve Jesus, but it's also good to sit at the feet of Jesus.

It's good to serve Jesus, but it's also good to sit at the feet of Jesus. It's good to use our energy and our efforts and our enthusiasm to serve Jesus, and we should. But we also need to take time to sit at the feet of Jesus.

Because like Mary, when we sit at the feet of Jesus, we learn and we listen and we're enabled to look to Jesus. And by learning and listening and looking, we ultimately love him more and more.

In fact, I would go as far as to say that we can't serve Jesus unless we have first of all sat at the feet of Jesus. We can't serve Jesus unless we have first of all sat at the feet of Jesus.

Because like Martha, it's good to cook for Jesus, but we need to be committed to Jesus, which is what Mary displays, what Mary demonstrates here.

[31 : 04] She shows her commitment to Jesus because we're told there that she took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus.

She took perfume and poured it over the feet of Jesus. A pound of perfume she poured over the feet of Jesus. Now, I'm not very good with weights and measurements.

Never have been. But since Matthew's been born, I've had to remind myself of the difference between stones and pounds and ounces when it comes to baby weights.

Now, you'll all be up on this. There are 16 ounces in a pound, 14 pounds in a stone. But the pound of weight that's mentioned here was actually not the pound that we use, the 16 ounces in a pound. The pound of weight here was called a Roman pound. It was called a libra. And there were only 11 ounces in a Roman pound, not 16 pounds.

[32 : 08] But 11 ounces in a Roman pound, not 16 ounces in the pound. Because the pound of perfume that was poured on Jesus, and as we're told there, it was poured, so it was a liquid. So 11 and a half ounces of this liquid perfume, if you work it all out, I had to Google it all, 334 milliliters.

334, sorry, 343 milliliters, which is more than what's in a can of Coke. So we're all familiar with what's in a can of Coke, 330 milliliters.

But in this pound of perfume poured on Jesus was 343 milliliters. And when you stop to think about it, the pound of perfume that Mary poured over the feet of Jesus was a lot of perfume, an awful lot of perfume.

because I'm sure that before you left the house this morning to come to church, I'm sure that you gave yourself a couple of sprays of perfume or aftershave, you put it on yourself before you came to church.

I don't think any of you would have poured a whole bottle. I don't even think they sell that much in a bottle, probably 100 milliliters. So I don't think you would have poured a whole bottle of perfume onto yourself before coming to church.

[33 : 27] Otherwise, everyone would smell you before they see you. So it's no wonder the house in Bethany, we're told there, was filled with a fragrance of perfume.

As Mary, she is here displaying and demonstrating her commitment to Jesus. She's there anointing the feet of Jesus and wiping his feet with her hair.

She's displaying and demonstrating her commitment to Jesus. us. But of course, Jesus doesn't ask us to pour out our perfume in order to display and demonstrate our commitment to him.

No, Jesus very simply asks us to display and demonstrate our commitment to him by sitting with him at his table. That's what Jesus says.

Jesus asks us to display and demonstrate our commitment to him by simply sitting at his table. And that's what we'll be doing, God willing, next Lord's Day, sitting at his table.

[34 : 34] But you know, there's one person who shouldn't have been sitting at his table. Because as we look around this dinner table, we see Martha the cook and we see Lazarus the cured and Mary the committed.

The one person that probably shouldn't have been there was Judas the crook. Judas the crook. Martha the cook, Lazarus the cured, Mary the committed and Judas the crook.

Judas the crook, look at verse 4, we're told that Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, he who was about to betray Jesus, said, why was this ointment not sold for 300 denarii and given to the poor? He said that it's not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief. And having charge of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

So when Mary displayed and demonstrated her commitment to Jesus by pouring a pound of perfume on Jesus, Judas the crook was concerned.

[35 : 34] But Judas' concern wasn't about Mary's willingness to give everything to Jesus. Judas' concern was about Mary's wastefulness by giving everything to Jesus.

Judas' concern was the cost and the cash that could have been gained by getting a good price for that pound of perfume. That's why he says there in verse 5, why was this ointment not sold for 300 denarii and given to the poor?

Now, 300 denarii is a lot of money because a denarius was a day's wage, so 300 denarii was 300 days' wages.

You could say it was an annual salary. In today's money, the average salary in the UK is about 35,000 pounds. For many people, it's much, much higher. And so 300 denarii was a lot of money. But the concern for the poor that Judas the crook had, it was all a front. It was all a facade. And John affirms this in verse 6. He says that he said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief.

[36 : 43] And having charge of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it. So Judas the crook was a fake. He was a phony.

He was a fraud. Judas the crook put on a front and a facade to other people. Judas was someone who was false because his focus was all wrong.

Judas the crook, the man with the money bag, he was always focused upon finances and putting his fingers into the finances rather than being focused upon Jesus.

But Jesus knew this because Jesus knows what's in our heart. Regardless of what we might want to show lots of people on social media, Jesus sees our heart.

And Jesus saw straight through the heart of Judas the crook, which is why Jesus went on to speak the way he did. And that's what we see.

[37 : 47] We see the last person sitting around the dinner table was Jesus the Christ, the head of this meal. So as we look around the dinner table, fascinating first century dinner table, you have Martha the cook, Lazarus the cured, Mary the committed, Judas the crook, and then Jesus the Christ.

Jesus the Christ is at the dinner table. Jesus said, verse 7, leave her alone so that she may keep it for the day of my burial.

For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me. You know, as Jesus the Christ, as he sat at this dinner table, you could say that he was the seen guest at this meal.

He wasn't the unseen guest at this meal, but he was certainly the listener to every conversation that was going on around this dinner table. He was there.

And as Jesus sat at the dinner table in the house of Bethany, well, he knew everyone who was sitting at the dinner table. He knew Martha the cook, he knew Lazarus the cured, he knew Mary the committed, and he also knew Judas the crook.

[39 : 01] In fact, as we said, Jesus knew them better than they knew themselves, because Jesus knows us better than we know ourselves. But, you know, when Mary displayed and demonstrated her commitment to Jesus by pouring a pound of perfume on the feet of Jesus and wiping it with her hair, as we said, Judas' concern and complaint was all about the cost.

He wanted the cash. He wanted to get a good price for the perfume. But Jesus doesn't ask us for perfume in order to display and demonstrate her commitment. That would be a message of prosperity, would it not?

That would be a prosperity gospel. If Jesus was to ask for a pound of perfume or to ask for money to display her commitment, that would be a prosperity gospel.

Many people throughout the world, they preach a prosperity gospel, give me your salary and you'll receive salvation. You might never have heard it. I hope you've never heard that message.

But many people throughout the world, they have preached to them a prosperity gospel. Give your salary to receive salvation. But you know, my friend, when you look at this passage, when Jesus says to Judas, leave Mary alone.

[40 : 22] Leave Mary alone. Do you know what he's showing us? He said, Jesus doesn't ask for your wages. He asks for your worship. He wants your worship.

Jesus doesn't ask for your income. He asks for your involvement. in his church. Jesus doesn't ask for your cash. He asks for your commitment.

My friend, the gospel of Jesus Christ doesn't give your salary to receive salvation. Because Jesus doesn't ask for your salary. Instead, Jesus asks you to sit.

He doesn't ask for your salary. He asks you to sit. He says, eat with me. He says, eat with me at my table. And you know, my friend, Jesus, he's reminding us here that in order to display and demonstrate our commitment to him, we simply sit.

We sit at his table, which as we'll be doing, God willing, next Lord's Day as we move on to having supper with Jesus. But you know the glory of the gospel when you look at this first century dinner

table.

[41 : 32] you see Martha the cook and Lazarus the cured and Mary the committed and Judas the crook and we see them all there sitting with Jesus the Christ. The glory of the gospel is that Jesus invites you.

He invites you. In fact, he instructs you. It's not just an invitation. It's an instruction. He invites you to have supper with him. He instructs you to have supper with him, which is why Jesus says about the Lord's Supper.

And we'll see more of this, God willing, next Lord's Day. He says, do this in remembrance of me. Do this in remembrance of me. It's a wonderful invitation, a wonderful instruction, lovingly given, beautifully offered by the one who's sitting at this table.

And so what does a first century dinner table look like? It looks like this, where you have Martha the cook, Lazarus the cured, Mary the committed, Judas the crook, but you also have Jesus the Christ, the same guest at this meal, listening to their conversation.

But my friend, this same Jesus is one who invites you to come and sit at his table and eat with him and know his blessing on your life.

[42 : 58] Lord, may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks for reminding us again this morning that Jesus invites us to sit with him and to eat with him and to know that when we eat with him, we are those who are strengthened and sustained in our faith.

We are encouraged and enabled to serve him wholeheartedly. and Lord, help us, we pray, to be those like Mary who sit at the feet of Jesus, but also to be like Martha who loves to serve Jesus. Help us, Lord, to sit and to serve and to do it all for the glory of our wonderful Savior, Jesus Christ. Bless us together, we pray.

Uphold us, we ask, for we ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. Amen. We're going to bring our service to a conclusion this morning.

We're going to sing to God's praise in Psalm 128. Psalm 128 this time in the Sing Psalms version. We sang it in the Scottish Psalter earlier.

[44 : 17] Couldn't find three psalms with the word table in it. That's a wonderful psalm, Psalm 128. It reminds us of the blessing of sitting and being around a table.

Psalm 128, it's page 172 in the Sing Psalms version. How blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk the way that he has shown. Success and blessing will be yours.

You'll eat the fruit that you have grown. Your wife will be a fruitful vine, and round your table will be placed. Your children like young olive shoots. Thus he who fears the Lord is blessed.

May you behold Jerusalem's good. From Zion may God's blessing flow. Your children's children may you see. May God and Israel peace bestow.

These verses of Psalm 128 will stand to sing if you're able to God's praise. God bless you. Amen. How blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walked away that he has shown.

[45 : 30] Lord bless you. You'll be the fruit that you have grown.

Your wife will be a fruitful vine.

And round your table will be placed Your children like young all his youth Thus he who fears the Lord is blessed May you behold Jerusalem's good From Zion may God's blessing flow Your children's children may you see May God on earth's world's peace be stoned

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.