

Wednesday with the Word

Wheat Street Baptist Church

Rev. Ralph Basui Watkins, MFA, DMin, PhD
Servant Pastor

From a Blind Man to a Dead Man: A Faithful Testimony

John 11:28-44 (Background)

28 After Martha said this, she went and privately said to her sister Mary, “The Teacher is here, and he wants to see you.” **29** As soon as Mary heard this, she got up and went out to Jesus. **30** He was still outside the village where Martha had gone to meet him. **31** Many people had come to comfort Mary, and when they saw her quickly leave the house, they thought she was going out to the tomb to cry. So they followed her.

32 Mary went to where Jesus was. Then as soon as she saw him, she knelt at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

33 When Jesus saw that Mary and the people with her were crying, he was terribly upset **34** and asked, “Where have you put his body?”

They replied, “Lord, come and you will see.”

35 Jesus started crying, **36** and the people said, “See how much he loved Lazarus.”

37 Some of them said, “He gives sight to the blind. Why couldn’t he have kept Lazarus from dying?”

38 Jesus was still terribly upset. So he went to the tomb, which was a cave with a stone rolled against the entrance. **39** Then he told the people to roll the stone away. But Martha said, “Lord, you know that Lazarus has been dead four days, and there will be a bad smell.”

40 Jesus replied, “Didn’t I tell you that if you had faith, you would see the glory of God?”

41 After the stone had been rolled aside, Jesus looked up toward heaven and prayed, “Father, I thank you for answering my prayer. 42 I know that you always answer my prayers. But I said this, so that the people here would believe that you sent me.”

43 When Jesus had finished praying, he shouted, “Lazarus, come out!” **44** The man who had been dead came out. His hands and feet were wrapped with strips of burial cloth, and a cloth covered his face.

Jesus then told the people, “Untie him and let him go.”

John 11:45-57 - the plot to arrest Jesus and the confession that he will die.

John 12:1-2

Six days before Passover Jesus went back to Bethany where he had raised Lazarus from death. **2** A meal had been prepared for Jesus. Martha was doing the serving, and Lazarus himself was there.

Martha was serving. We are first and foremost called to faithful servants. Martha who had confronted Jesus in John 11:20-22. I want to argue those who serve God with their whole heart are also the people whose faith is inspired and fed by their service.

John 11:20-22

20 When Martha heard that Jesus had arrived, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed in the house. **21** Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. **22** Yet even now I know that God will do anything you ask.”

We have to serve God. What we do, we are not doing it for the church or the people of the church. We do what we do for God. We are serving God. When you are clear that you are serving God it empowers you to get over the people who can sometimes get in the way of you serving God. You don't look for “a well done from the people” you look for “a well done from GOD!”

How do you react when people don't seem appreciative of you and your service?

How do you maintain your relationship with God such that you can hear God say, “well done”?

What does God think about the service that you give?

Who are looking to for approval, acceptance and reward/ award?

John 12:3-8

3 Mary took a very expensive bottle of perfume (worth a year's wages) and poured it on Jesus' feet. She wiped them with her hair, and the sweet smell of the perfume filled the house.

4 A disciple named Judas Iscariot was there. He was the one who was going to betray Jesus, and he asked, **5** “Why wasn't this perfume sold for three hundred silver coins and the money given to the poor?” **6** Judas did not really care about the poor. He asked this because he carried the moneybag and sometimes would steal from it.

7 Jesus replied, "Leave her alone! She has kept this perfume for the day of my burial. 8 You will always have the poor with you, but you won't always have me."

What's the issue with the perfume, from Judas perspective?

Why did Jesus tolerate Judas?

What is Judas's purpose in this story?

What does Judas look like in real life?

African Proverb:

"an eye that will go blind starts shedding involuntary tears long before"

Ministry Over Money: The Judas Factor in the Church

Is Judas still with us?

How do we deal with Judas and how did Jesus deal with Judas (see verse: 7)?

How do we talk about money in the church?

Do we talk about what we don't have and what we can't do or do we talk about what we must do and the needs we have to meet?

How have the things we have historically said we can't do and in-turn didn't do affect the life and trajectory of our church?

What should be the theology for the management of church funds?

How should God's will inform how we manage the resources God has blessed us with?

Can / do we talk about money without talking about Bible?

Can / do we talk about money with out talking about the Bible and theology (what God thinks / God's ways / God's will)?

Should there be a theology that informs our financial reporting and financial decisions? If so what is it?

What is the perfume issue in the church?

Verse 8: "You will always have the poor with you, but you won't always have me."

What do you make of this verse?

Is this prophecy?

Is it condemnation?

Is it truth telling?

Is it Jesus sayin that the sin of oppression will always be in the world, therefore while you should work vigorously to address the systems that create poverty and those in poverty there will always be poverty?

What is it?

John 12:9-10

9 A lot of people came when they heard that Jesus was there. They also wanted to see Lazarus, because Jesus had raised him from death. **10** So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus. **11** He was the reason that many of the Jewish leaders were turning from them and putting their faith in Jesus.

When the people hear what God is doing they will come. They want to come and see. But you always have the chief priests, the religious folk, who want to kill Lazarus.

Note: Not going to say much about this because we will be preaching this on Sunday. Coming attraction. The Testimony of a Dead Man

John 9:12-19

12 The next day a large crowd was in Jerusalem for Passover. When they heard that Jesus was coming for the festival, **13** they took palm branches and went out to greet him. They shouted,

“Hooray!

God bless the one who comes
in the name of the Lord!

God bless the King
of Israel!”

14 Jesus found a donkey and rode on it, just as the Scriptures say.

15

“People of Jerusalem,
don’t be afraid!

Your King is now coming,
and he is riding
on a donkey.”

16 At first, Jesus' disciples did not understand. But after he had been given his glory, they remembered all this. Everything had happened exactly as the Scriptures said it would.

17-18 A crowd had come to meet Jesus because they had seen him call Lazarus out of the tomb. They kept talking about him and this miracle. **19** But the Pharisees said to each other, “There is nothing that can be done! Everyone in the world is following Jesus.”

The Pharisees finally give in to the way of the Lord.