

**1054 The woman who anointed Jesus with perfume and the parable of sowing seeds
-The image of Jesus (9)
(Verses refer to those in NASB unless otherwise specified, and by Whirlwind.)**

We first take a look at the woman who anointed Jesus with perfume in the house of the Pharisee Simon. The event of the woman described in Mark 14:3 and Matthew 26:6-13, who broke an alabaster vial of very costly perfume, isn't the same event. Here, she loved much and was forgiven correspondingly. "We love, because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19) Secondly, we see that many women were contributing to their support, and the reason why Jesus chose the twelve is for them to learn and to preach with Him. Thirdly, Jesus told the parable of sowing seeds. People often think that they are the persons who have multiple fruits, without thinking that they may have no ears which can hear and also are not doers. For those like this, how can they hear what God says and be doers? Fourthly, let us take a look at how the Bible interprets this parable, which says clearly what was sown is the Word. Only those who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast can bear fruit with perseverance. We also see that even a lamp is put under a bed, it cannot hide its light just like anything secret that will come to light eventually.

1. The woman who anointed Jesus with perfume

In Luke 7:36-50, it says, "Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume. Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner." And Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he replied, "Say it, Teacher." "A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which of them will love him more?" Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have judged correctly." Turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." Then He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven." Those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?" And He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace.""

This paragraph is clearly enough. We know the place of the event which is in the house of the Pharisee Simon. Because the Gospel of Luke is written according to order of events, we know that it happened nowhere close to the time that Jesus was nailed to the cross. We see

what the woman did without knowing who she was. Her name is not so important. What is more important is what she did to Jesus. This is why Jesus saw her faith.

From the conversation between Jesus and Simon, we know that Jesus indeed knew the woman is a sinner. And she knew herself very well that she was not worthy to be saved. But He forgave her sin. We saw that those who were reclining at the table with Him didn't know, "...that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"(Mark 2:10) We believe that her sin was forgiven is also because of His compassion and grace. Isn't it our current situation just like this? Although we "...have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."(Romans 3:23-24) God loves us, has compassion on us, and gives us a chance to be justified by faith.

We can also see in this case that to see things in the aspect of human (Simon) and that in the aspect of God (Jesus) are consistent. So, we can see that the two viewpoints are not necessarily absolutely different. But when these two viewpoints are different, we should not choose our viewpoint. If not for reasons like obeying the Holy Spirit, we must know what was stated in Isaiah 55:8-9, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts." Therefore, our viewpoint is not necessarily correct. It is absolutely good for us if we obey the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Let us emphasize again that although we are humans, but we can see things in the aspect of God since the Bible is inspired by God. It is very important for us to interpret the words from the Bible correctly. But the converse is not true. Basically, all we need to know is that God is infinite, and the words in the Bible is finite. Infinity cannot be equal to finite. Thus, we cannot add equal sign for two statements arbitrarily to avoid mistakes. Otherwise, we may have changed the messages in the Bible without knowing. The same goes for listening to the words of others. Don't add equal signs because of our own thinking.

Finally, what we want to mention at the end of this section is that some people may think the event of the woman described in Mark 14:3-9 and in Matthew 26:6-13, who broke an alabaster vial of very costly perfume, is the same event as this one. What was described in Mark 14:3-9 and in Matthew 26:6-13 is indeed the same event, which is for the burial of Jesus, and happened very close to the time Jesus was nailed in the cross. Looking at the time of what happened, we know that the event there and this one is not the same event even though both happened at the house of the person named Simon. They are not the same persons but with the same name. We'll discuss the details when we reach there.

2. The women who followed Jesus and the twelve apostles

In Luke 8:1-3, it says, "Soon afterwards, He began going around from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God. The twelve were with Him, and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna the wife of

Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who were contributing to their support out of their private means."

The reason why Jesus chose the twelve is for them to learn and to preach with Him. The twelve had authority to cast out demons, as said in Mark 3:14-15, "And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach, and to have authority to cast out the demons." We can indeed see their learning from the example of Peter and John described in Acts 4:13, "Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus." Please notice that their courage came after the Holy Spirit came down in Pentecost. The situation is now different from when Jesus was ready to be nailed in the cross. At that time, all disciples fled except John [1]. Here, we can also see that many women were contributing to their support out of their private means.

3. The parable of sowing seeds

We first look at the parable itself in Luke 8:4-8, "When a large crowd was coming together, and those from the various cities were journeying to Him, He spoke by way of a parable: "The sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell beside the road, and it was trampled under foot and the birds of the air ate it up. Other seed fell on rocky soil, and as soon as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. Other seed fell among the thorns; and the thorns grew up with it and choked it out. Other seed fell into the good soil, and grew up, and produced a crop a hundred times as great." As He said these things, He would call out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear.""

The same event is so recorded in Mark 4:1-9, "He began to teach again by the sea. And such a very large crowd gathered to Him that He got into a boat in the sea and sat down; and the whole crowd was by the sea on the land. And He was teaching them many things in parables, and was saying to them in His teaching, "Listen to this! Behold, the sower went out to sow; as he was sowing, some seed fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate it up. Other seed fell on the rocky ground where it did not have much soil; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of soil. And after the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. Other seeds fell into the good soil, and as they grew up and increased, they yielded a crop and produced thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold." And He was saying, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."" Here, we see that His teaching is not restricted to this one, many teachings were not recorded, and it says clearly about why some people cannot bear fruits. We also see the situation at that time. Jesus was in a boat in the sea with the whole crowd who was by the sea on the land.

In Matthew 13:1-9, the same event is recorded also. These three are the same thing and they all say that "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Having ears that can hear is not an easy thing. All seven churches mentioned in the Book of Revelation were told, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."(Ref. Revelation 2-3) People often thinks that they are the persons who has multiple fruits, without thinking that they

may have no ears which can hear and also doers. For those like this, how can they hear what God says and be doers? In particular, when God through a person preaches His words, people may ask, how come it is you and not me? They forget that God has absolute authority. For those like these, it is difficult for them to bear fruits!

4. Explaining the parable to disciples

Although Jesus told the crowd this parable in public, He explained it to the disciples in private. We can see that Jesus knew that although the parable was simple enough, people wouldn't understand. It was easy for them to think that they could bear multiple fruits. The reality may not be so.

It is said in Luke 8:9-18 "His disciples began questioning Him as to what this parable meant. And He said, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God. Those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved. Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away. The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity. But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance. Now no one after lighting a lamp covers it over with a container, or puts it under a bed; but he puts it on a lampstand, so that those who come in may see the light. For nothing is hidden that will not become evident, nor anything secret that will not be known and come to light. So take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him."

Here it is said, "the seed is the word of God." It explains clearly why some people cannot bear fruits. People often think that they are all right, and thus it is hard for them to listen to true words from others. One cannot just hear correctly, but need to hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance. Perseverance is necessary, since it takes time from a seed to bear fruits. Jesus didn't plan to have them not to understand on purpose. It said clearly in the Book of Matthew, the crowd was to start with the status, "...while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand."(Matthew 13:13)

Here is what said in Matthew 13:10-17, "And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" Jesus answered them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; You will keep on seeing, but will not

perceive; For the heart of this people has become dull, With their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes, Otherwise they would see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I would heal them.' But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it."

Therefore, we can see that the crowd was to start with "while hearing they do not hear." It was not that Jesus was afraid of their return. But it also said clearly that the emphasis was "return, And I would heal them." Indeed, only the blessed could hear this parable. Similar messages are also given in Matthew 13:18-23 and Mark 4:13-23. In Mark 4:14, it says clearly, "The sower sows the word." Therefore, it is thus said in Matthew 13:19, "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road." Regarding "whoever has, to him more shall be given," it should be the working principle of the kingdom of heaven. As it also mentioned in other verses such as that in Luke 19:26, "I tell you that to everyone who has, more shall be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away."

Please notice that even a lamp is put under a bed, it cannot hide its light just like anything secret that will come to light eventually. Then what does it mean in Matthew 5:14-16, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Isn't it according to this verse that all Christians must on purpose put themselves on the lampstand? Isn't it just contradictory to what we just said? No, here talks about life. The verses mention about good works. It isn't talking about that all Christians must display themselves in public on purpose. This is contradictory to what being humble is. We should know that life cannot hide in any way. Life will show it up naturally and eventually, no matter what one tries to pretend!

Reference

[1] When Jesus was in ready to be nailed in the cross, except John, "...all the disciples left Him and fled."(Matthew 26:56) Regarding John was in front of the cross, it is described in John 19:25-26, "Therefore the soldiers did these things. But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!""