

LESSONS FOR THE SISTERS  
Lesson 37

**Patterns and Examples of Women  
in the Old Testament (9) – Miriam  
and the Daughters of Zelophehad**

Scripture Reading: Num. 12:1-15; 27:1-11; 36:1-13

- I. **"And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married .... And when the cloud had departed from over the tent; there Miriam was, leprous, as white as snow.... So Miriam was shut up outside the camp seven days, and the people did not set out until Miriam had been brought in again"—Num. 12:1, 10, 15:**
- A. Miriam and Aaron were Moses' blood relatives and were both prophets—Exo. 4:10-16; 6:30–7:1; 15:20:
    - 1. Their word here indicates that, being older than Moses, they regarded themselves higher than Moses and were jealous of the greater respect that Moses received.
    - 2. Miriam and Aaron took Moses' apparent mistake in marrying a Cushite woman as an excuse to slander him (v. 1); however, the real issue here concerned the question of who had God's oracle.
    - 3. Although Miriam and Aaron were used by God to speak for Him, neither was God's spokesman; only one, Moses, had the oracle of God; being jealous of Moses, Miriam and Aaron were in rivalry with Moses in the matter of speaking for God.
  - B. In speaking against Moses, Miriam and Aaron were speaking against the deputy authority of God: God had appointed Moses to be His deputy authority, His representative authority on earth—Exo. 3:10-18a; 7:1.
  - C. According to God's governmental administration, Miriam and Aaron should have submitted themselves to Moses; but they rebelled.
  - D. "Then Jehovah came down in a pillar of cloud, and stood at the entrance of the tent, and called Aaron and Miriam. And when they had both come forward"—Num. 12:5:
    - 1. God took the slander of Miriam and Aaron seriously because this matter touched God's authority.
    - 2. To touch, defy, or challenge God's authority is to shake God's throne.
  - E. Miriam's becoming leprous was God's governmental dealing:
    - 1. God punished Miriam but not Aaron because it is likely that Miriam took the lead and was the instigator in this rebellion.
    - 2. Moreover, because rebellion is particularly unseemly for a female, God punished Miriam to warn and alarm all the females among the children of Israel, so that they would not follow Miriam—cf. 1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-24.
  - F. Only after seven days did the tent of meeting journey on; whenever there is rebellion and reviling among us, God's presence is gone, and the tent will not move— Num. 12:14-15:
    - 1. The pillar of cloud will not come until reviling words have been judged.
    - 2. If the matter of authority is not settled, all other matters will remain unsettled.
  - G. When there is reviling, it proves that there is the spirit of rebellion within; the reviling is the sprouting of this rebellion; we have to fear God and must not speak in a rash way:
    - 1. Many today speak against those ahead of them; they speak against the responsible brothers in the church, but they do not realize the seriousness of this matter.
    - 2. If one day the church receives grace from God, she will separate herself from those who revile the servant of God; she will not talk to them because they are leprous.
    - 3. May God be merciful to us that we would see that this is not a matter with our brother, but a matter of God's appointed authority; if we have met authority, we will realize that there are too many incidents where we sin against God.
    - 4. Thereafter, our concept concerning sin will be changed; we will see sin from God's point of view; the sin that God condemns is man's rebellion.

**II. "The daughters of Zelophehad speak rightly. You shall surely give them the possession of an inheritance among their father's brothers; and you shall cause the inheritance of their father to pass to them" (Num. 27:7); "Let them be married to whom they think best; only into the family of the tribe of their father they shall marry" (36:6):**

- A. The five daughters of Zelophehad typify all the believers in Christ, who are females, weaker ones (1 Pet. 3:7), in the sight of God; hence, their request (Num. 27:4) is for us all:
  - 1. In order to keep their father's name and his inheritance within their tribe, the daughters of Zelophehad took the way of fellowship by contacting their stronger kinsmen—v. 4.
  - 2. The same principle applies to the keeping of the enjoyment of Christ by the weaker believers in the church life.
- B. In the Bible inheritance is determined according to genealogy, according to the source of life and the fellowship of life—Num. 27:1:
  - 1. The fact that the daughters of Zelophehad were of one of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph indicates that they were in the life and the fellowship of life of the proper origin.
  - 2. This indicates that in order to inherit Christ as our good land, we must have the proper origin of life: i.e., we must be born of God to be His children – John 1:12-13
- C. The father's family signifies the church (Eph. 2:19); if we would enjoy Christ as our inheritance, participating in His riches, we must also have the church life; if we give up the church life with the fellowship of life, we will spontaneously lose our right to inherit the enjoyment of Christ.
- D. In typology, the desire of the daughters of Zelophehad to possess their father's inheritance signifies the desire to inherit God's grace, i.e., to inherit Christ as the grace given to us by God (Col. 1:12; John 1:17); such a regard for the divine inheritance is pleasing to God.
- E. The five daughters of Zelophehad were given an inheritance among their father's brothers, provided that they did not marry outside their tribe—Num. 36:2-3, 6-7:
  - 1. God allowed the daughters to marry according to their taste but only within the family of the tribe of their father.
  - 2. This indicates that although the Lord gives us freedom, this freedom must be exercised within the limit, the boundary, of God's regulation—Num. 36:6, note 1; cf. Gal. 5:13.
  - 3. That "each one of the children of Israel shall cling to the inheritance of the tribe of their fathers" signifies that as our inheritance Christ is not transferable and that we should cling to Him as this inheritance.
  - 4. In principle, for a believer to marry an unbeliever is to make Christ as the inheritance transferable—Num. 36:7, note 1; cf. 2 Cor. 6:14.
  - 5. In Christ we have the right to inherit the divine things; however, we should not marry outside our "tribe," i.e., outside Christ and the church—cf. 2 Cor. 6:14.
- F. Today, we may be weak, but in God's house, the church, there are stronger ones; through fellowship, especially in the vital groups, the weaker ones will be strengthened by the stronger ones and thus will be able to enjoy Christ as their inheritance.

LESSONS FOR THE SISTERS  
Lesson 38

**Patterns and Examples of Women  
in the Old Testament (10)-  
Jezebel and Esther**

Scripture Reading: 1 Kings 16:31-33; 18:13; 21:1-16; 25-26; 2 Kings 9:22;  
Rev. 2:20; Esth. 2:5-20; 4:13-16, 5:17; 7:1-10; 8:1-13, 17

**I. “And [Ahab] took as his wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal the king of the Sidonians” —  
1 Kings 16:31:**

- A. Jezebel, who came from the Gentile land of Sidon, was the wife of Ahab the king of Israel; Jezebel taught the house of Ahab to worship idols, thus provoking God to anger, and as a result, the children of Israel were carried away into exile – 16:29-33.
- “And [Ahab] took as his wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal the king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshipped him” —16:31.
1. “Jezebel slew the prophets of Jehovah” —18:13.
  2. “And Jezebel [Ahab's] wife said to him, Do you now exercise sovereignty over Israel? Rise up, eat some food, and let your heart be glad: I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.... And when Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, Jezebel said to Ahab, Rise up and take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive but dead” —21:7, 15.
  3. “Ahab...sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of Jehovah because Jezebel his wife urged him on” —v. 25.
  4. “The harlotries and sorceries of Jezebel your mother are so many” — 2 Kings 9:22.
  5. “And Jehu came to Jezreel; and Jezebel heard of it. And she put paint on her eyes and adorned her head, and she looked out the window”—9:30.
  6. “Jezebel...calls herself a prophetess and teaches and leads my slaves astray to commit fornication and to eat idol sacrifices”—Rev. 2:20.
- B. Jezebel, the pagan wife of Ahab, signifies the apostate church—vv. 20-23:
1. Jezebel came from a heathen background and brought pagan things into the worship of God—1 Kings 16:31; 19:1-2; 21:25-26; 2 Kings 9:7.
  2. The principle of the apostate church is to mix the heathen, pagan things with the worship of God; the apostate church helps God's people to worship Him, but in her own pagan, heathen way, not in God's way.
  3. From the beginning of her history, the apostate church has been absorbing paganism; wherever she goes, she assimilates things related to the worship of idols.

**II. “There was Jew in Susa the capital whose name was Mordecai.... And he was foster father to Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had neither father nor mother.... And when her father and mother died, Mordecai took her to himself as his daughter”—Esth. 2:5, 7:**

- A. In His secret care the hiding God raised up Esther, a Jewish orphan virgin, to be crowned by the top king as his queen; her Jewish name was Hadassah, meaning *myrtle*; her Persian name was Esther, meaning *star*—2:1-18.
1. An Agagite by the name of Haman was promoted (no doubt at the instigation of Satan, the adversary of God) to the highest seat above all the princes who were with the king—3:1
  2. Haman's evil intention was to destroy all the Jews and to take away their wealth—vv. 5-15
  3. In 4:1 through 8:2 we have an account of Mordecai's confrontation of Haman's plot through Esther's close and intimate contact with the king:
    - a. “Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther....If you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from some other place, and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”—4:13-14.

- b. “Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, Go; assemble all the Jews who are to be found in Susa, and fast for me; and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day; I also and my maids will fast in the same way. And so will I go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish”—vv. 15-16.
  4. At her feast with the king and Haman, Esther the queen pointed out that Haman was the wicked adversary and enemy who conspired to kill all the Jews; the king immediately sentenced Haman to death and commanded his men to hang Haman on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai—7:1-8:2.
  5. The king issued through Mordecai a decree to authorize the Jews to destroy all their enemies throughout his empire from India to Ethiopia—8:3-14.
  6. The city of Susa the capital shouted and rejoiced, and the Jews had light, gladness, joy, and honor; throughout every province and every city, wherever the king's decree came, the Jews had gladness, joy, a feast, and a good day; many from among the peoples of the land (the heathen) became Jews, for the fear of the Jews had fallen on them—vv. 15-17.
  7. The Jews destroyed their enemies throughout the empire under the reign of King Ahasuerus in the influence of Esther the queen with Mordecai as the second to the king—9:1-16.
  8. The triumphant Jews appointed and established the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month Adar as the Purim to celebrate their triumphant victory over their enemies; the appointment and the establishment of the Purim was confirmed by Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew in writing with all authority—vv. 17-32.
- B. Esther was exercised to deal with Haman, the hidden flesh:
  1. Haman was an Agagite, a descendent of Agag, the king of Amalek who was cut in pieces by Samuel (1 Sam. 15:33); Amalek signifies the flesh (Exo. 17:10-16; Gal. 5:16-17, 24).
  2. God hates the flesh signified by Haman; according to the book of Esther, the flesh works in a hidden way to undermine God's people and even to kill them; today Haman, the flesh, tries to work in the church.
  3. Haman's plot to annihilate Israel was eventually exposed and thwarted; through Esther's help, Haman was put to death.
- C. Today God's people have many needs; however, He does not want to deliver His people by performing miracles by Himself; He wants to use you; God can perform miracles and grant deliverance, but He wants to do them through you; the question is whether or not we are worthy of His elevation—Esth. 4:14.

LESSONS FOR THE SISTERS  
Lesson 39

**Patterns and Examples of the Sisters  
In the New Testament (1) -  
Mary the Mother of Jesus**

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:26-38; 46-56; John 19:25-27; Acts 1:14

**I. The birth of Christ was accomplished through Mary's surrender—Luke 1:26-38:**

- A. According to Luke 1:26-38, the birth of Christ was carried out through Mary's surrender; it was not easy for a young virgin like Mary to accept the commission to conceive a child.
- B. For us to read this record is easy; however, suppose a young sister among us were to receive such a commission tonight; could she accept it? Mary might have said, "Gabriel, don't you know that I am espoused to a man already? How can I conceive a child?"
- C. After listening to the word of the angel, Mary said, "Behold the slave of the Lord; may it be to me according to your word"—Luke 1:38:
  - 1. This may appear simple, but the price was extremely high; to bring forth Christ Mary paid a very high price—the cost of her whole being.
  - 2. It is not easy to bring forth Christ; it is not cheap; if we would bring forth Christ, we must pay a price.
- D. We need to see the position of the sisters in the record of the New Testament; the first position of the sisters is related to the birth of the Lord:
  - 1. What is the Lord's birth? It is to bring the Lord into the human race; all the sisters must realize that their position in the church is to bring forth Christ to people.
  - 2. Whatever you do must bring forth Christ; you have to pray that the Spirit will come upon you and that the power of the Most High will overshadow you so that you can bring forth Christ—1:35.
  - 3. If you are serving in a service group, you must bring forth Christ; if you go to visit the saints or have fellowship with the sisters, you must bring forth Christ to them; it is not just a matter of working for the Lord; it is a matter of bringing forth Christ.

**II. Mary's poetic praise indicates that she was a godly woman, qualified to be a channel for the Savior's incarnation and that the Lord Jesus would grow up in a family which would be filled with the knowledge and love of God's holy Word—vv. 46-56:**

- A. In Luke 1:46-56 we have the praise of the Man-Savior's mother; Mary came to visit Elizabeth; when Elizabeth saw Mary, she blessed her; Mary responded to this blessing by offering praise to God.
- B. Mary's poetic praise is composed of many quotations from the Old Testament; this indicates that she was a godly woman, qualified to be a channel for the Savior's incarnation; it also indicates that the Lord Jesus would grow up in a family which would be filled with the knowledge and love of God's holy Word:
  - 1. Although Mary was a young woman, she was very knowledgeable concerning the Old Testament and could quote verses from it in her praise to God; actually, her praise was a composition of quotations from the Scriptures.
  - 2. She was the right person for God to use in conceiving the Savior who was to be born.
- C. Before Mary was visited by the angel to receive the word concerning the conception of the Man-Savior, she was already full of the knowledge of God's Word:
  - 1. Many verses of the Scriptures had been absorbed into her being.
  - 2. Therefore, at the proper time she could pour out what was within her as she offered up praise to God.
- D. Mary's praise indicates that in order for us to be used by God, we need to have certain qualifications; one qualification is the proper knowledge of the Word of God:
  - 1. The young people in particular should learn of Mary in this matter.
  - 2. Do you intend to be used by the Lord to bring forth something of the Lord, even, in a spiritual sense, to "conceive" the Lord Jesus and bring Him forth?

3. If so, then you need to be qualified by being filled with the Scriptures, filled with the word of God—cf. Col. 3:16.
- E. Mary's spirit exulted in God; then her soul magnified the Lord; she lived and acted in her spirit, which directed her soul:
1. In Luke 1:46 and 47 Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has exulted in God my Savior;" first Mary's spirit exulted in God; then her soul magnified the Lord.
  2. Her praise to God was initiated from her spirit and then was expressed through her soul; her spirit was filled with joy in God her Savior so that her soul manifested her joy for the magnification of the Lord.
  3. She lived and acted in her spirit, which directed her soul; her exultation in God in her spirit was due to her enjoyment of God as her Savior, and her magnifying of the Lord in her soul was due to her exaltation of the Lord—Jehovah, the great To Be.
  4. We all need to experience what Mary experienced in knowing God as our Savior and Lord; when we enjoy God as our Savior, exulting in Him, then we shall magnify Him as our Lord.
- F. When we magnify God as our Lord, we serve Him; to magnify the Lord is to serve Him as Lord:
1. We need to be impressed with the fact that to serve the Lord is not mainly to do things for Him.
  2. On the contrary, the most important aspect of serving the Lord is to magnify Him: we need to be those who live a life not merely of doing things for God but of magnifying Him—cf. Phil. 1:20.
  3. Magnifying the Lord is a matter of our soul, not of our spirit; this means that magnifying the Lord involves our mind, emotion, and will; it involves our thoughts, our likes and dislikes, and our decisions; in all these things the Lord should be magnified.
- G. Mary could be a person whose spirit exulted in God her Savior and whose soul magnified the Lord; we certainly need to learn of her to exult in the Lord with our spirit and magnify Him with our soul.

**III. While Jesus was being crucified, He saw His mother and "the disciple whom He loved" standing by, and He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son. Then He said to the disciple, Behold, your mother. And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home"—John 19:26-27:**

- A. According to John's record, Jesus was crucified for the transfer of life, for the imparting of His life into His disciples.
- B. Through this transfer of life, one of His disciples could be His mother's son, and His mother could be this disciple's mother,

**IV. Acts 1:14 says, "These all were persevering with one accord in prayer, together with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers."**

- A. We are told in Acts 1:14 that the disciples, together with the women, Mary, and the Lord's brothers, persevered with one accord in prayer.
- B. Mary is mentioned here for the last time in the New Testament.

## LESSONS FOR THE SISTERS

### Lesson 40

#### **Patterns and Examples of the Sisters In the New Testament (2) Martha the Sister of Mary and Lazarus**

Scripture Reading: John 11:1-40; Luke 10:38-42; John 12:1-2

- I. In John 11:17-28 we see Martha's opinion; we must learn the lesson of stopping our opinions:**
- A. In John 11 God's intention was to express the power of the Lord's resurrection through Lazarus; however, this expression of the power of life was frustrated by human opinions:
    - 1. Lazarus was sick, and God in His sovereignty intended for Lazarus to be sick unto death; however, Martha and Mary sent people to ask the Lord to come and heal him.
    - 2. First of all, the two sisters expressed their opinion in the way that they informed the Lord; they sent people to Jesus to say, "He whom You love is sick"—v. 3.
    - 3. Such a word was full of opinion; the Lord, however, was determined to deal with these human opinions.
    - 4. Hence, after He heard such a word, He remained in the place where He was for two days (v. 6); He stayed where He was until Lazarus was dead—v. 14.
  - B. When the Lord Jesus arrived at the place where Lazarus was, Martha went to meet Him and immediately expressed her opinion, saying, "If You had been here, my brother would not have died"—v. 21:
    - 1. Martha seemed to be saying to the Lord, "Why didn't You come earlier? If You had come four days ago, Lazarus would still be alive. But he is dead and buried. What is the use of Your coming?"
    - 2. The Lord said to Martha, "Your brother shall rise again" (v. 23); Martha replied, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection in the last day"—v. 24.
    - 3. When the Lord said that Lazarus would rise again, He meant that Lazarus would be resurrected that very day; Martha, however, in her expounding of the Lord's word, postponed this resurrection until the last day.
    - 4. Like Martha, sometimes we also explain away the Lord's word; we may read something in the Scriptures and then say that this is not for our experience today, but for some time in the future.
  - C. Then the Lord Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me, even if he should die, shall live; and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall by no means die forever"—vv. 25-26:
    - 1. The Lord seemed to be telling her, "It is not a matter of time. There is no problem of time with Me. Nothing is too late, and nothing is too early. As long as I am here, everything will be all right, for I will raise up your brother."
    - 2. Then the Lord asked Martha, "Do you believe this?" Martha replied, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world"—v. 27.
    - 3. What she answered absolutely was not what the Lord asked; she was not clear about what the Lord was saying; her old, preoccupying knowledge prevented her from understanding the Lord's new word.
    - 4. Today, many Christians have opinions because they have so many teachings; when someone talks with them about the inner life, they immediately begin to share their opinions; too much knowledge and too many doctrines breed endless opinions.
  - D. When the Lord came to the tomb, He told them to take away the stone; once again, Martha frustrated the Lord with her opinion:
    - 1. She said, "Lord, by now he smells, for it is the fourth day that he has been there" (v. 39); she felt that there was no use in moving the stone.
    - 2. Although the Lord is life to the people in the church, He meets a great number of human opinions from the people in the church.

- E. When we stay with our opinions, we are kept away from the enjoyment of the Lord as our resurrection life; when our opinions are subdued, it is easy for us to enter into the full enjoyment of the Lord Himself.
- F. It is because of our opinions that the Lord's power cannot be expressed and that we cannot know Him.
  - 1. Too often we judge matters only according to our own views and opinions.
  - 2. The reason why the Lord's resurrection life and glory often cannot be expressed through us is that we have too many opinions.
  - 3. In order to know Christ and follow Christ, we must put aside all of our views and opinions.
- G. When we draw near to the Lord in prayer, we must learn the lesson of stopping our opinions; whether the wine has run out or a person has been dead for four days, we do not need to counsel the Lord; we should simply give it to the Lord and hear what He has to say.

**II. We should not serve the Lord according to our opinion, concept, or understanding; instead, we should serve Him according to His desire and preference—Luke 10:38-42:**

- A. Mary was listening to the Lord's word, but “Martha was distracted with much serving” (v.40); the Greek word translated “distracted” means to be drawn about in different directions.
- B. Standing over the Lord, Martha said, “Lord, does it not matter to You that my sister has left me to serve alone?” —v. 40.
- C. The Lord answered, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary; for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”
- D. Here we see that the Lord prefers His saved ones who love Him to listen to Him (v. 39) that they may know His desire, rather than do things for Him without knowing His will—cf. Exo. 21:5-6; Isa. 50:4-5; John 5:30.

**III. “And Martha served”(John 12:2b); we should appreciate Martha's service:**

- A. In the church life there are different functions; there are three kinds of functions in the service of the church represented by the three persons in the house—Martha, Lazarus and Mary.
- B. First is the serving function represented by Martha—12:2:
  - 1. Throughout all the centuries Martha has been treated unfairly; Christians have looked down on her; do not condemn Martha.
  - 2. We should not think that Martha is no good, for this chapter says that Martha served; this is very good, for, in the church service, the business affairs of the church must be taken care of.
  - 3. How could we have the food taken care of without Martha? We need her to prepare the food; we should appreciate Martha's service.
  - 4. We all must change our concept about her and not look down on her; we should encourage the sisters to be Marthas.
- C. We have three kinds of functions: serving, testifying, and loving; we have the service, the testimony, and the love poured out upon the Lord; these three items must be found in the church life.

## LESSONS FOR THE SISTERS

### Lesson 41

#### **Patterns and Examples of the Sisters In the New Testament (3) — Mary the Sister of Martha and Lazarus**

Scripture Reading: Luke 10:38-42; Matt. 26:6-13; John 12:1-8; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; 1 Pet. 1:8

- I. Luke 10:38 and 39 mention Martha and Mary; the meaning of the names of Martha and Mary conveys the thought of rebellion; this may indicate their natural life:**
  - A. The name Martha probably comes from Chaldean and means “she was rebellious;” the Greek word Mary is Maria, for the Hebrew Miriam and means “their rebellion” —Num. 12:1, 10-15. The Lord's salvation can transform the rebellious into the submissive, as portrayed in this story; one like the rebellious Miriam in the Old Testament becomes one like the submissive Mary in the New Testament.
- II. Mary was listening to the Lord's word, but “Martha was distracted with much serving” (v. 40); the Greek word translated “distracted” means to be drawn about in different directions:**
  - A. Standing over the Lord, Martha said, “Lord, does it not matter to You that my sister has left me to serve alone?” —v. 40.
  - B. The Lord answered, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; but one thing is necessary; for Mary has chosen the good part which shall not be taken away from her.”
  - C. Here we see that the Lord prefers His saved ones who love Him to listen to Him (v. 39) that they may know His desire, rather than do things for Him without knowing His will (see 1 Sam. 15:22; Eccl. 5:1).
- III. It is quite significant that this story of Martha and Mary immediately follows the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37); the parable shows the compassion and love of the Savior, who is a man and becomes the sinners' neighbor; the story of Martha and Mary unveils the desire and preference of the Lord, who is God and becomes the believers' Master (vv. 38-42):**
  - A. The Savior gives us His compassion and love so that we can be saved by Him; the Lord expresses His desire and preference so that we can serve Him.
  - B. After receiving salvation from the Savior, we should render service to the Lord; for our salvation we need to realize the Savior's compassion and love; for our service we need to know the Lord's desire and preference.
- IV. We need to listen to the Lord's word in order to know His desire:**
  - A. When the Lord came into Martha's home in Bethany it was not His desire to be served with food; on the contrary, His desire was that His saved ones would listen to Him in order to know what was on His heart.
  - B. The Lord did not care about eating; He wanted those who loved Him to be silent, to sit with Him, to listen to Him, and to concentrate on His speaking; in this way they would know His desire and preference.
  - C. In Luke 10:39 Mary sat at the Lord's feet listening to His word; later, she prepared ointment to anoint Him before His death (John 12:3); she came to know this through listening to the Savior's speaking; by sitting at the Savior's feet and listening to His word, she came to know His desire and preference.
- V. In Luke 10:38-42 the Lord may have been speaking to Mary about His death; at that juncture, what was on the heart of the Savior was His approaching death:**
  - A. Mary realized that He was going to Jerusalem to die; twice the Lord unveiled His death to His disciples, but they did not have an ear to hear the Lord's word—cf. Luke 9:22, 43b-45.
  - B. Mary, however, heard the Lord's word concerning His death, and she took this word; having heard and received the Lord's word concerning His death, she looked for the opportunity to anoint Him before He died—Matt. 26:12.
- VI. Matthew 26:6-13 is on the story of Mary:**
  - A. The story of the gospel is that the Lord loved us, and the story of Mary is that she loved the Lord; we must preach both, the Lord loving us and us loving the Lord:

1. One is for our salvation, and the other is for our consecration.
  2. The gospel tells us how the Lord loved us, but the loving story of Mary stirs us up to love the Lord; thus, there needs to be a mutual love; this must accompany the preaching of the gospel.
- B. When she poured the ointment on Jesus' head, she was criticized by many; they murmured that it was a waste of three hundred denarii to anoint the head of the Lord, and that the money could have been given to the poor and taken care of many people—vv. 8-9.
- C. The disciples considered Mary's love offering to the Lord a waste; throughout the past twenty centuries thousands of precious lives, heart treasures, high positions, and golden futures have been “wasted” upon the Lord Jesus; to those who love Him in such a way He is altogether lovely and worthy of their offering: what they have poured upon Him is not a waste but a fragrant testimony of His sweetness—Matt. 26:8, note 1.
- D. The Lord said, “Wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what this woman has done shall also be told as a memorial of her”—v.13:
1. The story of Mary must be spoken of wherever the gospel is preached because every time the gospel is preached, there is the need of the story of Mary to maintain the balance of the truth.
  2. Many preach the gospel by telling others that they can pass from death to life, and from judgment to eternal life and salvation; men like to hear this kind of gospel; but if you tell them that after they have believed, they should offer themselves to God, obey God, and be His prisoners and slaves, they would refuse to accept.
  3. A danger exists if one only preaches the gospel; this is why the story of Mary must be told; on the one hand, we have to preach the gospel, but on the other hand, we must offer up everything to the Lord.
  4. Paul said, “We have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died” (2 Cor. 5:14); this is the gospel.
  5. But it does not stop here; following this, Paul said, “And He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised” (v. 15); this was what Mary did.
  6. The Lord is the One who has died for us; the purpose of His death and resurrection for us is that we may live for Him.
  7. Today is the only time for us to express our love to Him; in that day, it will not be a thing of surprise for us to see the Lord and love Him; what is precious is for us to love Him today without seeing Him—cf. 1 Pet. 1:8.