

"Live as examples of Christ Jesus"

Devotions for Deacons

"Prompt Us to Seize New Opportunities to Worship God with Offerings of Wealth, Time, and Ability"

Title:

Scripture:

John 12:1-8

Text:

Romans 12:1

What do you think it would be like to be close to Jesus? What would it be like to eat dinner with Him? Talk with Him? Laugh with Him? Worship at His feet?

Mary, Martha and Lazarus know. They are close to Jesus. They are His friends. They eat with Him and talk with Him. They worship Him. All 3 of them, in their own way, offer Jesus who they are and what they have: Martha, always practical, chooses her worship in serving Jesus dinner, offering her gift of hospitality. Lazarus sits by Jesus, offering himself, his gratitude and friendship. And then there is Mary. Mary disregards expense and extravagantly pours the finest perfume on Jesus. Mary ignores what is proper to unbind her hair and wipe her offering from Jesus' feet like a servant. Hers is an act of beauty, no more genuine than her siblings, but still a moment of worship and adoration.

It is a powerful and holy moment, the beauty of it broken, though, by Judas' objection. If we could just get past Judas' coming betrayal, we might admit that Judas *does* bring up a good point. Surely giving to the poor is more important than spending money on expensive perfume. But Jesus knows Judas' heart. He calls his motivations into question. To give to the poor is important, but Jesus wants us to make it our worship, to do it from our hearts. This is something Judas, with a heart full of greed, did not understand. Serving begins in

worship first. Our "true and proper worship" is to offer our bodies "as living sacrifices" in obedient service.

Though we need to have a heart like Mary's and allow our service to flow out of our worship, we are not all *like* Mary. Some of us are like Martha, serving in practical ways as we have been blessed. Some of us give our time, like Lazarus. Most of us give at least some of our wealth. Probably we are a little like all three. No matter how we serve or what we give, we must understand that God wants our service and our giving to flow out of worship. Once we truly understand God's mercy in Jesus, we will want to offer everything we are and everything we have. As deacons, then, we will be able to "prompt" or lead the congregation in giving when we make clear the deep and profound connection to worship.

For many churches, an offering is part of the order of worship. But is it truly part of worship? Is there a clear connection between giving and the Word of God? Is there a connection between the offering at church and offering the rest of life? Does your congregation understand that it is not just about "ten percent," but about our time and ability too? Worship, like giving, is all of life – it is a lifestyle. As a deacon, you know that only the Holy Spirit will change hearts. But *you* can continue to challenge the congregation with new ways of worshipful giving. Ask God to open your eyes to those opportunities today.

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