

Everyone!

Paul has just used that wonderful word "everyone" in [Romans 1:16](#), "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to *everyone* who believes." O, what an exhilarating word to those of us in this room who feel that there is something about us that rules us out! Wrong family, wrong background, wrong education, wrong language, wrong race, wrong culture, wrong sexual preference, wrong moral track record. Then to hear the word, "*Everyone* who believes." Everyone! One thing can rule you out: unbelief. Not trusting Jesus. But nothing else has to. The good news that Christ died for our sins, and that he rose from the dead to open eternal life, and that salvation is by grace through faith – all that is for *everyone who believes*. Not just Jews and not just Gentiles and no one race or social class or culture, but *everyone* who believes.

Then in What Ways Do the Jews Have Priority?

So why then does he follow this exhilarating word "everyone" with a word that seems to give priority to Jews? "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes, *to the Jew first and also to the Greek*." How does he mean, "To the Jew first"? What kind of priority, what kind of "firstness" do they have? And why does he say this? What effect does he want this to have on us?

To answer this let me suggest six ways that the Jews are first in experiencing the salvation of God. And then we will look at a few ways that they are not first. Finally we will see what effect this should have on us today.

First, then, how are the Jews "first"?

1. The Jews have a priority over Gentiles as the chosen people of God

How do they have priority over Gentiles? In Genesis 12, God chooses Abraham and his descendants freely from all the peoples of the world to bless with his covenant and promise. [Nehemiah 9:7](#) says, "God . . . chose Abram, and brought him out from Ur of the Chaldees." Then [Deuteronomy 14:2](#) says about the whole Jewish people, "The LORD has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth." And [Amos 3:2](#) says, "You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth." And here in [Romans 11:28-29](#), Paul says, "From the standpoint of the gospel they [the Jews] are enemies for your sake [you Gentiles], but from the standpoint of [election, or] God's choice, they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable."

The Jews have a priority over Greeks (that is, all Gentiles, by implication) because of their special role as God's elect or chosen people. He set his favor on them and set them apart from all the peoples. Freely! Not because of any virtue or special value in them, but simply on the basis of his free choice: "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers" ([Deuteronomy 7:7-8](#), See *The Pleasures of God*, pp. 128-133).

2. The Jews have a priority over Gentiles as the guardians of God's special revelation, the Old Testament Scriptures

In [Romans 3:1](#), Paul asks our question: "What advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?" And he answers in verse 2, "Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God." In other words, God gave his special revelation and promises to Israel by Moses and the prophets. [Romans 9:4](#) puts it like this: "[They] are Israelites to whom belong . . . the covenants and the giving of the Law . . . and the promises." All the great expressions and foreshadowing's of the gospel of salvation were given to the Jews in the Word of God, the Old Testament. So the Jews had priority in having the Scriptures.

3. The Jews have a priority over the Gentiles in that the Messiah himself, Jesus Christ, came first as a Jew to the Jews

In Romans 9:5, Paul brings his list of privileges to a climax with these words: "From [the Jews] is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen." The Messiah, Jesus, was a Jew, a Son of David (Romans 1:3). And he focused his earthly ministry on the Jews. They had a priority in his work. In Matthew 10:5-6, Jesus said to the twelve apostles as he sent them out during his life, "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." And in Matthew 15:24, Jesus said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." So during his earthly life, Jesus was focused on the Jews. They had priority in his ministry.

4. The Jews have a priority over the Gentiles in that salvation is from the Jews

These are the very words of Jesus in John 4:22. Jesus says to the Samaritan woman at the well, "You worship what you do not know; we [Jews] worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews." This simply sums up all that we have seen so far. They are the chosen nation; the nation with God's special revelation; and the nation with the Messiah, the Savior. So, clearly, salvation is "from the Jews."

Another way to see that salvation is from the Jews is found in Romans 11:17-24 where Paul compares the Jewish nation to an olive tree. He says that natural branches are broken off and unnatural branches were grafted in, meaning that Jews by birth were unbelieving and so cut off from the covenant of promise; and Gentiles who were believing were grafted in and saved by the covenant of promise. Verses 17-18 are crucial for us: "If some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, [then] do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you." In other words, salvation comes to us Gentiles from the root of God's covenant with the Jews. We are simply grafted in like wild olive branches that have no historical claim at all on being God's people. And God saves us by reckoning us children of Abraham by faith, as Paul says in Galatians 3:7, "It is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham."

So Jews have priority because "salvation is from the Jews." All salvation is salvation through God's covenant with Abraham!

5. The Jews have a priority over the Gentiles in that Paul evangelized Jews first when he brought the gospel to a new place

For example, in Acts 13:46 Paul and Barnabas are preaching in Antioch of Pisidia, and the Jews will not listen to the gospel, so they say, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles." In other words, just as God chose Israel and revealed himself to Israel and sent the Messiah and Savior to Israel so that salvation is from Israel, it is fitting that in the spread of the Gospel to new places, the Jews hear first of their Messiah and the good news of his salvation. So Jews have a priority in the order of frontier missions when the gospel comes to a new place.

6. The Jews have a priority over the Gentiles in final judgment and final blessing.

In Romans 2:9-10, Paul says, amazingly, "There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." In other words, the priority that the Jews have, if it is rejected and squandered will result in a priority in judgment. And if they are grateful for their priority and trust in the mercy of their Messiah, then they will go first into the final blessing of God. There are definite dangers in having this priority. "From everyone who has been given much, much will be required" (Luke 12:48).

So when Paul says in Romans 1:16, "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek," we should call to mind these six ways that the Jews have a priority over the Gentiles.

They are the historic chosen people of God.

They are the guardians of God's special revelation, the Old Testament Scriptures.

10 WOMEN OF THE BIBLE - SAPPHIRA

ACTS 5:1-11

**DO GOOD ——— QUIETLY!**

Quote: M. Lacado

Ananias and Sapphira would have been better off just keeping their mouths shut and giving the gift.....They didn't need to tell a soul .....

Matt 6:3

But when you give to someone in need, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.

**THE CHURCH COMMUNITY**

Acts 4:23-24

Acts 4:29-31

Acts 4:32-37

What was happening in the early church?

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Deut 15: 7-8

Matt 25: 35-40

2Cor 9:6-8

As you read these verses.... what do you see scripture is trying to teach us about giving and sharing.

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**THE LOOK OF LOVE**

Read this quote and then read the portion in Mark....

What stands out to you as you think about what has been said.....?

M. Lacado

Ananias and Sapphira had wanted to be like Barnabas, who had given the proceeds of a field he sold to the church ....or at least they wanted the RECOGNITION Barnabas had received when he made the generous gift... The problem was their selfish motives. They just didn't hold back their money from God ... they held back their hearts from him as well

Mark 7: 6-13

## MASKS = HYPOCRITES

HYPOCRITE originally means "actor"..... A hypocrite then is one who puts on a mask - a false face. God says of them, "These people draw near to me with their mouth, and honour me with their lips but their heart is far from me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men

Matt 23:5-7

Matt 23:12

It is obvious what these verses are saying ... but how do these verses help us to take a second look at ourselves...??

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Are we as "genuine" as we sometimes want others to see?

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## THE ALLURE OF FALSEHOOD

YOU HAVE TO STAY IN THE CENTER OF "TRUTH"

John 15:4-8 (MSG)

<sup>4</sup>"Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you. In the same way that a branch can't bear grapes by itself but only by being joined to the vine, you can't bear fruit unless you are joined with me.

<sup>5-8</sup>"I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you're joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can't produce a thing. Anyone who separates from me is deadwood, gathered up and thrown on the bonfire. But if you make yourselves at home with me and my words are at home in you, you can be sure that whatever you ask will be listened to and acted upon. This is how my Father shows who he is—when you produce grapes, when you mature as my disciples.

**M. Lacado** ..... "the farther we step away from truth, the more comfortable we become with lies.."..

Honesty sometimes has negative consequences ..... so we learn to cover up ....

Jeremiah 17:9 NLT

<sup>9</sup>"The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked.

Who really knows how bad it is?

We know we are prone to weakness.....

## REGENERATION.....

change of heart

... the implanting of a new principle or disposition in the soul; the impartation of spiritual life to those who are by ...nature "dead in trespasses and sins."

...the objective work of God in a believer's life

How do these verses encourage you?

John 8:31-32

Jeremiah 17:10

Ezekiel 36:26



Heart of Stone..... What do you remember from the study of Mary Magdalene about the "stones" in our lives?????

How is the Holy Spirit helping you to remove those stones?

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**FATITHFUL IN SMALL THINGS - THAT'S ALL THAT'S REQUIRED.....**

The" heart" of the matter..... **Psa 51:10 ... CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART ....**

DISCUSSION TIME... Read the quote and look up the following verses.....

Discuss what you stand out to you in each portion.....

TEN STUDIES IN PROVERBS by Francis Dixon.

Quote:

*There is also a **REQUIREMENT.** " Give me your heart" . No gift is acceptable to God until we have given Him our hearts; even if we pray, or give our money, He will not accept these unless we have first given ourselves to Him (Proverbs 15:8; 28:9). God wants our hearts, He wants us.*

**1. He wants our hearts in order to Exchange them**

Ezekiel 36:26

**2. He wants our hearts in order to Empower them**

Ezekiel 36:27

**3. He wants our hearts in order to Establish them**

Ezekiel 36:28

**4. He wants our hearts in order to Enrich them**

Ezekiel 36:28

**Examine your heart today .... We need the Holy Spirit to help us.... to see into our hearts places that we have not seen or places that we have forgotten or even places that we have refused to look. We know that the Holy Spirit is able to not only shine His light into those places ... but to lead us to repentance and healing....**

**These can be lies we tell others or lies we tell ourselves...**

**Is there a prayer that you can write out that can be a beginning part of that healing taking place.....**

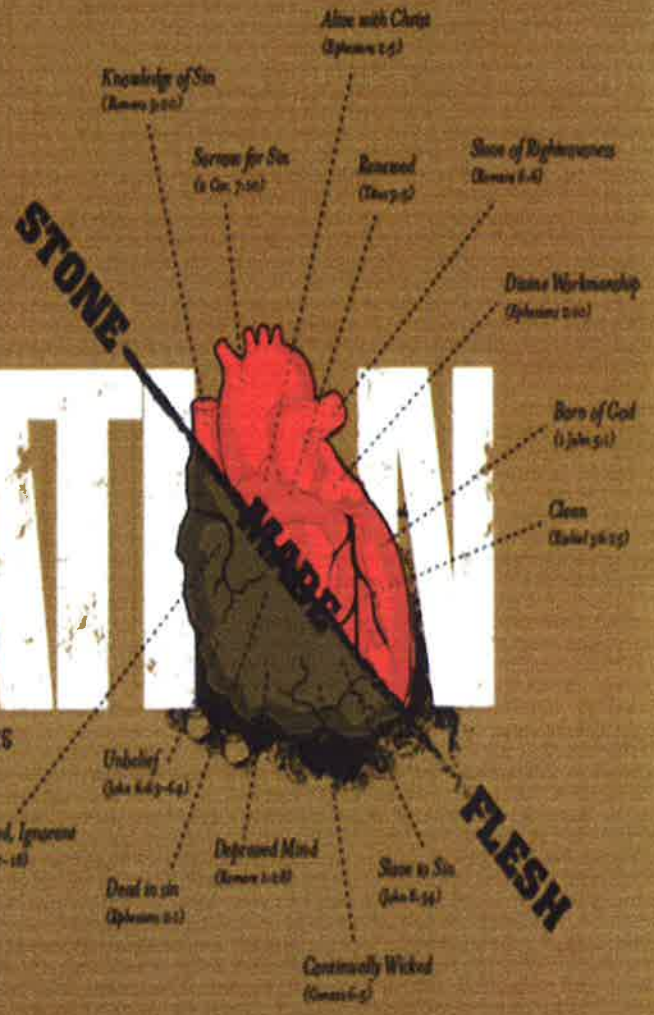
**We all have something to give.... some much some little.... we are not in competition with each other.... we are not out to impress God.... He wants our hearts.... Pure in heart ... see God**

**THAT'S ALL THAT'S REQUIRED.**



# REGENERATION

WITH PEOPLE THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE, BUT WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE. MATTHEW 19:26







## 10 WOMEN OF THE BIBLE - MARY MAGDALENE

The Introduction of Mary Magdalene

—Matthew 27:56, 61; 28:1; Mark 15:40, 47; 16:1-19; Luke 8:2; 24:10; John 19:25; 20:1-18.

Some have described Mary Magdalene as a prostitute.... although she is never named as such...

Some presume that she is the “sinful” women in the story of Luke 7: 36-39... but that is only an assumption and cannot be scripturally verified. Rather, scripture does say that she was delivered of demons and disease, that she became a disciple of Jesus.... and her female company existed of well established and resourceful women.

John 19:25....

John 20: 1-18

Mark 16:1-11

LUKE 8:1-3

As you read over these verses what are some things you notice about Mary?

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It is interesting to notice that Mary was again... a women who MET Jesus and her life changed.

### Taking a deeper look at the story.

#### A. Staying the Course

From our reading of Luke 8 we can learn that Mary Magdalene was a “disciple” of Christ. Not one of the twelve ... but Christ had many disciples...followers.....

#### DISCUSSION TIME

Read over these passages of scripture and discuss what you see in these verses.... what speaks to you as you read these verses...

Consider these thoughts...

\* What was Mary’s motivation?

\* Was there any reward in what Mary was going to do?

\* What if half way up the mountain Mary had decided to quit - to give up – to turn back

\* Should Mary have “expected” or “known” what had happened to Jesus?

\* What do you think caused her to “see” Jesus?

#### B. Mary was delivered from demons and disease..... Satan still uses his tactics to try to keep us distant from God and God’s plan for us.

Satan has never sat idle in our world.... then or now...

Satan’s goals are to rob kill and destroy.....

Read over these "tactics" and "Gods defense" .... is there one area that you recognize as how the enemy loves to attack you or your loved ones....

### **SELF IMPOSED PAIN**

Satan loves it when we hurt ourselves. Drugs, violence, work, food, immorality

Revelation 1:5

1Peter 5:8-9

### **OBSESSION WITH DEATH AND DARKNESS**

John 3:19 (NLT)

<sup>19</sup> And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil.

Evil feels at home here

Romans 13:12

1 Thess 5:5-6

1 John 1:7

Prov 18:21

**SPEAK LIFE!!!**

### **ISOLATION**

Satan loves to separate us from the safety of the flock.....

Hebrews 10:25

1 Thess. 4:1

Quote: M. Lacado

The enemy of our souls is on the prowl. He loves it when we forget he exists, because this causes us to let down our defenses. He also loves it when we obsess over his existence, because this causes us to focus less on the existence and power of God. There is a fine spiritual line for us to walk. For while it is true that the devil is just as real today as he was during the time of Mary Magdalene – and he seeks to imprison people today - ... God doesn't want us to be filled with worry or angst over him.

**1 Peter 5:8-9 (NLT)**

<sup>8</sup> Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are

As you read that verse.... how can you personalize it for your life today and encourage yourself!!!

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## **C. The Stone**

Mark 16:1-4

John 20: 3-10

Question?

Was the stone rolled away for Jesus to get out..... or for the women and the disciples to get in ....

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There are so many things "Stones" in our lives that can BLOCK GODS TRUTH from our lives. We are following Him, but yet there are still lies Satan has places in our hearts.... stones or rocks that we collect..... That causes us not to see HIS FULL TRUTH....

John 8:7

**They kept demanding an answer, so he stood up again and said, "All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!**

Do you recognize some of the "Rocks" in your own life?

We all have "rocks" in our life.... that stop us from seeing and experiencing Gods glory.....

What "rocks" has God moved in your life so you could better see His glory?

How is He teaching you more about His miraculous power through the trials, victories, and even monumentonous routines you go through in your everyday life?

What are some of the "Rocks" that you still need to be moved?

## **D. I Have Seen the Lord**

John 20:18

Isa. 6:1

Rev. 4:3

Mary sees the Lord..... She recognizes his voice.... she recognizes Him when He calls her name.....

We may not see God in our lives the way Isaiah or John did until heaven .....in wonderful dreams or visions..... but we have all "seen" God in our lives....

We have all heard His voice....

He calls us by name....

He knows who we are...

We can see His glory.....

Can you think of a time or moments in your life when you have "seen" Him....?

Have those moments spurred you on to continue to serve Him and tell others....

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Quote M. Lacado

The acts of faithful service we perform in his name will reward us for staying the course and following Him We should love and serve others in the same way we love and serve God Our love for Christ does not come from ourselves but from being with Him.



10 WOMEN OF THE BIBLE - MARY OF BETHANY

**Matthew 26:6-13;**

**Mark 14:3-9;**

**Luke 7:36-50;**

**John 12:1-8**

Friends of Jesus .....

**Martha:** a woman who provided hospitality for Jesus and his disciples

**Mary:** Martha's sister, who was a thinker rather than a doer

**Lazarus:** Lazarus, their brother, who died and was raised to life by Jesus

These three people seem to have provided a home for Jesus and his disciples when he was in Jerusalem, in the tiny bedroom community of Bethany. Scholars suggest they were about the same age as Jesus, or younger.

A story involving Martha, Mary and Lazarus, when they give a final dinner for Jesus.

It was the week before his death, but none of them knew what lay in store for Jesus. They were aware he was in danger, and no doubt they tried to keep him from going into Jerusalem where he was in most danger.

It was the custom when guests arrived for **dinner** to give them a refreshing foot bath. Then they either sat at a table, or lay propped up on couches surrounding a central food table. Martha served the **food** to her guests.

Mary's gift

During the dinner, Mary took some vastly expensive perfume and smoothed it over Jesus' feet, then wiped his feet with her long hair.

One of Jesus' friends, **Judas Iscariot**, objected to the waste of money, but Jesus again sided with Mary, defending her action. He knew he was in great danger, and that the path he meant to take might end in a terrible death. Being fully human he could not see into the future, but he knew the probable consequences of what he planned.

Mary also knew the danger that Jesus was in, and that he faced an ominous future. She offered her gift as a comfort and a reassurance to him, and perhaps as something more. She believed he was the Messiah, and she used the nard as anointing oil. In her own way, she anointed a king in readiness for what lay ahead.



Three things I want to point out from this story ....

**1. The importance of TRUE FRIEND**

John 12:1

Proverbs 18:24

Proverbs 13:20

Proverbs 27:5-6

It is important that we choose our friends wisely .

We need to take seriously praying "good friends" into our own lives and into the lives of those we care about.

Can you think of a "friend" who betrayed you .... Caused you hurt ... or whose influence caused a negative impact on your life?

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Now, think of a friend who believed in you ... encouraged you.... accepted you for who you are ... how has that impacted your life?

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**2. The importance of TRUE LIVING**

John 12:2

**a. Prepared** -

1Peter 3:15

1Peter 1:13

Matthew 25:1-46 - Foolish virgins

**b. Serve**

Mark 9:35

Mark 10:45

Col. 3:23-24

**c. Participate**

Eccl. 9:10

2 Tim 2:15

Romans 12:11

Describe TRUE LIVING in your own words.

### 3. The Importance of TRUE WORSHIP

John 12:3

a. There is a cost

Phil. 3:7-8

Matt. 16:24

Luke 14: 26-28

b. There is a position

James 4:10

Col. 3: 12

1 Pet 5:6

2 Chron 7:14

c. There is a fragrance

Phil. 4:18

Eph 5:2

2 Cor 2:15

Describe TRUE WORSHIP in your own words

The disciple Judas was quick to criticize. There are always people ready to criticize us.  
But Jesus speaks up in her defense.

#### **John 12:7-8 (NLT)**

**Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for my burial. <sup>8</sup> You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."**

This verse can sound very caring and callous at the same time....

Even though Jesus here was speaking of His corporeal presence ... how does what Jesus said apply to us today.....

Consider .....

Priorities...

First Love....

Sacrifice....

Mary shows us a picture of what true discipleship looks like in this story.

Read: Hosea 6:6

According to this verse, what does God desire from us?

What does that look like in practical terms as we work and interact with others?

**Cause and Effect**

Even in this gentle story of one women's act of silent true worship, there were different reactions.

John 12: 4-6

Judas Iscariot

Describe his reaction:

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John 12: 9-10

The town's people

Describe their reaction:

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John 12:11

New believers

What had occurred as a result of Jesus and his friendship with Lazarus, Martha and Mary?

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**One way or the other we impact the people around us.....**

**May we be impacting others as they see our True Friends, our True Living and our True Worship**



What is the same women and story .... or two different women and two different stories

There is a divided camp on this ... whatever you choose to accept does really not alter the account .

Here are some commentaries that you can find as a point of interest rather than debate .

This is one event, told four separate ways but included in all four gospels to fulfill Jesus prophesy about her. Luke's account, for whatever reason, is simply not in chronological order.

If we allow all four of these stories to harmonize, watch what happens... there is something really special. In Luke's account (LK 7:40), Jesus begins by telling Simon the Pharisee, at who's home this is occurring, a parable about gratitude. Why this story? Why make this point to Simon the Pharisee unless Simon should have had a far greater degree of gratitude for something. The point of the parable is that the person who had been forgiven much, would love more. Jesus is not talking about the woman, he is talking about Simon!

Simon the Pharisee was holding a dinner in Jesus honor. He was indeed grateful for something Jesus had done for him but not grateful enough to understand that his need for Jesus was just as great as this sinful woman. He is still blind. He could not see that he too had been "forgiven much."

If we allow these events to harmonize, and take a look at the larger picture, we see Simon the Pharisee not only as the Pharisee, but as Simon the Leper... the healed Leper, for a Leper could not host a banquet (or even a snack) if he had not been healed! He would have been forbidden such close contact with other people.

This is one account fulfilled in the four Gospels.

By the way, the woman is actually Mary, the sister of Lazarus. (John 11:2)

It seems that there were probably two incidents, one described in Matthew, Mark and John, and one described in Luke. The accounts in Matthew, Mark, and John all seem to be one account:

- All take place in Bethany
  - Mark and John both mention that it is pure nard
  - Mark and John both mention the figure of 300 denarii
  - In all three, some of the disciples are indignant that the perfume wasn't sold for the poor
  - Jesus mentions that this is to prepare him for his burial
  - All take place around the time of the triumphal entry
- Luke's account reads a bit differently:

- It takes place at the home of a Pharisee, probably in Galilee
- Chronologically, it seems to occur much earlier in Jesus' ministry than the account in the other three
- The indignation raised about the event is by the Pharisee that the woman is a great sinner
- Jesus uses the opportunity to tell a parable

There are differences between John and the Matthew and Mark accounts, but these aren't nearly as difficult to reconcile. However, the position, purpose, and details of the Luke account are disparate enough that many scholars consider that to be a separate story. In fact, some think that John's mention of Mary wiping Jesus' feet with her hair is a mistake and that John confused the two accounts. However, Carson points out that in both Matthew and Mark, Jesus says that the perfume was poured "on my body" and suggests that John has different theological reasons for mentioning the feet than Matthew and Mark have for mentioning the head.

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### **Women Anointing Jesus: The Same Story?**

The Gospels offer several stories of women who come to anoint Jesus. Some of these are clearly parallels, but one seems not to be.

The parallel stories are found in Matt. 26, Mark 14, Luke 7, and John 12. It is my argument that we have only two incidents reported, but by only two different women – Mary the sister of Martha (Matthew, Mark and John), and an unnamed woman who was a sinner (Luke).

Some preliminary critical questions:

- *Is it likely that there would be two such anointings during Jesus' ministry?*

Not at all unlikely. Keener [Matthew commentary, 618] reports that anointing the head with oil was a typical banquet custom for honored guests. Mary would have been quite in line with normal practices of hospitality to anoint her own guest. The woman's actions in Luke were more risky (as we shall see) but she would have been using a customary practice.

- *Why do the stories sound so much the same, if they are reporting different events?*

The simple answer to this is that the stories took on some of the same characteristics during a period of oral transmission. We shall see, though, that events reported to be the same are mostly events which would have to accompany *any* anointing, whereas the details differ in ways indicating different incidents. Furthermore, if there are only two stories, and Luke is the "odd man out," this is what we would expect.

- *Where was Jesus?*
  - **Matthew** – in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper
  - **Mark** – agrees with Matthew
  - **Luke** – a Pharisee's house, but no location is given; the Pharisee's name is given later as Simon
  - **John** -- with Mary and Martha and Lazarus, in Bethany

Two points need to be made here.

First, it is assumed often that John 12 has Jesus at the house of the Martha, Mary and Lazarus family. This is not said at all in the text. It is said that Martha served, and that Lazarus sat at the table – but was only *one* of the people at the table.

This does not mean that it was all held at their household. Indeed, if this is at the house of Simon the Leper, he would have to have had someone else serve the food; as a leper he was ritually unclean and was unable to serve himself, and likely had servants to do the job if he was holding a banquet. One suggests that Martha was in his employ.

Second, how likely is it that both incidents involved a man named Simon? Quite likely – as likely as there being 19 men named Simon in the works of Josephus. This was the name of one of Israel's tribes, as was Judas, Levi, and other names popular at this time; Simon was also the name of a great Maccabean hero [Witherington, Mark commentary, 367n]. Jesus' apostolic band had two Simons (Pete and Zealot) and three Jameses (brother of John, son of Alphaeus, Jesus' brother). Josephus has 9 Jonathans.

- *Who was the woman?*
  - **Matthew** – no specifics are given
  - **Mark** – also no specifics
  - **Luke** – "woman in the city, which was a sinner"
  - **John** -- Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus

This fits in fine with the idea that Mary is the one in Matthew and Mark doing the anointing. Why she was not named? Likely because until John wrote his Gospel, to name her or her siblings would have endangered them with the authorities. (Cf. John 12:10!)

- *What did she do?*
- **Matthew** – having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat
- **Mark** – agrees with Matthew
- **Luke** – "...when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment."
- **John** -- "Mary [took] a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment."

The similarities here are expected in light of historical constraints. Ointment or nard (a type of ointment) was usually kept in alabaster bottles that were specially sealed to prevent evaporation. The neck of the container was broken and the ointment expended all at once. The feet and the head were the normal targets for such attention, so that we have the same report in that regard is not surprising.

The only oddity is that John mentions feet only, whereas Matthew and Mark report the head only, and both report the woman's use of her hair whereas Matthew and Mark do not. However, Witherington notes [John commentary, 207] that the differing focus would serve a symbolic purpose in line with each writer's theology: the anointing of the head symbolizes kingship, while the anointing of the feet symbolizes Jesus' is glorified in death.

The wiping of the feet with the hair is not unusual either as it reflects "the ancient practice of diners' wiping excess oil or other potable substances from their hands onto a servant's hair." [208] It is not clear whether this was done by Jesus' own request or by the women's' initiative.

- *What was the reaction?*
- **Matthew** – But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.
- **Mark** – agrees with Matthew, though using different verbiage
- **Luke** – Simon wonders at this, and Jesus offers a parable about the forgiveness of sins
- **John** -- Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

This fits well if John, Mark and Matthew report the same event and Luke another. John differs in focusing in on Judas Iscariot, from whom it is clear he has a distaste, and reports a different part of Jesus' reaction.

