

## **The Why's And Wonders Of Worship #4**

### **Dismantle Your Glory**

Have we lost the art of adoring the Lord? Sometimes our worship gets so cluttered with endless strings of shallow and insincere words that all we do most of the time is “take up space” or “put in prayer time” with a passionless monologue that even God must ignore.

Some of us come to Him clinging to such heavy burdens that we are too frustrated and distracted to see the Father or understand how much He loves us.

### **You Will Have to Face Him**

What He wants us to do is just look at Him. Yes, we can tell Him what we feel. We need to tell Him, but He is really waiting to receive our most intimate worship and adoration, the kind that transcends mere words or outward actions. He has set before you an open door, but you will have to “face” Him. You cannot back your way into the door of eternity; you have to walk into it. You will have to stop looking at and listening to other things. He is beckoning to you to “come up hither,” and He’ll show you the “hereafter” (see Rev. 4:1). That should bring peace to a weary child.

It is dangerous for us to be led by our “number-crunching intellect” because we can over-analyze the causes and the purposes of God. We’ll end up like the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes of Jesus’ day who missed their hour of visitation. Jesus wept over Jerusalem the symbol of the “home of God’s presence” in His day, saying in essence, “You didn’t know the hour. I came to you and you didn’t know. You knew the Word, but you didn’t know Me” (see Luke 19:41-44) **“He came unto His own, and His own received Him not”** (John. 1:11).

### **Heaven’s Hall of Fame**

“And one of the Pharisees desired Him that He would eat with him. And He went into the Pharisee’s house, and sat down to meat. And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, 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. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden Him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, this man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him: for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on” (Luke 7:36-40).

God’s definition of a hero and ours are probably not the same. Consider what He said about the “sinful” woman who broke the alabaster box to anoint the Lord with oil. If heaven has a hall of fame, then here is someone whose name is going to be right at the top of the list. It is Mary, the woman with the alabaster box. What is so startling about it is that the disciples were so embarrassed by the woman’s actions that they wanted to throw her out, but Jesus made her actions an eternal monument of selfless worship! Jesus didn’t intervene because of Mary’s talent, beauty, or religious achievements; He stepped in because of her worship. The disciples said, “To what purpose is this waste?” (Matthew 26:8b) Jesus said, “It’s not waste; it’s worship.” Often dense disciples mislabel things during their political posturing about who sits at the right and who at the left, while Jesus goes “worship hungry.” His growling hunger pangs attract an outsider, a “box-breaker,” a foot washer! Such worshipers must often ignore the stares and comments of a politically correct church while ministering to Jesus.

He desires our adoration and worship. Heaven’s “hall of fame” is filled with the names of obscure people like the one leper who returned to thank God while nine never bothered. It will be filled with the names of people who so touched the heart and mind of God that he says, “I remember you. I know about you. Well done, My good and faithful servant.”

Meanwhile in our church services are we acting like ungrateful children demanding our biblical allowance and blessings? We religiously seek the hand of God, but we know nothing about seeking the face of God and crying out, “I just want You.”

### **Are Our Services Tailored for God or Man?**

For too long, the Church has asked God to be “present” but never placed the presence of God in a position of honor. That means that what we really wanted were His “tricks.” We wanted His divine healings, supernatural giftings, and all the miraculous things He can do; but we really didn’t want to honor Him. Have most of the church services you’ve attended been custom-tailored to entertain people or God? Is it more important to us that when an influential man or woman leaves, he or she says, “Oh, that was good, I enjoyed that;” or that God says, “Oh, that was good, I enjoyed that?”

When God enters our services, how often do we suspend everything we are doing to honor Him? Or did we consider His arrival as an interruption in our agenda that was nice, but only in “proper measure.” Is it possible when Mary broke open the alabaster box containing precious oil of spikenard, she noticed that when her tears fell on our Lord’s dusty unwashed feet, that they made a streak of cleanliness? Did it suddenly dawn upon her what measure of disrespect had been shown toward Jesus, although He was an invited guest in that house? She did, and it broke her heart. Her grief seemed to only turn up the velocity of her tears until they came like a floodgate had been opened. There were so many tears dripping on Jesus’ feet that Mary was literally able to use them to wash away the animal dung on His feet!

But what could Mary use to wipe the remaining residue of animal dung from the Lord’s feet? She had no honor or authority in that place, so she couldn’t ask for a towel. Having nothing else at hand, with no towels provided by servant or master, Mary dismantled her hair and used her glory to wipe Jesus’ feet. She took the disdain and public disrespect of that household away from Him and took it upon herself. She removed every evidence of His public rejection with her beautiful hair and took it as her

own. Jesus gave us insight into His feelings in that moment when He openly rebuked His host.

“And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss, but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.” (Luke 7:44-47).

### **An Anointer or the Anointed**

We “pedestalize” people whom God has anointed. Whom does God memorialize? Jesus says that what Mary did will “**be told for a memorial of her**” (Matthew 26:13). We like the anointed; He likes the “anointers!” These are people of His face and feet—oil pourers, tear washers, humble lovers of Him more than lovers of things. Some believe that Mary actually anointed Jesus twice, and was going to anoint Him a third time. First she came as a sinner and anointed His feet, longing to receive forgiveness at any cost in Luke chapter 7. Then she anointed His head at the end of His earthly ministry in Matthew chapter 26 and Mark chapter 14. There he is hanging on the cross, suspended between heaven and earth as though unworthy of both, abandoned by all, breathing His last agonizing breaths.

But what’s that He smells...more than the salty smell of blood trickling down His fractured face, stronger than the noise of dice thrown by the soldiers, overpowering the jeers of the Jewish priests? It’s the fragrance of past worship, captured in the locks of His hair...He smells the oil from the alabaster box! The memory of the worship of an “anointer” strengthens His resolve, and He “finishes” the task at hand.

The same woman who anointed Him in His life witnessed the crucifixion and said, “I can’t leave Him unanointed in His death.” As she carried yet another compound of precious spices to anoint the Lord’s body in the tomb, she found His tomb empty and again felt her heart break with

emptiness as she began to bitterly weep and cry. Oh, the love of an anointer! They are willing even to pour anointing over dead dreams!

Jesus had just vacated the tomb and was on His way to sprinkle His blood on the mercy seat when He heard her familiar cry. This was potentially the most important task that Jesus ever did, because it was the heavenly fulfillment of the most important task that any earthly high priest ever did in his sanctity and cleanliness. The high priests of Israel had to be very careful to avoid becoming ceremonially defiled, so no woman was allowed to touch them at all. Yet just as Jesus began His ascent on high to sprinkle His blood on the true mercy seat in heaven, he saw the one who had dismantled her glory to clean His feet, the anointer. Perhaps He had one foot on the bottom rung of Jacob's ladder that ascends into heaven when He abruptly stopped and said, "She's come to do it again. She has come with her precious fragrances and sacrifices of praise, only I am not there to receive it." So He stopped on His way to do the most important task He would ever do and said, "I can't leave her here without letting her know."

You can literally arrest the purposes and plans of God if you are a worshiper. Jesus stopped what He was doing to go to a person who had broken her most precious alabaster box to anoint Him. He stopped when He saw her tears and went to stand behind her. Finally He said, "Mary, Mary."

### **Are You Waiting for the Whisper of God?**

In a sense, Jesus was endangering the very purposes of God the Father for a worshiper who would dismantle her glory. That is why He had to be careful to say, "Don't touch me." What a level of trust He had in her! Have you ever wondered how certain people seem to have a certain attachment to God? For some reason, God just seems to be near them all the time. It isn't because they preach so well, or because they are such stellar singers. No, they know how to dismantle their egos and glory. They lay it all aside just to worship at His feet in brokenness and humility. And it is for these precious few that God Himself will stop His ascent to Heaven just to whisper His secrets into their waiting hearts.

Did you notice that God didn't break Mary's alabaster box? Mary had to break it. If you want to have that kind of encounter with God, then you will have to "break" yourself. The highest level of worship comes from brokenness, and there are no shortcuts or formulas to help you "reach the top." No one can do it for you; that is something only you can do. But if you do, God will stop just to spend time with you.

If He hears that cracking tinkle when you break your alabaster box of personal treasures; if He notices the rustling sound as you bow to dismantle your own glory; you are going to stop Him in the middle of whatever He's doing, because God cannot pass by a broken and contrite heart. He is going to move heaven and earth just to come visit with you.