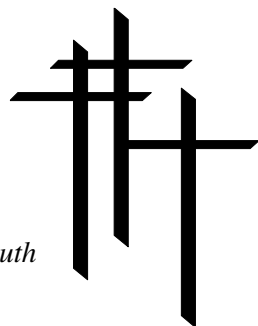


Timely Messenger



*Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth
Speaking the Truth in Love*

Volume 68 No. 3

Summer 2008

AT THE FEET OF JESUS

by Gregg Bing

We often hear the question asked: “If you had the chance to have dinner with anyone who ever lived, who would it be?” Most respond with sports figures, others with entertainers or politicians, but often people want to have dinner with Jesus Christ. A close-knit family in Bethany, Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha, experienced this many times during Jesus’ earthly ministry. Lazarus is the most well known member of the family, having been raised by Jesus after he had been dead four days. As amazing as his experience was, Mary seems to have been more personally affected by the time she spent with Jesus than either her brother or sister. The reason for this? Each time we see Mary with Jesus, we find her in the

same position—“at the feet of Jesus.”

Mary Listening

Mary’s first encounter with Jesus is recorded in Luke, chapter 10. When Jesus entered Bethany, Martha invited Jesus into her home. During Jesus’ visit, she was so busy working and serving Jesus that she spent little time with Him. However, Mary sat at Jesus’ feet and listened to the words He spoke. Seeing her sister sitting there, Martha complained to Jesus, demanding that He tell Mary to help her with the work. Jesus answered, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”

Mary seated herself at Jesus’ feet, assuming a humble position of worship. There she

listened to Jesus' powerful words and teaching, enabling her to grow in grace, and faith, and knowledge of God. Trying to serve the Lord, Martha found herself worrying and fretting over many things. Jesus pointed out to her that in His presence, only one thing is needed, the good thing that Mary chose—spending time with Jesus. The relationship Mary was developing with Jesus, the things she learned as she heard Him speak, were things that would never be taken from her.

Mary Learning

The next time we find Mary with Jesus was a time of great sorrow for her and Martha. In John, chapter 11, we read that their brother Lazarus became sick, so they sent word to Jesus. Knowing Jesus loved their brother, they trusted He would immediately return and heal Lazarus. Jesus did love this family. However, He waited two days before He returned to Bethany in Judea, so that by the time He arrived, Lazarus would be dead. Jesus knew these things had happened that He might raise Lazarus from the dead and “that the Son of God might be glorified through it.”

When Jesus neared Beth-

any, Martha went out to meet Him, while Mary remained behind, sitting in the house. Martha's first words to Jesus were, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.” She believed in the resurrection at the last day, but this did not seem to ease her present grief at the loss of her brother. Jesus assured her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” While Martha declared her belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, she did not truly understand the powerful meaning of His words.

Martha then returned home and told Mary that Jesus was calling for her. When she heard that, Mary hurried to Him. The Jews thought she was going to the tomb to weep, so they followed her. Though Mary was filled with sorrow, possibly even somewhat disappointed with Jesus, she still fell on her knees at His feet when she came to Him. Like her sister, Mary's first words were, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”

Jesus was troubled in His spirit when He saw Mary, as well as the Jews who followed

her, weeping and wailing in grief. Jesus asked where the body of Lazarus had been laid. As they led Him to the tomb, Jesus Himself shed tears, not in sorrow over the loss of Lazarus, but because of the unbelief of these Jews, especially Mary. They had seen Him heal the lame, the deaf, even the blind, but, they never considered Jesus had power to raise the dead.

Lazarus's body had been laid in a cave and a stone rolled across the opening. Jesus told them, "Take away the stone." Martha protested, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days." Jesus responded, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" After they took away the stone, Jesus lifted His eyes and gave thanks to His Father, that the people watching, especially Mary and Martha, might believe that the Father had sent Him. Jesus then cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!"

Lazarus came out of the tomb, his hands, feet, and face still bound with the tightly wrapped grave clothes. Jesus commanded them, "Loose him, and let him go." What a tremendous learning experience for both Martha and Mary as they

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Gregg Bing — Editor

Sent **free** to anyone upon request. If you live in the Fort Worth area, we invite you to worship with us.

Sunday Services:

10:00 AM	Sunday School
11:00 AM	Morning Worship
6:00 PM	Evening Worship

Mid-Week Services:

Tues.	10:00 AM	Ladies Class
Wed.	7:00 PM	Bible Study

ADDRESS CHANGED?

If so, please notify Grace Bible Church. Be sure to include your name, your old address, and your new address. This will help us keep our mailing list current and reduce the cost of postage.

*Thanks for your help
in this matter!*

(Continued from page 3)

watched their brother brought back to life. The statement they each greeted Jesus with must have seemed foolish now. Jesus' declaration to Martha that He was "the resurrection and the life" had been demonstrated in a powerful and personal way. However, Mary seems to be the one who truly understood the full impact of Jesus' words.

Mary Loving

The day before Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, He again had supper with His friends in Bethany (John 12). Lazarus sat with Jesus at the table, Martha served, and Mary, once again, sat at the feet of Jesus. She took a pound of expensive oil, anointed Jesus' feet with it, and then wiped His feet with her hair.

The Scriptures tell us "the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil" as Mary lovingly worshipped her Lord. Using that which was a woman's glory, her hair (1 Cor. 11:15), she wiped Jesus' feet giving Him the glory and honor He was due. Not only did the fragrance of the oil fill the room, so did the sweet smell of her humble service.

Judas Iscariot, who would

later betray Jesus, questioned why this valuable oil was not sold and given to the poor. Judas didn't really care about the poor; he knew if the oil was sold, he would have a chance to take some of the money for himself (Judas carried the moneybag for the group and would often take what was put in it). Judas was not alone in thinking what Mary did was a waste; the other disciples complained about it as well.

Jesus defended Mary, explaining her actions with these words: "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always." Far from being a waste, Mary had kept the oil for the day of Jesus' burial. Why, then, do we find her anointing Jesus with the oil at this time?

Before returning to Judea, Jesus had told His disciples what would happen to Him in Jerusalem.

"Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished. For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. They will scourge Him

and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.” (Luke 18:31-34)

Jesus’ disciples understood none of these things for the saying was “hidden from them.”

Having witnessed the resurrection of her brother, Lazarus, Mary may have come to see something the twelve disciples did not—that Jesus Himself would rise from the dead.

The Jewish burial custom was to anoint the body with fragrant spices and oil and then to wrap it tightly in strips of cloth (grave clothes). After Jesus’ death, as the high Sabbath drew near, Jesus’ body was hastily prepared and laid in a tomb. A group of women watched as this was done. Following the weekly Sabbath, the women returned to the tomb early Sunday morning intending to anoint Jesus’ body according to the Jewish custom. Two of the women were named Mary: Mary, the mother of James, and Mary Magdalene. Mary of Bethany was not with them.

Mary seemed to realize that Jesus must die, but she also understood that Jesus would rise again. She believed Jesus when He declared: “I am the resurrection and the life.” This is why she took the oil that had been

kept for His burial and anointed Him with it that evening in Bethany. How would Mary know and understand such things, truths that even Jesus’ disciples had not grasped?

Mary had listened to Jesus’ words; she had watched Jesus as He worked the works of God. She experienced Jesus’ power firsthand seeing Him raise her brother from the dead. Mary knew Jesus; she believed in Him as Lord and Christ. She had developed a relationship with Him. She knew Jesus loved her and her family, and she loved Him. All this happened because Mary spent time sitting “at the feet of Jesus.”

Application

Oftentimes, we are like Martha. We work hard trying to serve the Lord, but we find ourselves unsatisfied, “worrying and fretting over many things.” Certainly, we are called to do good works (Eph. 2:10), but before we can effectively serve the Lord, we must choose, as Mary did, “that good part, which will not be taken away”—spending time with Jesus Himself. We cannot literally sit at Jesus’ feet and listen to Him speak, but we can spend time listening to what He has

said in His Word. As we read, study, and meditate on God’s Word, we come to know more of our precious Savior; we develop a deeper and more intimate relationship with Him; we learn to love Him more and more, and His love compels us to worship and serve this One “who is our life” (Col. 3:4).

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.
—1 Corinthians 1:30

My Savior, Lord, and Life

By Dennis Blankenship

The story is amazing
And wonderfully true,
That Christ has paid the ransom,
He has died for me and you.

The gate has been thrown open
That all may enter in,
And find in Christ, a Savior,
There's no unpardonable sin.

Living in His presence
Each and every hour,
Overcoming sin and self
Through the Spirit's power.

Taken up to Glory
Where we will see His face,
Worship, love, and praise Him,
And feel His warm embrace.

Oh, bless you, God, my Father,
I'm rescued from life's strife,
In Christ, your own Beloved Son,
My Savior, Lord, and Life.

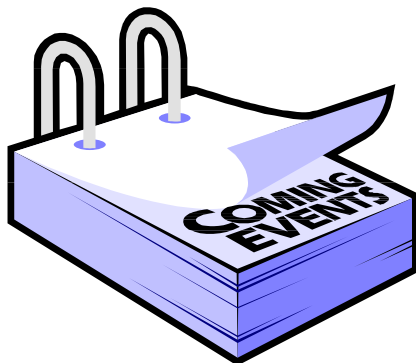
If then you were
raised with Christ,
seek those things
which are above,
where Christ is,
sitting at the right
hand of God.

Set your mind on
things above, not on
things on the earth.

For you died, and
your life is hidden
with Christ in God.

When Christ who
is our life appears,
then you also will
appear with Him
in glory.

Colossians 3:1-4



WINTER YOUTH RETREAT

January 1-3, 2009

Our Winter Youth Retreat will be held January 1-3, 2009 at Three Mountain Retreat in Clifton, Texas. This retreat is for young people, ages 13 through college age. There will be good Bible teaching, praise and worship through singing, recreational activities, including horseback riding, touch football, indoor games, and the "Big Night Game." More information will be available in the Fall issue of the *Timely Messenger*.

FAMILY BIBLE CAMP

June 29 - July 3, 2009

Dates for next year's Family Bible Camp have been set for June 29 to July 3, 2009 at Camp Arrowhead in Glenrose, Texas.

WHAT'S YOUR HURRY

By Charles W. Wages

Someone has aptly said, "The stops of a good man are ordered of the Lord as well as his steps." Speed has become a compulsive way of life for most of us. Some have become completely obsessed by speeding automobiles, motorcycles, planes, and every means of transportation. There are those who will wait in line for up to two weeks at a raceway to watch automobiles travel in excess of 150 miles per hour! Doctors are telling us to "slow down," policemen are saying "slow down," and above all the Lord is saying "stand still."

When God was delivering the people of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, they were in a hurry to escape Pharaoh's horsemen and chariots. However, Moses was led of the Lord to say to them,

"Fear ye not, stand still (stop) and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you today; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see no more forever." (Exo. 14:13)

Speed blurs the vision. The salvation of God is so beautiful and important that a person really needs to not only slow down, but completely stop everything else and "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). The Lord Jesus on Calvary needs more than a fleeting glance. The majesty of His person (God) and the magnitude of His work (Redemption) demands that humankind take the complete look of eternity. The children sing a little chorus which says, "Stop and let me tell you what the Lord has done for me."

Luke, chapter 2, tells of the old man Simeon who was "waiting for the consolation (hope) of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him." This man was willing to wait patiently for the salvation of God. Luke 2:29-30 records his words:

"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; For mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

It is true that we do not have long to do God's work here upon earth. There is an urgency that borders upon an emergency. However, there is so much in "religion" that is done without proper thought or preparation. Songs and sermons are so shallow today. God doesn't want us to treat His Word lightly or to reason on the run. Samuel of old told the people,

"It is the Lord that advanced Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt. Now therefore, stand still (stop), that I may reason with you before the Lord of all the righteous acts of the Lord, which he did to you and your fathers." (1 Sam. 12:6-7)

When a person "stands still," he is able to look in all directions, especially up. The Old Testament prophets told the people to "lift up their heads, and look unto the Lord." The Psalmist wrote:

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth."

Isaiah, with the solemn

warning of the end times in view, said:

"Lift up your eyes to the heavens and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but my salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished." (Isa. 51:6)

We need to stop and seriously consider "the righteous acts of the Lord," to fully appreciate that, "his salvation shall be forever," and "his righteousness shall not be abolished."

We should ask ourselves, just "what is our hurry?" Do we take time to put aside all the trivial things we consider so important? Are we obsessed with speed? What will be at the end of our fast journey through life?

If you are not a Christian, if you have never really received Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, please stop and look to the Lord Jesus for eternal salvation and life. He died on the cross for your redemption. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

TAKE TIME TO BE HOLY

by William D. Longstaff

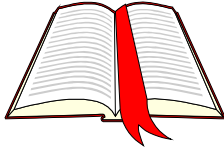
Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord.
Abide in Him always, and feed on His Word.
Make friends of God's children, help those that are weak,
Forgetting in nothing, His blessings to seek.

Take time to be holy, the world rushes on.
Much time spend in secret with Jesus alone.
By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be.
Thy friends in thy conduct, His likeness shall see.

Take time to be holy, let Him be thy Guide,
And run not before Him, whatever betide;
In joy or in sorrow, still follow thy Lord
And looking to Jesus, still trust in His Word.

Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul;
Each thought and each motive beneath His control;
Thus led by His Spirit to fountains of love
Thou soon shalt be fitted for service above.

BIBLE STUDY BOOKS



The following Bible study materials are available free of charge for your personal use or for use in teaching a Bible class.

by Charles Wages

- Written for Our Learning
- Stepping Stones to Truth
- Past Pentecost to Paul
- Points to Ponder
- The Ages
- Saved by Grace
- Ministry of the Church
- The Perfect Will of God
- Once in a Lifetime
- Fellowship in Christ
- Hidden in God
- Thoughts on Vision
- Spiritual Fitness
- What Saith the Scripture
(Set of 6 Diff. Tracts)

by Mrs. Charles Wages

- Seasons
- Spiritual Thoughts for Young Minds
- A Man Named Paul
- Studies for Women

by R.B. Shiflet

- Informal Study: Philippians
- Informal Study: Ephesians
- Personal Meditations on Paul's Post-Acts Ministry
- Giving Under Grace
- Ultradispensationalism
- The Lord's Supper

by Ike T. Sidebottom

- The Book of Acts
- Through the Bible Dispensationally
- Prophetic Gleanings
- Saved, Settled and Sure
- Fellowship of the Mystery

by Gregg Bing

- Keys to the Word : Understanding the Bible
- Unless the Lord Builds the House
- A Good Conscience
- That I May Know Him
- Making Good Choices
- For God So Loved the World
- It is Finished!
- Conformed to the Image of His Son
- The End of the World
- Assurance : Can We Know that We are Saved?

by John D. LaVier

- Yokefellows : Paul and His Companions
- Sure Words of Prophecy
- The Lord has Spoken
- Why is Heaven Silent?

S tudy to shew
thyself approved
unto God, a workman
that needeth not to
be ashamed, rightly
dividing the Word
of truth.

— 2 Timothy 2:15