

Sent: Monday, March 30, 2015 12:40 PM  
Subject: Last Tuesday's MOB Study

The scene for last Tuesday's lesson, in John 1:1-11, takes place at the home of Mary and Martha--and Lazarus--in the town of Bethany, just a few miles outside of Jerusalem! Despite the death threats from Jewish leaders, Jesus returns to "celebrate" the Passover, fully knowing that He was, as John the Baptist had prophesied, the "Lamb of God"--who came for the very purpose of giving His life to "take away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). He is not the "tragic victim" but, as Kostenberger notes, is fully in control of the events about to occur! The time had now come!

John highlights the fact that Lazarus is there--alive and well--reclining at the supper table with his friend, and Savior! Jesus. But the focus is on Mary, who lavishly "anoints" Jesus with a highly costly perfume, and "wipes His feet with her hair," something, in that culture, that only a servant would do! Judas (Iscariot)--the one who, John notes, "had the money bag and used to pilfer what was put into it,"--was there too, and He became totally indignant about it all, piously complaining that the perfume could have been sold (for about a year's worth of wages!) and the money "given to the poor!" Sure! But Jesus calls it fitting for His "burial"--and both Matthew and Mark record Jesus saying that "wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her!" (Matt. 26:13; Mark 14:9).

There's some irony, and lessons to grasp, here! Kostenberger calls it a tale of contrasts: "on the one hand is Mary's lavish devotion to Jesus, on the other the looming prospect of Judas's betrayal of his master!" And, in another: "the man whom Jesus raised from the dead, Lazarus, takes part in the dinner, while Jesus Himself is anointed for burial!" He adds: "This is a time for devotion or antagonism toward Jesus to come to the fore!"

So, what does this all mean for us, especially as we celebrate another Easter season? How lavish and "extravagant" is our love and devotion to the Lord? How can we "come to the fore" and express all that He has done for us, by coming into our world and giving His life that we might have not only have life--but have it more abundantly?

Happy Easter, men!

Lowell