

Catford Lectures 2009-2010

Part 1

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[00:00:00] Good evening everyone. Can we begin this meeting by singing hymn 267? All fullness resides in Jesus our head, and ever abides to answer all need. The Father's good pleasure has laid up a store, a plentiful treasure to give to the poor. Number 267.

The Father's good pleasure has laid up a store, a plentiful treasure to give to the poor.

[00:01:13] Whatever distress awaits us below, such plentiful grace the Lord will bestow, and still shall support us, and silence our fear, and nothing can hurt us while Jesus is near.

When sorrows assail us, or terrors draw nigh, His love will not fail us, He'll guide with His eye, [00:02:21] and when we are fainting and ready to fail, He'll give what is wanted and make us prevail.

We trust His protection, we'll lean on His might, we'll show His direction, He'll guide us aright.

[00:03:06] We know who surrounds us, almighty to save, and no one confounds us, the Savior who hath.

Jesus. Amen. I would like to turn to a number of scriptures this evening, but I would like to read them as we come to them. So the first passage is from John's Gospel. Now, Paul told me some time ago that he was exercised to speak about Psalm 133 and Ephesians 4. But as I was listening to him, [00:04:01] he referred so many times to John's Gospel that I began to be a little concerned because all my scriptures are from John's Gospel. But I'm sure the Lord has His hand in all these things. We can trust Him to direct according to His mind and will. So John's Gospel, chapter 2, verses 1 to 5.

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. And both Jesus was called and His disciples to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto [00:05:02] you, do it. My exercise this evening is to speak about the Lord's encounters with His people in this

Gospel. There are seven I would like to draw attention to, and they all concern sisters, women, who met with the Lord Jesus in their lives. And it's fitting perhaps that the first one we start with is the mother of Jesus. And what's presented to us here in these verses is the all-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus. He had been invited to this marriage, but they wanted wine.

There was a deficiency of wine. And Mary, she said to the Lord Jesus, They have no wine.

[00:06:04] Perhaps it seemed to her natural to do this. It was indeed natural in one sense for her to do this, to speak to the Lord Jesus about it. To imply in what she said to Him that He should do something to make up this deficiency, to make up this need. She knew that He could do this.

But sometimes we've been surprised by the reply the Lord Jesus gives her. Woman, what have I to do with thee? To our ears in this day and age, that sounds a little disrespectful. But of course it can't be, because these are words from the Lord Jesus Himself. Now what the Lord Jesus is saying to Mary here is that He was about to embark upon His three, three and a half years of public ministry. And supremely in those three and three and a half [00:07:05] years, He would display what we learnt about this afternoon, that He would be doing that which His Father showed to Him. He would be working with His Father. He would not be directed by those who had a natural link with Him. Remember, in the other Gospels, we get instances when His mother and His brethren, those who were the offspring of Joseph and Mary, sought to intervene. They were concerned about what He was doing.

But He was taking His direction entirely from His God and from His Father.

And this reminds us of a verse in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, [00:08:15] verse 16.

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh, yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him. No more. We've been learning about those wonderful spiritual links which we have with the Lord Jesus. Each one of us has that link with Him and with each other. We're members of His body. Now, as we had explained to us, that originated, that came into being on the day of Pentecost, when the Lord Jesus sent the Holy Spirit down, when we were baptised into one body by that Spirit. That doesn't mean we forget about our natural relationships.

[00:09:07] That doesn't mean that we discard them, that we ignore them.

It's made quite clear to us, particularly in the writings of Paul, but also Peter, that we have responsibilities that relate to the fact that we have mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, children.

We're responsible to the government. All those things should be exemplified in our lives as believers on the Lord Jesus perfectly. We should be the true exponents of those relationships in our lives. But the most important thing when it comes to serving the Lord is to be directed by Him and Him alone.

[00:10:06] When we think of ourselves individually, He is our Lord. When we think of ourselves as members of His body, He is our head. We can't really know all the preciousness that relates to Him as the head of the church until we really work out what it is individually to live our Christian lives owning Him practically, not just with the lips, as our Lord. His mother accepted what He said. She said, whatsoever He saith unto you, do it. We haven't got enough time to go into the detail of what's happened, but really this scene at Cana of Galilee looks forward to that day of which Paul was

speaking, when the Lord Jesus will be King of kings and Lord of lords, when He will [00:11:02] be acknowledged in this world, when He will rule over this world, and there will be joy in this world in a way there's never been joy in it before. We look around us today, we see the very antithesis of joy today. There's conflict everywhere. There's no certainty. There's no peace. Men believe that they are making a better world, but every step they take, well, as we say, one step forward, proverbially two steps back. That's the state of things today. Man is making more and more problems for himself. Why? Because he's refused the one in whom all fullness resides, Jesus, our head, and it's when we practice that truth, as Paul exhorted us to do earlier today in the meeting, that we are a witness to those around us, that we are in touch with the one who can bring real blessing in their lives. May it be that we show this out day by day.

[00:12:08] It says here it was the third day. If you look back into the previous chapter, you can see the second day, which seems to speak of a future day still for us, when the remnant of Israel will be exercised to be true to the Lord before he comes in his power and his glory. And if you go back to the day before that, and you see those who wanted to follow the Lord Jesus, and he said to them, come and see, when they asked him where he abode, that seems to speak of our day, the day when we can gather to the name of the Lord Jesus. We can have him at the center. We can behold him. Remember how it says John the Baptist looked upon the Lord Jesus as he walked and he said, behold the Lamb of God. But of course, we can only really do that if we've realized that we're sinners [00:13:05] and we've realized that he is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. And each one of us has to put, as it were, by faith our sin upon him and say, yes, I believe that when he suffered and died upon Calvary's cross, he bore my sin and I'm trusting him that the work he did there deals with my sin for the glory of God, for my eternal salvation.

But here in this story, we need to recognize, and that's one of the reasons why the Lord Jesus says woman to Mary, not mother, woman. He disowns that relationship for the purposes of the service of God, not in his normal life. We'll see that later on before we get to the end of the address. [00:14:03] We have to see that, first of all, the Lord comes first in our lives. For him it was the will of his Father, for us it's the will of the Lord. And then joy can flow, there can be blessing as there will be in this world, there can be joy individually in our lives, in our lives as families, in our lives too as companies of God's people. The next encounter is in John's Gospel chapter 4 verse 21. It doesn't actually name Mary.

In that passage we've just read, it just speaks of her as the mother of Jesus. And here we have a woman who's not named, not identified at all for us. We know this story very well, don't we? She was a Samaritan woman. [00:15:05] She knew her place. The Samaritans have no dealings. The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans, she says in verse 9. But let's just read on later in the story. Verse 21.

For the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. If in that first story we've seen there's a deficiency, there's no real [00:16:09] joy, the Lord Jesus needs to supply that joy. Here we see that the Lord Jesus and the Father in particular are looking for a response from us. They're looking for something from us. How can that be? When we need so much, how can we give anything to God? Here was this woman, as we've said, she wasn't part of the people of Israel. The Lord Jesus had come to the lost sheep of Israel. But here was one he met, he encountered on his way. He must needs go through Samaria, it says. And his love is flowing out and he would make this one, who seemingly had nothing to give, whose life seemed to be a life that was full of disappointed hopes. He was going to make her one who could be

a witness of him and a worshipper [00:17:09] of the Father. We're told elsewhere, aren't we, in the Gospels that the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. God is seeking lost ones, not just to be saved, but here we learn in these verses to be worshippers. We're not to be left in a situation where we're constantly receiving and never giving. We're to give out as well. And this woman did give out. In verse 25, it tells us that she said to the Lord Jesus, I know that Messiah's cometh, which is called Christ. When he has come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee, am he? And that seems to have really spoken to our heart. She seems to have believed what the Lord Jesus said. [00:18:03] And it says in verse 28, the woman then left her water pot and went her way into the city and saith to the men, come see a man which told me all things that ever I did is not this the Christ. Here's her witness. But in the earlier verses, she is brought to know that there's an hour coming.

In fact, it now is. They were right on the tips of it. That's what that expression means. When it says the hour cometh and now is. When they that worship the father wouldn't do it in a particular place such as Jerusalem, certainly not there in Samaria, but it will be those who worshiped in spirit and in truth. The whole of what the Lord Jesus speaks about to this woman in this chapter is to do with the gift of the Holy Spirit, that which meets our innermost needs. But the idea [00:19:07] is that it springs up to the source from which it came in worship and response to the Lord. It doesn't just refresh us, but it enables us to give something back to God from our lives. God is a spirit, the Lord Jesus says, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. Have we got that exercise in our hearts to respond to the father who gave his son to be our saviour? The Lord looked for it, indeed revealed it to this Samaritan woman. We could say humanly speaking she was the least likely candidate to be told a truth like this, but the Lord told her. The Lord looks for those who will worship the father in spirit and in truth.

[00:20:03] Once we've trusted the saviour, we're no longer those who are simply needy ones, who need to be saved. We're transformed into those who can then respond to the father, who can worship him in spirit and in truth. The spirit shows us it's no longer a physical thing like it was for the people of Israel. They had to observe all kinds of rules and procedures. We might call it ritual in their worship of God. Of course it had value, it taught them certain things, it still teaches us certain things, but now the worship is spiritual and is aided by the Holy Spirit of God. We're able to worship him in spirit. Paul speaks about this in Philippians chapter 3 and of course it's worship which is in truth as well. It's no longer the thoughts that the people in Samaria may have had [00:21:04] or the people in Jerusalem may have had. It's in truth. It's in a completely right setting with regard to God. It's what is in accord with his mind and will. But this woman was given this wonderful truth here. Maybe it's a surprise to us why the Lord did it to her, but he did. And for me it illustrates very much the teaching we get in Ephesians chapter 2 that we Gentiles who were once without hope and without God in this world have now been brought nigh. We've been enabled to be worshippers of the Father. Jew and Gentile together. One new man. No longer separated by that middle wall of partition, but peace being made with God are brought nigh by his blood and are enabled by the Spirit of God to worship him in the way that he's always desired to be worshipped. [00:22:05] We move on. John's Gospel chapter 8.

Verse 7. This is one of those stories which seems to me to often be misused. It's the story of the woman who was caught apparently in the act of adultery. We'll break into it at verse 11. This refers of course to the people that had caught her. So when they continued asking him and what they were asking him was in verse 5. Now Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned but what sayest thou? He lifted up himself and said unto them he that is without sin among you let him first cast the stone at her. And again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. [00:23:05] They which

heard it being convicted by their own conscience went out one by one beginning at the eldest even unto the last. And Jesus was left alone and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself and saw none but the woman he said unto her woman where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? She said no man Lord. Jesus said unto her neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more. We often find in the gospels these religious people trying to catch the Lord Jesus out.

It's important for us particularly when we're younger we're brought up in a Christian family never to allow this kind of attitude to get into our hearts and minds. Of course we should ask questions when we don't know the answers. [00:24:02] And our older brethren will not always know the answers. Sometimes we have to search the scriptures. Sometimes we have to wait for some time before the Lord gives us the answer to a particular problem we have. But he will always give us an answer from his word. But of course it's important to ask in faith. It's important to ask trustingly. We started off our meeting all fullness resides in Jesus our head. He desires to give. He's the giver of every good and perfect gift. And therefore we should always ask in a way which has confidence that he will bless us. We're never to distrust the Lord. And this shows the true state of heart of these people.

These people they wanted to catch the Lord Jesus out. They had no real relationship with him. [00:25:02] But here they thought they had him reverently speaking we could say they thought they had him in a bind. They thought that they would show that what he was saying would be in complete contradiction of what Moses has said in the law. But instead the Lord Jesus turns the spotlight of the law on them. And they find that they're the ones in the bind instead. And they continued asking often in men and women today there's no sense of reverence about the things of God. They will go on arguing about things regardless of what said to them from the scripture. So it was here they went on questioning him. And there we get these words he lifted up himself in his majesty in his dignity in his personal glory and said unto them he that is without sin among you let him first cast a stone. And then he stooped down and wrote on the ground as he had done before. [00:26:07] Contrast indeed with the finger of God on the stone tables when the law was given to Israel in the first place. Here it is on the ground. And as they see the Lord Jesus tracing on the ground. His words sink down into their hearts. Convicted by their own conscience they went out the eldest first. He had more in his life to accuse him than the younger one. And in the end Jesus was left alone. But you know the woman was still there. The woman was still there. This is the love of God to the sinner. He is holy. He is righteous. But he never repels the one who comes to him in faith. She was bruised. She didn't come. But now she was there. She didn't want to [00:27:02] go away from him. She waited upon what he had to say. He lifted up himself and saw none but the woman. And said to her, woman where are those thine accusers? Have no man condemned thee? Now the reason I said this story seems to be often misapplied is it seems to be used as an excuse to allow, to permit sin. And to say we can't deal with it because who of us can cast a stone at another person. But that's not what the story means. What it brings before us is that there's no condemnation in Christ to the one who will acknowledge their sinnership and come to him in obedience. The obedience of faith. And we get something of that in her words. She says to him, no man Lord. She acknowledges him as Lord. And Jesus said unto her, neither do I condemn thee. [00:28:05] Go and sin no more. She wasn't to commit sin. The sin that she had been caught in or they knew to be characteristic of her life. Whether they actually caught her in it or not is another matter. But the point is she wasn't to be marked by that anymore. And neither as we, as believers who know the Lord Jesus, it's important that we're not characterized by the sin that's all around us in the world today, which is thrust at us in many different ways in our lives, particularly when we're younger. It's important that we're not characterized by this sin. It's a wonderful thing to be saved. And as Paul was explaining to us, it's not just a question of salvation from the penalty of sin.

It's salvation in a practical ongoing way in our lives, [00:29:07] knowing his power to enable us to overcome sin in our lives day by day for the glory of the Lord. And also, of course, it's in the end, salvation from the very presence of sin in his presence for ever more. No condemnation. We stand in liberty, Paul says in Galatians, but we're not to make any provision for the flesh. We're not to allow our liberty to be used for the flesh to have its way in our lives, but rather we're to show forth the righteousness of God in our lives in a practical way day by day. John chapter 11.

The story of the raising of Lazarus. We'll start to read at verse 20. [00:30:03] Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him. But Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know that even now whatsoever thou would ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus said unto her, thy brother shall rise again. Martha said unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She said unto him, yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the son of God, which shall come into the world. And then we just dropped down to verse 32. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was and saw him, she fell down at his feet saying unto him, [00:31:02] Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping and the Jews also weeping, which came with her, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled and said, where hath he laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, behold how he loved him. And some of them said, could not this man have opened the eyes of the blind, which open the eyes of the blind have caused? Even this man should not have died. Jesus therefore, groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, said I not unto thee, if thou wouldest believe thou shouldst see the glory of God. Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. [00:32:04] Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always, but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. When he had thus, when he had thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. He that was dead came forth, bound head and foot with grave clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, loose him and let him go. Well, there's much that we could say about this passage, and we haven't got enough time to say much. But what we can say about it is that the Lord loved this family at Bethany. It says in verse five, now Jesus loved Mary. No, it says Martha. We might have expected it to say Mary, because after all, she was the one who in Luke chapter 10 sat at his feet and listened to his [00:33:03] word. And the Lord Jesus had had to reprove Martha in that incident when she had said, Lord, bitter, come and help me. But no, we see here in these words, the love of the Lord Jesus flows out to all his people. Even when we make mistakes, even when we act in a way which isn't becoming of a believer, we're loved by him and he would draw us back to himself. He loved this family. He saw in Martha one who loved to entertain him, loved to have him in her home. And that's a wonderful example that Martha has for us. And we see in the next chapter, she is serving. She's serving at table, no longer cumbered about. But here in the verses we've read, we've seen that Martha, she needed to realize that belief isn't a theoretical thing. [00:34:02] It's a vital thing. Yes, she believed, as she said to the Lord Jesus. I believe, she said in verse 27, that thou art the Christ, the son of God, which should come into the world. But she hadn't really taken hold of the words that he had said in that previous verse for herself right at that very moment. She hadn't made them her own. And that's why when the Lord Jesus said in verse 39, take ye away the stone, Martha interposes, impetuous as ever, she says, by this time he stinketh, Lord, for he's been dead four days. And indeed, four days was at the point it was recognized a body would start to corrupt. But she hadn't

taken on board those words of the Lord Jesus, when he said, I am the resurrection and the life. These are beautiful words. One of the several I am's we have in John's gospel, which bring before us the deity of the Lord Jesus. [00:35:07] He is God. The one who said I am in the Old Testament, still says I am in the New Testament. Jesus is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. And here in these words, he showed that he was able to deal with this situation which had arisen among them. This would mark him out, son of God, as we're told by Paul in his first few verses of his letter to the Romans. Marked out son of God. By the resurrection of dead persons. And the Lord Jesus, he is able to raise Lazarus from the dead.

These are beautiful words in verse 25. I am the resurrection and the life. Resurrection comes first because if you're dead, you're in the grave. You need to be raised. But then you're given life. [00:36:02] He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. That's certainly true of those who've believed on the Lord Jesus and who have passed through the article of death, they shall live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. That is, we can say, each one of us who've believed on the Lord Jesus, death has no power over us. Yes, we may die physically, but it will be but a doorway into the presence of the Lord. But you know, there's another fulfillment of these verses, which is going to happen very soon. At the rapture, when the Lord Jesus comes, when he speaks the word and he names all his redeemed, then yes, those who have already passed through the article of death, yes, their bodies will be raised because he is the resurrection. And yes, those who are living at that time and are believers on him, they will hear their names [00:37:02] and they will never die. And this verse will then have its most wonderful fruition, its most wonderful answer. You can check out what I'm saying by looking at 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 and 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Yes, the Lord Jesus showed and demonstrated his power.

Of course, it's been said, if he hadn't said, Lazarus, come forth, all the dead would have come forth. But he says, Lazarus, come forth. Only one came forth. He had to. He couldn't resist. At the command of the Lord, he came forth. But what a difference from the resurrection of the Lord, as we shall see in a moment. What an answer to these sisters' grief and sorrow. The Lord loved them. He met them in their need. He gave them what they couldn't have imagined possible. We might say, well, why didn't he just go there and heal Lazarus? Because he was teaching them a lesson. It was for the glory of God. It was that they would learn something from it. This comes out [00:38:07] in the words of this scripture. Very often, we do have to go through difficult experiences, but the Lord is teaching us for our blessing and his glory. The difference between Mary and Martha is very interested in these verses. You know, when Mary speaks to the Lord Jesus, she says exactly what Martha said. There's no difference at all. But there is one difference in the way in which she approached the Lord. She fell at his feet. And you know, this is a wonderful characteristic of Mary. She's always at the feet of the Lord Jesus. She's listening to him in Luke chapter 10 at his feet. Here, when she says the same words as her sister Martha, she's fallen at his feet. And in the next chapter, which we're now going to read, she's at his feet again. [00:39:08] And perhaps this is a lesson to us. Perhaps this is why Mary is so particularly a wonderful example to the Christian. And where we fall so far short, why we don't put into practice what Paul was speaking about this afternoon, is because we're not enough at the feet of the Lord Jesus. It's good to be at his feet. If he's the head, we need to be at his feet. And sadly, so often we're not. We're trying, reverently I say this, to do the thinking for him sometimes. We're trying to plan things out so that they will occur in the way we think they should. But if we were more at his feet, we would be more like Mary, committing everything into his hands and resting on what he was going to do. Just let's read those first seven verses of chapter 12. [00:40:04] Then Jesus, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper. And Martha served, but Lazarus was one of them that

sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the odor of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, why was not this ointment sold for 300 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 bear what was put therein. Then said Jesus, let her alone. Against the day of my burying has she kept this. This is one of the most beautiful portrayals of worship we have in the scriptures. [00:41:05] We thought about worshipping the Father, that wonderful truth of Christianity, that we know God as our Father, and we can respond to him in worship. And it's wonderful. It's a cardinal truth of Christianity. Do we do it individually, as families, as gatherings of his people? We've got plenty of hymns in our hymn book to the Father. And of course, we can pray to the Father. But here we have a verse which illustrates the importance, too, of worshipping the Lord Jesus, the Son. It's important to remember in John's Gospel, chapter five, that we cannot honor the Father if we do not honor the Son. It's been said by some that's only in the context of him as judge, but it's not. If you read the verse carefully, you'll see it's there as a principle. Worship of the Son and worship of the Father. And here was [00:42:04] one who knew that right at this moment, the thing to do was to respond, to demonstrate, to express her love for the Lord Jesus. And there in the presence of all, she did it. Quietly, she didn't say anything. She took what was most precious to her and she broke it upon him.

In some Gospels, it says she anointed his head. In others, it says his ear. In this one, it says she anointed his feet. As we've so often heard, we've learned, haven't we, that in Matthew and Mark, she anoints his head because he is the king. He is the one who was the servant here, but is really Lord of all. And he should be anointed upon his head. But when we contemplate [00:43:06] him as the Son of God, which we do in John's Gospel, we can only bow at his feet and anoint his feet. Of course, she anointed him completely. She, as it were, bathed him, we could say, in this ointment. She loved him so much, the whole house was filled with the odor of the ointment. And she wiped his feet with her hair, expressing to us her submission to him. She, in her life, would walk in service and subjection to him because this is what the long hair of the woman represents.

And it's a glory to her. And it's a glory to Mary here. Judas, the son of perdition, he couldn't see any value in what was done. He would use it to attack [00:44:05] the worship of the Lord Jesus. And people all around us will tell us that what we're doing is of no value. Far better to do something good with it, to give to the poor. I expect today someone would say we could have used it to reduce carbon emissions.

All sorts of things could be said today about the good we could do with what we've got. But the first call on our lives is the one who loved us and gave himself for us. And Mary, it seems, knew that he was going to do this. At Plumstead this week, at the Bible reading, we were considering the sisters who went to the grave of the Lord Jesus on that resurrection day. But Mary isn't named among them. She wasn't there. She had already anointed his body. When he [00:45:03] was alive, she had taken the opportunity to do so. She had sat at his feet. She had heard his word. She had realized, perhaps not fully, perhaps only partly, but she had realized what he was going to do. He was going to suffer and die for her. And so it was now, before he rose from the dead and the opportunity was no longer there to do this, that she anointed his feet with this ointment and wiped his feet with her hair. And he said, let her alone. He defended her. He'll defend us. We don't have to defend ourselves. He'll defend us. He said, let her alone. The words of authority put these accusations out of court against the day of my burying as she kept this.

Wonderful tribute to one whose heart was in line with the heart of the Lord Jesus himself. [00:46:10]
Chapter 19.

Verse 25.

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother and the disciples standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son. Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother. Behold thy mother. And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. When perhaps we're taken aback as we mentioned earlier on by his words to his mother at the [00:47:05] marriage at Cana, we perhaps should think about this verse here. He uses exactly the same address, Woman, behold thy son. We wouldn't think it was disrespectful here, would we? No, he's caring for his mother. He's making sure that there's someone to look after her. Humanly speaking, he is the elder son. Of course, we know that his brethren were the offspring of Joseph and Mary, but he was the first child of that family and he takes up the responsibilities connected with that. We believe Joseph had probably passed away already. Mary would now be bereft of him. It appeared. And so he shows us a wonderful example [00:48:10] of care. And this is why we were saying earlier on that when we become Christians, it doesn't mean we can dispense with our natural relationships and just forget them. That's not right. We should demonstrate the fact that we're believers by the fact that we honor such God-given relationships. And therefore, he makes provision for his mother. He makes them from the cross. This is the second cry from the cross or the second set of words from the cross. At this point, the hours of darkness have not descended. The Lord Jesus is still speaking to those who were in this scene. In a short while, he would speak to the thief [00:49:08] who said to him, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. The Lord Jesus said today, shalt thou be with me in paradise. That thief left it to the last possible moment to be saved just before the three hours of darkness began. Don't leave your salvation if you haven't trusted the Savior so long as that. But he is not the subject. Mary is here, the mother of the Lord.

She seems to have come back to the Lord as the one who had come to do the Father's will here because the Lord can provide for her to be looked after by the disciple whom he loved. [00:50:01] John takes responsibility, not one of the other children of Mary. And it's wonderful to see that the Lord had one to whom he could commit his mother. And the disciple was one who could answer to these beautiful words from the Lord when he said when he said to him, behold thy mother. From that hour, that disciple took her into his own home.

And we know that later on, Mary was found among the disciples gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem. So although in that first instance, she had seemed to take the initiative and had to be reproved for it, now she seems to be submitted to the will of the Lord for her life. And that's a good practical lesson for us. What wonderful love and care is shown by the Lord. What human [00:51:06] sympathy is demonstrated by the Lord. We had it this afternoon when Paul was speaking about the Lord Jesus as our high priest. He cares for us. He sympathizes for us. Here from the cross, we see his care, his love for his mother and the way he provides for her. He knows our frame. He knows our needs. He knows our concerns. Simeon of old had said, a sword will pierce your heart. When the Lord Jesus had been presented as a little baby in the temple, and it came true here, but that one who Simeon had held in his arms was holding Mary this time in the arms of his disciple. And this is how the Lord works out his love today. It's through his own here in this world. We as his body express his love, express his care to one another, but also to [00:52:06] others outside. John did this. I know the Holy Spirit hadn't yet come. The body hadn't yet been formed. But here we see little aspects, little

glimpses about what was to be worked out in the heart and lives of the people of God when the Holy Spirit had come. We close then with chapter 20. I should perhaps just say something about Mary, the wife of Cleopas, just to say that she's only mentioned very briefly. She's, if you like, a little footnote. But the fact she's mentioned there shows that she was being faithful in being with the other women. And the Holy Spirit records her name. Her name is forever recorded in the scriptures of God. Whenever the Lord saw his people [00:53:02] speaking about him and about his name, he made a book of remembrance and put their names in that book. And we should always remember that the Lord knows that every little act of faith and obedience for him is never forgotten. Chapter 20, verse 11.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the garter, [00:54:02] saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself and saith unto him, which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not, for I'm not yet ascended to my father, but go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my father and your father and to my God and your God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord. They had spoken these things unto her. I can only really say a few words about this because of the time. But Mary Magdalene had also been at the cross. Now she was at the tomb. She was the first one there. While it was almost just still the night time, she had come there. So much did she love the Lord. But unlike Mary of Bethany, [00:55:02] she hadn't understood that he was going to suffer and die and rise again. But does the Lord hold that against her? Well, she has to learn a lesson, but of course he doesn't hold it against her because he sees her heart. He sees her love for him, her ardor for him. You know, in Paul's life, he's sometimes been criticized for insisting on going to Jerusalem where he was told that he would suffer and be put in bonds. But does the Lord hold that against the apostle? No, I don't think so. The Lord saw in the apostle's heart the great love he had for the Jewish people. And the Lord turns what did happen in terms of his imprisonment to our benefit because the epistle that we read this afternoon, Ephesians, [00:56:03] was written from prison, expanding to us all the wonderful things that God has accomplished for us in Christ. And here the Lord saw in the heart of Mary, she saw his love. But sometimes it's when we are tearful, when we're perhaps not thinking the way the Lord wants us to think, that we don't see clearly. And Mary didn't see clearly here, she thought, when the Lord spoke to her, he was the garden. But the Lord Jesus just had to say her name, Mary. There was that link with him. She heard him say her name as he had said it so often in her life, no doubt, to her. And she realized it was the Lord. Have we got that kind of link with the Lord practically in our lives? She responded to him, Rabboni, which is to say master. [00:57:05] He had to show her that the relationship that they had had before, an earthly relationship, was no longer to apply because she was going to ascend to his father. It was going to be a spiritual relationship here. Takes us back to that verse we read in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 earlier on. But Mary here, we might say, well, she didn't show that intelligence she should have done but she was given a wonderful intelligence to take back to the disciples. And it's a wonderful intelligence. Go to my brethren, say unto them I ascend unto my father and your father and to my God your God. And here begins the wonderful opportunity to worship the father in spirit and in truth. Of course, the Holy Spirit was yet to be given. But here, [00:58:04] instead of the Lord speaking about the father or my father, he now says as well as my father, your father. And we can now respond to God and say our father. Not in heaven. We don't have to say heavenly father or our father in heaven. That denotes the distance that you read about in Matthew's gospel. When often we read the expressions, the father which is in heaven, your father which is in heaven, or your heavenly father, we don't have to say that anymore. We can simply say father because we're no longer at a distance from him. We are brought nigh to him in Christ. And we can simply call him father, or we can call him Abba father, a term of endearment. This is what the Lord

Jesus has accomplished for us. And this truth he put in the possession of this sister, Mary of Magdala, to tell his disciples. His [00:59:09] disciples weren't there. They had forsaken him and fled. But these women have remained faithful to him. They demonstrated their love. They were fearless for the Lord because they loved him so much. And Mary in particular here in these verses is given the privilege of taking this wonderful message, this wonderful bit of intelligence to the disciples and through the words of scripture to us too. Go tell my brethren that I ascend unto my father and your father, my God and your God.

May we respond to those words that Mary gave and respond to our father in worship and praise in our lives in this world. Can we close with hymn 418.

[01:00:09] As I said, there's lots of good hymns to the father in this hymn book. So we're particularly blessed to have a hymn book like this. Father, thine own unbounded love has reached us through thy son. We now behold him crowned above, eternity's begun. This hymn's a great hymn because it expresses the distance from which we've been brought, the nearness which we've been brought into. 418. [01:01:06] of eternity's begun. Once far from thee, and dead in sin, in him who lives we live.

The spirit rise to bless thy name, and holy worship give.

The praises led by thy beloved, divine and holy name.

[01:02:12] And with hearts divinely moved, rejoice that praise to share.

Father, thy love a portion gives, thou giv'st to thy son.

For thine own glory, and for his, made like the blessed one.

[01:03:12] In that bright sea of cloudless light, where sons at home shall be.

With him we'll share thy glory bright, and all his beauty see.