

Zephaniah 1-3

Sunday 1/16/2005

We will all go through a fun time this morning. Everybody try to find the book of Zephaniah. Zephaniah is not hard; you are almost at the end of the Old Testament there, so we are moving right along here. Zephaniah is a great book in the Old Testament, and a book that we will have some fun with today. I am looking forward to spending some time in it.

As you know, last week we saw the great concept of God's people having a vision in the book of Habakkuk. The book of Habakkuk is an incredible book because it really defines some things. I told you how the smaller books of the Bible, called the minor prophets, really focus on issues that are truly important. There is no more important issue, obviously, than God's people getting an understanding and seeing the vision of God so they know what they need to do with their own lives and how they fulfill those things. We looked at that last week, but this week we are going to be in the book of Zephaniah. You are going to see today that, again, just like the book of Habakkuk, Zephaniah is another powerful little book that teaches another great concept for you and me in our life of trying to build a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ during the time that the nation of Israel is in decline and shortly before they go into captivity.

Zephaniah's ministry is a unique ministry. It takes place during Judah's troubled times before they fall into apostasy. It is a book like the other ones that we have studied so far; it is before the exile, and it is to the southern tribes. But it takes place during Josiah's reign. Josiah was one of the kings back in 2 Kings 22 and 23, if you remember. Josiah is somewhat of a good king. When we studied the fall of the nation of Israel and saw how the kings began to deteriorate and all the problems began to happen with the nation of Israel, we saw that there were maybe two or three bad kings, and a good king would come along, and you would get four more bad ones, and then pretty soon the whole nation of Israel was really in a mess.

Zephaniah's ministry takes place during Josiah's reign. What we see here, if you go back historically during this time, and this is what Zephaniah is writing about, we see a revival break out. We see the nation of Israel trying to regain some things with God. It is very small and it does not last. But yet it is one of those glimmering little lights that take place when everything begins to fall apart in the nation of Israel. Zephaniah really focuses on the reason why this revival fails. Because of that, we learn some great lessons why things are not lasting in our lives.

As God's people, God wants us to really focus on our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ inwardly, all the things that we really want to focus on for our personal relationship with the Lord. Zephaniah, in his book here, hammers home, there are only three chapters, but these three chapters really make a unique three-point outline. Because Zephaniah, in his message that he hammers home to the nation of Israel, really focuses on the same problems that you and I have, and why revival or why a lasting relationship with God does not work in our lives.

We see that before God's hand comes down and judges the nation of Israel, and long before the nation of Israel is restored, Zephaniah, in this revival that breaks out among the nation of Israel, the fact that it does not last, the fact that it really is not real, the fact that it really just does not accomplish what it ought to accomplish, he lays home the great truth that true spirituality and

true godliness with God has to start from the inside. This is the problem with the nation of Israel. This is why it does not last. This is where the great lesson for us comes in today. The nation of Israel, their revival was just outwardly. It never took any root starting on the inside in the heart.

Today, in our lives, living in the times that we live in, the Laodicean church period, we find that the reason why God's people have such a tough time today. I have never seen a time in all the years that I have ministered that God's people are struggling with things the way they are. It is simply because they are building things on the outside instead of starting on the inside. When we start to work on developing ministries here in the next couple of weeks, in the next year really, one of the things that I am going to teach you, one of the things that I am going to lay out for you, is the aspect of how you focus when you start to work with people and you make sure that you start with what is on the inside first. Again, this message is very timely and it really helps us put together some great concepts that we all need to know and understand.

Let us go to the Lord in prayer this morning and we will look to Him for guidance through His Spirit.

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You so much. We thank You, Father, so much for the fact that You love us, You care for us, that You have given us, Lord, the truth of the Word. We pray today that this humble servant, Lord, will be able to open up the book and display the Word of God that would be pleasing to You. I do not have anything to say on my own. I certainly do not have any knowledge or insight into anything other than the Holy Spirit of God illuminating my heart, showing me from the Scriptures. Lord, it has been good to come through the Bible book by book. It is just like it has built a foundation with our people. I see so many of them, Lord, that are on the verge of really taking that next step. Yet at the same time, Lord, I know You will continue to bring people that are like-minded people that love God, love the Word of God, and really want to make their lives count, not only with their own families, but Lord, people around them. Help us, Lord, in all that we endeavor to do, that You always take, as You so deservedly, Lord, the honor and glory of everything that we do. We, Lord, build around You this message today, hoping that the Lord Jesus Christ will be glorified and honored in everything that we say and do. In Jesus' name, for His sake, we ask it. Amen.

I. The Day of the Lord: Look Within, Look Around, Look Beyond

This book has a breakdown, much like the rest of the books that we talked about, and I have given you a breakdown, and yet the breakdown on this really forms the three-point outline, so to speak. The idea of this book, obviously, is the Day of the Lord, as that is the second coming of Christ. We have defined that over and over and over again in our studies. We know that the second coming of Christ is the theme of the Bible. We know that it is certainly the driving force behind the prophets as they really focus on where Israel is at in relationship to the Lord's coming.

- In chapter one, we find that in relationship to the Day of the Lord, Zephaniah deals with the content, and he tells the nation of Israel that they need to look within.
- In chapter two, he deals with the Day of the Lord, the second coming of Christ, from the aspect of its extent, what all God is going to accomplish. He says that they are supposed to look around.
- In chapter three, he deals with the second coming of Christ in the aspect of its intent, and he tells the nation of Israel in that relationship to look beyond.

Look within, look around, and look beyond. That forms a great concept from which we want to really take this thing and look at it in the aspect of an incredible study for ourselves this morning, and that really is the study of the inward man.

II. The Inward Man: God Looks at the Heart

You find examples of this all the way through the Bible. I remember one time back in Samuel, I think it is in 1 Samuel 8, where the nation of Israel is looking to find their first king, that they pick Saul over David. We know that God tells them, "Saul is not the right guy." Yet they say, "We want Saul." Samuel gets quite upset about it, and he is crying before the Lord, and he says, "Lord, they have rejected him." God says something to him that I always thought was incredible, that it is a great truth. He says, "Samuel, you do not need to feel bad about this because they have not rejected you. They have rejected Me."

A little bit later on in 1 Samuel 16:7, God shows us a great salient verse, a great concept, a verse with great concept to it. It carries all the way through the Bible where He says that basically:

1 Samuel 16:7

But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

He says in that same verse, He says another great concept, there is a number of concepts in it. He says that the Lord sees not as man sees. He says someplace else in Isaiah 55:11, that God's ways are not our ways. He gives us a great principle that we as human beings do not look at things the way God does.

The people saw Saul. Saul was a good-looking guy. The Bible says he was head and shoulders above all the rest of the guys. The Bible says that he looked like a real leader. The Bible says in every way he was taller, he had a great personality, a magnetic personality, people were drawn to him. He seemed to be a natural leader. But the truth of the matter is, he was the worst man to lead the people of Israel. God's choice was a little scrawny boy over there watching the sheep, about 15 years old, by the name of David. God says that man looks on the outward appearance, but

God sees the heart. That is why lasting change in our lives, it only stays lasting because of the fact that it begins within our own heart.

III. Attitude Versus Action

In time, many of you are going to be, as I have already said, working with people. I have worked with people for almost 35 years, and some of you have worked with me in those areas for 20 years anyhow. We have learned over the years, and we have talked about this before, and this is one of the number of concepts you will learn as you work with people. It is the concept of attitude versus action. If you just understand that little concept, it will explain so many things in life. Attitude and action really is a term that defines the forming of our attitudes and the actions that follow.

When you get knowledge, your knowledge is facts. You take that knowledge in and you process it. That knowledge in time gives you an attitude. It forms an attitude about whatever the information is. Whatever that information is, that in time it produces the action. That is exactly the way that it works. So you can see now, when somebody does not get that this is why unsaved children with unsaved parents have such a problem, because the parents give them wrong information. They go to the world instead of going to the Bible. By the time they figure it out, it is too late.

Back in my day growing up, there was a guy by the name of Dr. Spock. That is not the Star Trek guy. One had pointed ears, the other had a pointed head. Dr. Spock revolutionized the concept of raising your children. Everybody bought into Dr. Spock. But you see the problem with it is, it takes 30 or 40 or 50 years before you find out that that stuff does not work. By the time Dr. Spock's boy killed himself, I do not know how many generations of parents, unsaved parents, had already lost their kid to the philosophy of Dr. Spock. You would have been better just to follow Spock. But Dr. Spock, the guy with the pointed head versus the pointed ears, he led a lot of families astray. You know why? Because he focused on the outward. He focused on the things that were outward. He never focused on the biblical principles that changed the inward. He formed a lot of attitudes.

This is why, down the line, when you start to work with couples that are having marital problems, how many times I have heard this over the years. I have heard a wife say, "I just cannot stand this guy anymore. I am to the point now where I do not want to even stay with him." I will say, "Why do not we try to work this thing out? Why do not I sit down with him? Why do not I help him? Nobody has ever shown him. I will just work with him and I will show you." Here is what she will say. She will say, "Bob, here is what will happen. You will talk to him. He will do what is right for a while. Then a month later, he will be right back where it was. We have done it so many times. He is not going to change. I have come to the place now after 10, 15, 20 years, I do not love him anymore."

The problem is that guy has always just adjusted his action. He always adjusted his action. When his wife got upset with him about something, he will say, "Honey, I will do better." When his wife said, "You leave your clothes all over the floor and you have got crumbs all over the kitchen

floor. Why do not you put that thing in a microwave because it splatters all over the thing?" He kept saying, "I will do better." He does better for a while. Then six weeks later, he is right back to splattering the microwave. You know why? Because I do not give a flip about that microwave. I am a pastor. I am changing the eternal destiny of people's souls. I am going to waste two seconds thinking about a dumb microwave. I like the splatters. It gives the other food a little better taste. But the cat in the microwave was too much. I have got to admit.

You see my problem? My problem is I do not really care about the microwave. So if I took a course on microwave loving, then I would change my attitude about it, which would change my action. I am being funny, but the truth of the matter is that is why we do not change in our relationship sometimes because of the fact that we want to believe what we believe. We have what we want and we will adjust the action, but we will never really adjust the attitude. Adjusting the action only will never solve any problem. I call it treating the symptoms instead of solving the problems.

You see the same, I saw the same things in my kids growing up. I am sure you see it in yours. We talked about in weeks gone by of establishing a road of discipline. I am going to tell you, your kids will learn so quickly. Your kids will learn so quickly when they can tell by the inflection of your voice, when you say, "I am not going to tell you this again. I am not going to tell you again to pick that up." He says to himself, "According to my mom and dad, that means I have 15 more times to continue to do what I am doing because they never react after the first time. They just keep saying it and I will keep count, and we will get, when we get to nine, we will start taking it seriously. When he hits 10, we will go to code red, and when he hits 11, then we will do what we tell him to say." That is attitude versus action. That is adjusting the action to fit your circumstances because nothing is really changing on the inside. There is no attitude adjustment. Attitude produces action in a marriage, in a family. You have to change the attitude.

Now that is what the Bible does. The Bible takes away from us the excuse, "I will do better." It leaves me cold and naked in the kitchen when it comes to the microwave issue. I have nowhere to hide because I need to change my attitude. My attitude is, "Yeah, it does make a mess, but I like messing." No, my attitude is, "It really causes the problem." So you change. It becomes something that you are concerned about, and that is true of everything in life. Changing the action will not solve anything. That is what Israel did. That is what Zephaniah is preaching about. He is saying, "There is a revival in Israel, but it is only temporary and it will not last and it is not going to change anything because Israel is putting a band-aid on the issue. Israel is treating the symptoms instead of really focusing on the problems." That will carry over into your life and my life as a husband and wife and our relationships, our children, every aspect, our jobs, everything, and certainly in our spiritual relationship with God and the Word of God.

IV. True Revival: An Inward Transformation

This revival in Josiah's time, it so matches what goes on in our own time today. I know that in the where we are living today, we have a lot of mystifying words. If there is any word that is used wrongly today, it is the word revival. America has not seen a revival in the sense of a biblical revival for almost a hundred years. We have come to the place in our churches today where we

schedule revival. Revival could not come in my life when I unexpected because on the calendar here, we have got September 4th through the 5th a revival. So nobody thinks about revival any other time, and then you complain about it because of that week, but that is where you schedule it in.

Let me tell you something. In the old days, I will tell you a story. Remember us boys who were down to Joplin here not too long ago down there preaching? Remember that story that old boy told us how that church got started down there? A young preacher came down there in Joplin in the 1920s to hold a revival. The revival was supposed to be the church had us scheduled for a week. The revival turned out being never ending. It went on week after week after week after week. People were getting saved. Things were being changed. As a result of it, this church down there started because of it. It got started because somebody came in, God brought a revival in the true sense of revival, and it rocked that city.

In the old days when revivals came, the bars closed. People got saved. They did not open again. It was an impact into the city that everybody felt. Just like you can have the biggest evangelist in the world come in today, and it does not matter where he holds it, Camp Arena, wherever, and you get 10,000 churches show up. When he leaves, nothing really changes. The bars are still open. All the places that are ungodly are still going on. Nothing really changes because we are living in a day and age where everything for us is on the outside and very, very, very little is really on the inside. That is where we are at.

The truth of the matter is for your life and my life, the child of God should live in a constant state of revival. I enjoy them because I like to hear good preaching and I need to get preached to. But let me tell you something. As a child of God, I do not need somebody coming to town to revive me.

My Bible says in 2 Corinthians 4:16:

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

Ephesians 4:23 says:

And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

Romans 12:1-2 says:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The Bible says that I am to renew my mind, I renew my spirit every day, that I am to have a fresh revival. How do you do that? I know that is easy to say. You know how you do that? You do it first of all by understanding what the Bible does for you. I do not think God's people, well I

know they do not. The majority of them, most of you probably do, but I do not think the average Christian today understands the value of the Bible that he has in his lap.

You see, I can go to the public library. Remember I told you tonight we did the New Year's Eve thing. I said I had 100 books that I would give you if you wanted to research the stuff that we talked about that night. I went through, and if you would go down to the library, I am not saying you will not find good books. I am telling you, you will find books that will inform you about facts and history. You will find books that will conform you. You will find books that will reform you. You will find books that will misinform you. But the Bible does not do any of that. The Bible is a supernatural book. Where the world's books and writings may reform you, conform you, inform you, or misinform you, the Bible does something that no other book can do. It transforms you. But that has to be from the inside, not the outside. That is Israel's problem.

Zephaniah's message for Israel is really an outline for us. It says look within, look around, look ahead. Last week we talked about the concept of a strong tower. We talked about getting the vision that you stand upon the watch, upon a tower. I told you that that tower was one of the greatest studies you will take in the Bible. Sometimes it is called the Tower of David. Sometimes it is called a strong tower. Sometimes it is called a high tower. Whatever it is called, it all means the same thing. It is just different implications that show you different concepts. What it does is it shows you that you and I as a Christian are to be on a high tower. That is a strong tower. That is a Tower of David. That means it is based on the Word of God. That is, it is the Word of God in your life transforming you to the place that you see things from the inside, that you are in a position to look at the world, your family, your ministry, your job, everything around you. You see it from God's standpoint and not your own standpoint.

Basically in the world we live in, there are two kinds of people. Those two kinds of people are saved people and unsaved people. The Bible makes it really clear. It is really simple. In the world that we live in, there are only basically two kinds of people in a collective state. There are saved people and there are unsaved people. Now, let us discard the unsaved people because we are talking about saved people here. We are talking about why revival, why relationships with God do not last within us. I am trying to help you understand some things here because we are going some places here, Lord willing, in the next couple of months, in the next year, next two years of where we are going to focus. I have got a lot of exciting things to lay out for you.

The bottom line is we know that in God's people, in Christianity, there are also two kinds of people. We know that there are those who walk after the Spirit and those who walk after the flesh. We are talking this in Romans, 1 Corinthians, and many, many places. We know that the ones that walk after the Spirit are the ones that deal with the Word of God from within. They renew their minds day by day. They focus on the things of God, and their relationship with God is a continual thing, as is a revival. All of the things, their own personal relationship with God, they are living in a state of worship. They are living in a state of constant renewal, revival, if you want to call it. They are following, feeding the new nature, and they are watching from their tower inwardly. Remember now, that was the purpose of the tower last week. The only reason you get that high up so you can see everything is not to see what everybody else is doing, but the

first and foremost thing was to see what you are doing. Self-examination leads to self-evaluation, which leads to self-determination. That is the vision we talked about last week.

V. Israel's Outward Religion

That is what Zephaniah is up against with the nation of Israel. Here is the same concept with Israel. One of the greatest places that you will find about Israel in the defining passage is in Matthew 12:43-45. This is a definitive passage on the nation of Israel at the time of the first coming of Christ. Here is what he says. He tells a story.

Matthew 12:43-45

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.

Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

He is talking to the nation of Israel in Matthew 12, and he is saying the nation of Israel is like a man who has an unclean spirit, because Israel does. That unclean spirit leaves, and it comes back. When it comes back, it obviously brings seven more spirits, and you find this whole thing corralled for you in the book of Proverbs, and shows you how Israel is in a mess that they are in, and shows you what those seven other spirits are, but that is not our message today. The thing that you see from this, when this spirit comes back, Israel is swept and garnished. She is cleaned up her act. She has got religious garlands hanging over everything. She has got crucifixes on all the walls. She has got religious items everywhere. She has cleaned herself up. She has swept and garnished on the outside. She looks good. The problem is, the first word in that little description thing is she is empty. No Holy Spirit of God.

You see, this is what Israel did. This is why this revival did not last. This is why the revival in our life does not last, because we turn outwardly. We are not empty. We have the Holy Spirit of God, but we follow after the flesh instead after the spiritual things, and then we wind up just like Israel.

This is exactly what Jesus said in Matthew 23. Matthew 23 is a great chapter. There are seven woes in Matthew 23. It says, "Woe, woe, woe, woe, woe," seven times. You think people have enough sense to stop when somebody said "woe" seven times, not us. In Matthew 23:27, he is talking about the nation of Israel, and he says:

Matthew 23:27

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

Those are tombs. Go to Washington, D.C. You see all kinds of them. You will see one for Lincoln, one for Jefferson. Go to France, you will find one for Napoleon. They are everywhere. Go to Canton, Ohio, you will find one for McKinley. Beautiful buildings, sculptured, painted white, gleaming in the sun. But inside, what do you have? A dead man, maggots, dust, bones, the most terrible stench you would ever smell in your life if you could smell it. He is saying the nation of Israel is just like that. They are white as sepulchres. They are all cleaned up on the outside, but they are dead, they stink, and they are decaying on the inside.

Isaiah saw it in Isaiah 29:13. He saw the same problem when he said:

Isaiah 29:13

Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

He said, "You give me lip service. You talk about how much you love me. You talk about how much you honor me. You get up and give your stinking little testimony up there about what God has done for you. But down inside your heart, there is nothing. You are far from me." That is the state of the nation of Israel. Religiously, they are just hanging out the flag, religiously. You would think they were the greatest thing in the world, but internally, nothing. This is why the revival has nothing to grasp onto. This is why so many of God's people today struggle with the things that they struggle with. It is such an incredible study. These Old Testament books, especially the minor prophets, because they are smaller in content, they come right straight to the point and give great definitions of New Testament concepts.

VI. Lazarus, Mary, and Martha: Inward vs. Outward Christianity

Understanding this great concept of inward versus outward, attitude versus action, and the two types of Christians. In John 11 and John 12, you have a great story that illustrates this. It is the story we talked about this last week, just a little bit. It is a story of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. These three people characterize really the three groups of God, the nation of Israel, and then the two types of Christians in our study. I know that I can go someplace else and show you three types of Christians in this area of study, but in this inward study, and this study that shows why it works in some people's lives, and it does not work in other people's lives, it is Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, John 11 and John 12.

Let us look at Lazarus for a moment. I want to read here, John 11, just kind of walk with me here for a moment so we get a context.

John 11:1-15

Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

(It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judæa again.

His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

Those 15 verses are loaded. There is more in those 15 verses than you could ever hope to dig out of there. He is telling them some stuff that goes way beyond, "Lazarus is dying here." That concept of sleep and death, that figures out, we do not have time getting all that. We have got to stay with the thing here. But this is a great study here. There is so much in here.

Now let us talk about Lazarus. What is Lazarus in this whole scheme of things? Remember, the Old Testament illustrates all of the principles. I know that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are found in your Bible in the New Testament, but technically speaking, we know they are still in the Old Testament because the book of Hebrews says that the death of the testator is what brings about the New Testament from the Old Testament. Christ has not died yet. So technically speaking, we are still in the Old Testament, but we know that all the stories in these books show us great New Testament principles in the New Testament.

Lazarus is a picture of the nation of Israel. Watch this, it is incredible. Lazarus represents the nation of Israel. In our story, Lazarus gets sick and he dies. You realize that Lazarus is only one

of two men in the Bible in the New Testament that Jesus says he loves? In the New Testament, there are only two men that Jesus says that he loves. One is Lazarus and one is John, the apostle John. We already know that the apostle John is one of the greatest pictures of what your life and my life should be as a New Testament Christian. We know that Lazarus is a picture of the nation of Israel. It is no accident in that study, we find that these two men are the only two men that Jesus says that he loves. I know that Jesus loved everybody. I am not saying that. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." I know what the verse says. I am saying he is drawing your attention here that he is saying he loves Lazarus as a man and he loves John as a man because one represents the church and the other represents the nation of Israel. He also says he loves Mary and Martha, but Mary and Martha are two types of Christians here. But I am talking about the man concept right now.

Look at John 11:6.

When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

Why did he do that? I will tell you why. I have already taught you the third day in the Bible is a picture of the second coming of Christ. He found that he hears he is sick. He waits two days before he goes. He shows up on the third day, which is a picture of the second coming of Christ. I mean, I have laid that thing out for you through everything there just a couple of weeks ago. Lazarus is the picture of the nation of Israel. That is not all.

Look at John 11:9.

Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

It says, "Are there not 12 hours in the day?" Not "a day," "the day." What is "the day"? The second coming of Christ. Those 12 hours are found over there in Mark 13:35, laying out the four watches of 12 hours each from six o'clock at night to six o'clock in the morning. You have something here more than just Lazarus is a man dying. Do you not know that every story in the Bible represents some aspect of the nation of Israel? Here is Lazarus, a man who gets sick and dies. Israel is spiritually dead. Israel is diseased. He is one of only two men in the New Testament that Jesus says he loved. John is the other. In John 11:6, he says he is going to wait and come on the third day, just like I laid out to you a couple of weeks ago. Then on top of that, he says, "Are there not 12 hours in the day," not "a day." He is talking about one particular day in the Bible that the Bible lays out all the way through that you already know, the second coming of Christ. We are dealing with a picture of the restoration of the nation of Israel. When Jesus shows up in time, as the story progresses, he calls him by name and he resurrects Lazarus, just like he will resurrect the nation of Israel in Ezekiel 36, Ezekiel 37, and a thousand other places in the Bible. He is a type of the nation of Israel.

Now we have Mary and Martha. Let me just say a word about Mary and Martha because it is a tendency. Preachers preach on this that they always give the impression that only women are Marthas. Let me just say that to you before we get started any further, that is not true. Brother, I

have met some men that are great Marthas. Martha is not just a picture of a woman. Martha is a picture of men and women as Christians. Martha and Mary represent, as Lazarus represents the nation of Israel, Mary and Martha represent the two types of Christians, one that always does it outwardly, one that always does it inwardly. But take the fact that some preacher gets up and wants to use that just because he wants to bring all the women in line of church and be down on the women. Let me tell you something. In my lifetime, I have met more men who have the characteristic of Martha than ever met women. I just want to set the stage here straight before we go because I do not want us as men thinking, "Well, yeah, he is talking about, oh, yeah, I know a woman like that. I used to go to church someplace in there." I am not talking about that. Maybe she was. I am talking about, there are just as many men that follow the concept of Martha as there are women. More men than women, but let us talk about Martha.

These two women represent one inwardly, one outwardly. One walks after the flesh, one walks after the spirit. One has the right action. The other one has the wrong attitude. Let us look at Martha. When you look at Martha, you will see some of the things that Zephaniah tried but failed to get the nation of Israel to see. That is simply why revival did not stay, why it was not lasting. For you and for me, as men and women in the body of Christ, it shows us why we struggle with the things that we struggle with and how to overcome those struggles. There are some great concepts here. I want you to see some things out there.

In John 11:20, we have the story progressing here that as Jesus comes to Lazarus, he waits his two days and he comes. When Martha hears that Jesus is coming to meet him, the Bible says she runs out to meet him. She goes to meet him. In fact, it says in the verse:

John 11:20

Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.

What a great verse. You would read that verse and you would not think much about it. In fact, I have heard guys say, I have heard guys preach, "Now, you can pick on Martha all you want, but she was the first one that went out to see Jesus." They missed the great concept. Do you ever notice the first thing she does when she goes out to see him, she winds up telling him what he did not do right? She gets to him. She said, first thing she says, "Lord, if you would have been here, my brother would not have died." A dialogue takes place.

God has a plan here and this plan is going to interact in his own way in his own time. He will do in Lazarus' death and working at depth to his honoring glory. He already told you that in John 11:4, but this death was under his glory. God is doing something here. Martha cannot see anything beyond what she sees. Martha is one of those kind of guys that when he opens his mouth, his ears go shut. He cannot hear. He is a type of Christian that is always telling the Lord. I am going to show you here in a moment. Mary did the exact same thing. If you look down a little bit farther, she says the exact same thing that Martha said, but there is a difference. Martha is running down the road to find him. Mary is at his feet. Mary is always at his feet. Martha is in his face. But that is beside the point.

The key verse here in John 11:20, the whole concept here is the fact that, "but Mary sat still in the house." What a great verse that is. Let us explore that. Let us just see where that goes. As I already said, you are going to find in John 11:32 that Mary, when she sees Jesus, she says the exact same thing that Martha does, but you see the difference. Martha is running down the road to find him. Mary stayed still in the house.

You are going to take that word "still" sometime and run it back to 1 Samuel 9, 1 Samuel 12, Psalms 46. 1 Samuel 9:27 says:

And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God.

As a Christian in your life and my life, I am not saying you should not do things for God, but you ought to do things for God in the stillness of learning what God has for you. The Marthas of this world have no concept of that.

1 Thessalonians 4:11 says:

And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

Martha cannot get to that concept. I am telling you, she cannot grasp the concept of just standing still, staying still. You know why? What New Testament principle is found in here? Why she stood still in the house. Think about it for just a second. What New Testament principle? Here is the scenario. Lazarus is dead. That is a pretty traumatic time. Your brother dies. It is pretty traumatic. They went and told Jesus about it. Jesus purposely waits two days. He waits till Lazarus is dead. When Martha hears that he is coming, she trucks down the road and says, "Hey, if you would have been here, my brother would not have died." Mary stayed still in the house. In the midst of a tragic situation of the death of her brother, she knew Jesus was coming, but she stayed still in the house.

What New Testament principle goes along with this story? It is Philippians 4:11 where Paul says:

Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

Mary knew that her brother died. She felt the grief of her brother, but she had learned through the process of an interrelationship with God that whatever state you are in, therewith to be content. When Jesus shows up, she takes her rightful place as a representative of what your life and my life should be as someone who builds on the inner things instead of the outer things at the feet of Jesus, at the feet of Jesus. She learned whatever state she was in that the contentment of God and the Word of God that she had gotten from God was enough to get her through. She did not have to run to Jesus because she knew Jesus was coming to her. What a principle.

In Luke 10, that is another place. It is another companion story because you know the Gospels kind of give the same story sometimes. In Luke 10:40-41, you find some more information added.

Luke 10:40-41

But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

Martha is busy. She is cumbered about, the Bible says, with much serving. Mary, I guess, goes out of the house or goes out of the room or goes wherever. Jesus is there. Martha goes over to Jesus. She says, "Lord, do you not care that Mary left me here to serve alone?" The Lord's response is a classic response. It really sets the tone for our Martha, Mary, Lazarus study. Remember now, Marthas are not just women. In my years, how many preachers I have seen just be like Martha. Do not blame it on the ladies. Men have their share of it too.

The Lord's response, he says, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled by many things." Martha never has the ability to look within. She only sees what is going around her. Martha is so busy serving, she never learns to minister. Martha is so busy laboring, she never learns. She is so busy worrying, she never worships. She is always busy with things, but there is not a thing in her life that she has ever built in her busyness. You contrast this to the great woman of Proverbs 31, the virtuous woman. The Bible says that she works building the clothes for her children for when winter comes. That is not Martha. That is Mary.

Martha is so busy. She is part of a little group. She is so busy learning all the information. There are Baptist preachers that get in their little groups. I have seen them all my life. They get in their cliques. They get in their groups, and one thing is said to somebody, and in less time than you can take to throw a rock across that road, across the country, and every preacher in the world knows it. Somebody says, "Why do not we live in a great time of telecommunications?" You do not need telecommunications. All you need is a telephone, telegraph, or tele-Martha. It will be around the world before you know it.

Martha is upset. She is upset because she wants people to notice her. When nobody is around to see what she does, she loses her zeal. I have seen them like that all my life. Martha has never learned the great concept. That is an inward concept. You do not learn it by outward. You learn it by... They have never learned the great concept of ministering alone by yourself because you know what? That is exactly in the day and age that we live in the way we may wind up.

I love all you folks. I love you to death. You are all like my own family. I mean, I just love you. I do not know what else to say. I would do anything in the world for you. I cannot look at you, any of you, without thinking how much I love you and how happy I am and how God has given us the ability to minister together. I want to do things for you. I want to help you. I want you to be successful. I do not want anybody in this room to get to the judgment seat of Christ and not get everything that God has for you. That is my passion. That is my zeal. I love you.

But you know what? I am not under any illusion that the bottom line of ministry is me and Him. It is me and Him. Because God may take all you away from me and put me someplace where there is not any Christian friend that you have to stand all by yourself and it just has to be you

and Him. You do not have somebody or somebody or somebody to put your arm around you. You do not have somebody to call on the phone. You are there by yourself and you have to make it or break it based on what is on the inside, not what is on the outside. You are not going to tell me I do not love you guys and appreciate you guys? We are a band of brothers. You are my friend. You are my friend. You are my friend. You are my friend. All of you. I love you. You are my friend, but there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother. You have got to get to that point. It does not mean you will ever be at that point, but it means you have to minister with that concept because it sneaks in that you want people to say, "Oh, look at me." It always has to be you and Him. Every revival in your heart has to start with Him. Every day of the month, every week has to start with Him inside. It is you and Him because there is nobody, because He is the one that saves you. He is the one that called you. I did not call you. He called you. He is the one that wants to use you. Yes, He is going to use us together. Yes, He has put us in this church and He has given us a body and a band of men and women that love each other and love God with no problems, no bickering, no fighting, no nothing yet. You guys are too good. You are the best of the best. You are the cream of the crop. You are everything a man could want for people as a pastor. But you know what? In spite of all that, I never get myself to the place that I do not know that push comes to shove in the bottom line. It just has to be me and Him, me and Him, and it has to be you and Him.

Martha served but never ministers. She is always busy, but she never builds anything. She is upset because she wants people to notice her. I never understood that because when you read the passage, Jesus was watching what she was doing, but that was not enough. She wanted other people to see her. He wants other people to see him. Jesus watching what she was doing just was not enough. Two types of people in Christianity. Zephaniah's message, three points without a poem, is right on the money where Israel is at and right where we are at. Are you a Mary or are you a Martha? What are you building? What have you built? Do you have a relationship with God that really works? Is it really on the inside? That is the question for all of us, me included.

VII. Mary: The Example of Inward Ministry

Now look at John 12 and just look at Mary for a moment. Mary is what we ought to be.

John 12:3

Then took Mary 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.

Again, going back to Luke, just to kind of supplement the concepts here, Luke 10:39 says:

And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

While Martha was cumbered about with much serving, Mary sat at his feet and heard his word. Mary is always at his feet. When you look at Mary here, a picture of a child of God who walks after the spirit, a picture of the child of God who it is inward, not outward. When you look and you understand, there are three great lessons in John 12:3 that just separates the Marys from the Marthas. These are the same great lessons that Zephaniah tried to get across to the nation of

Israel. It has to be inward, not outward. I want to look at this and I want to talk to you today because let me tell you something, if you are going to go with ministry, if you are going to let God use you, and he already has, I am not talking to you like you are people who do not know what I am talking about. You are all good people. I prayed when we started this church that God would not bring us anybody that did not want to do ministry. I do not want to build a church of 10,000. I would rather build a church of whatever we have that people are dedicated because I will tell you something, it is not about the outward appearance, it is about the inward.

The first thing she does, the Bible says she anointed his feet. To me, that is an incredible concept. Taking this on beyond the New Testament, the church that really is the model church for us, and I know all of you know this, but in Acts 13, you find the church in Antioch. The church in Antioch is a great church. It is the model church for what we ought to be. It was bridging the gap between the Old Testament and the New Testament. It was launching out with missions. It was launching out with everything that the New Testament church was going to do. It is an incredible, the first Bible teachers. They are made up of multicultural people. It is an incredible church to study. It is where the Bible says they are first called Christians at Antioch. It is an incredible study, but one of the most incredible things about the church in Antioch is found in Acts 13:2, where it says the first thing about them is that:

As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

They ministered not around the world, not to each other, but the first thing they did was minister to the Lord. Ask the average Christian what it means for you and me as individuals to minister to the Lord. They do not have a clue. I am not saying everybody that says that is a Martha, and I am not saying everybody that says that is a bad person. A lot of God's people have never been taught. That is my point. My point is not to blame anybody. My point here is to help you. I want you to become everything that God wants you to be. I do not care if you have marital problems. I do not care if you have personal problems. I do not care if you have kid problems. I do not care if you have whatever problems. My job is to help you be successful. My job is not to get down on you. My job is not to take you in a bad situation and make you feel worse. My job is to help lift you up. My job is to be there for you through thick or thin, just like you would be for me. My job is to do everything I can to show you how much I believe in you and I love you as long as you want to do what is right, as long as you want to learn. My job is to help you be the best you can be at everything God wants you to be. That is my job. My job is to find out a hundred thousand different ways to tell you I love you. My job as pastor is not to reach the world. My job is to find out a hundred billion different ways to show you how much God loves you. My job is to do everything I know how to do. In everything that I say, in every act that I do, is to convey to you that it is an inward thing, not an outward thing. It is to help you become the mom and the dad and the man and the woman and the young man and the young lady that God wants you to be. That at the judgment seat of Christ, you do not have anything to be ashamed of. That you can say, "I gave it everything, God. I took everything and I applied it to my life. I applied it to my marriage. I applied it to my kids." No, I am not perfect. No, I made sure I made mistakes. Yeah, I did some really dumb things.

Building a relationship with God is a process. It is a process of taking the things of God and learning how to minister to Him first before you ever try to minister to somebody else. Martha's definition of ministry is busy. Mary's definition of ministry is sitting still, Lord first.

I will tell you something else. When she takes this ointment and she anoints his feet, in John 12:6, Judas, who else gets upset, says, "You know what?" He takes the ACLU approach. He takes the liberal approach. "Why are we doing this? We can take that money and give it to the poor. Look at all the people we can feed." There is a great lesson in that too. I am all for sending every dollar we can down to the tsunami. I am 100% for it. Somebody said America is going to give a hundred billion dollars. You have got to give 200 billion. Saw the TV movie stars on the thing last night raising all the money. If just that bunch right there would just give a million dollars a piece, they would not have to call anybody. They do not have enough to feed everybody. But no, they want you to give. They want to keep theirs. See how it works? I am all for it. I think we have got to send it. 60, 1600 trillion dollars down in one dollar bill. So everybody has something to do. When you have a water one to make sure they have got a lot of money till you spend it and you realize how well it is. But anyway, I am all for that. I am against selling all that down there without sending the gospel down. That is what I am against.

Judas misses the point. He says, "We ought to give all this money to the poor. What are we doing this for?" You see, he could not see the concept of you have got to minister to God first before he can minister to anybody else. But he is unsaved. He is a devil. John 13 cannot count him, but Martha cannot get it either. Mary got it. Jesus says down there when Judas got upset and he got mad about the thing. He says, "Leave her alone."

John 12:7

Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she done this.

She had done this. She saw something in all of this that had to do with the Christ's death. Mary has got some depth to her. Mary understands spiritual things. Judas is upset. Martha is running around setting the place tables and doing everything she is doing. Jesus says in John 12:7, "Let her alone; against the day of my burying hath she done this."

I will tell you something else. Why did she do his feet? Why did she do his feet? Every place in the Old Testament when they anointed somebody, they did it on his head. When they anointed him king, they took the oil or whatever it was and he put it on his head. They put it on his head. This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. Why did she not dump it on his head? Why his feet? I will tell you why. Mary is deep. While Martha is running around doing everything and building nothing, Mary understands Song of Solomon 7:1. While Martha is running around running the world, Mary understands Nahum 1:5 and Isaiah 52:7 about his feet. Mary knows something about those feet. She knows something about the second coming of Christ, reading those passages. She is not putting it on his head. She is putting it on his feet because of what the prophets told her about his feet in relationship to the second coming. She is deep. She has got her Bible down.

Then the second thing she does, she takes and she anoints his feet with very costly ointment. Then the Bible says the next thing she does, she uses her hair to wipe his feet. Let me just say something to you here. I am saying this to everybody. This thing represents of her hair on his feet, represents her personal commitment to him.