

The Gospel of John 12:1-27

I Life Issue-A House of Feasting (A Miniature of the Church Life) (vv. 1-11)

- A. Bethany means house of affliction. At this point the Lord was outside Judaism. Through His resurrection life He had gained a house in Bethany where He could feast and have rest and satisfaction. This house of feasting was a miniature of the assembly life.
- B. Because they had the Lord Jesus Himself with them, Lazarus, Martha, and Mary certainly would not have left Him to go to worship in the temple. They had been attracted by the Lord Jesus; He was a strong magnet drawing them to Himself. Who was this Jesus to whom they were attracted? He was the very God incarnate, that is, God in the flesh, God in humanity. This incarnated God was enjoying Himself with His disciples there in Bethany, and His disciples were enjoying Him with God and with one another.
- C. The scene in this passage depicts the typical situation of the assembly or church life:
- produced by the resurrection life—Lazarus (11:43:44);
 - composed of cleansed sinners—Simon the leper (Mark 14:3);
 - outwardly afflicted—Bethany;
 - inwardly feasting in and with the presence of the Lord (v.2);
 - Having more sisters than brothers (vv.2-3);
 - having members with different functions: serving—Martha, testifying—Lazarus, and loving—Mary (vv. 2-3);
 - spotted by the false one—Judas (v.4);
 - persecuted by religion (v.10);
 - being a test and exposing people (vv. 6,10); and
 - bringing in many believers (v.11).
- D. The Lord Jesus was a test to all those around Him. The Lord is the center of God's economy and is a sign set up by God (Luke 2:34). Anyone who contacts Him will inevitably be tested and exposed.

II Life's Multiplication for the Church Through Death & Resurrection (vv. 12-27)

- A. For Jesus as the Son of Man to be glorified was for Him to be resurrected, that is, to have His divine element, His divine life, released from within the shell of His humanity to produce many believers in resurrection (1 Pet.1:3), just as a grain of wheat (v.24) has its life element released when it falls into the ground and grows up out of the ground to bear much fruit, that is, to bring forth many grains.
- B. Because the Lord had raised Lazarus from the dead, a great crowd of the Jews highly esteemed Him and warmly welcomed Him (vv.12-19). They welcomed him by shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" Humanly speaking. This very hour was the most glorious time for the Lord while He was on earth. All the people praised Him, welcomed Him, honored Him, and respected Him. Even the Greeks came to seek Him (vv.20-22). The Jewish people welcomed Him, and the Greeks, sought to follow Him. Could the Lord have produced and increased the assembly by accepting this kind of welcome and honor? No, this is not the way to bring the assembly into existence and increase it in life.
- C. This "much fruit" became Christ's increase in resurrection. This increase is the glory into which Christ entered through His death and resurrection (Luke 24:26). The portion from v.23 of this chapter to the end of ch.17 is a discourse on the mystery of this glory. Christ had the glory with God (17:5) His incarnation caused His divine glory to be concealed in His flesh. Through His death and resurrection His glory was released, producing many grains, which become His increase as the expression of His glory.
1. In the Lord's last words to the believers in chs.14-16, there are three concrete, corporate expressions of this glory: the Father's house (the assembly) in 14:2, the branches of the vine (the constituents of the Body of Christ) in 15:1-5, and a newborn corporate man (the new man) in 16:21. All three denote the assembly, showing that the assembly is the glorious increase produced by the glorious Christ through His death and resurrection. In this glorious increase, Christ, the Son of God, is glorified, causing God the Father also to be glorified in Christ's glorification, that is, to be fully expressed through the assembly (Eph. 3:19-21).
 2. This expression needs to be maintained in the oneness of the Triune God. Therefore, the Lord prayed in particular for this matter in His concluding prayer in ch.17 (17:20-23). This glorious increase of Christ is the peak of the mystery revealed in the Gospel of John, and its ultimate consummation is the New Jerusalem in Revelation, also written by John. The new holy city will be the aggregate of Christ's divine glory will be expressed to the uttermost. In the glorifying of God the Son, God the Father also will obtain eternal, matchless glory, which will be His full expression in eternity. Thus His eternal economy will be fulfilled for eternity.
- D. The Lord, as a grain of wheat that fell into the ground, lost His soul-life through death that He might release His eternal life in resurrection to the many grains. As the many grains we also must lose our soul-life through death that we may enjoy eternal life in resurrection. This is to follow Him that we may serve Him and walk with Him on this way, the way of losing our soul-life and living in His resurrection, as mentioned in v.26. As a man the Lord was troubled in His soul because of the death He was about to suffer. Hence, He prayed, "Father, save Me out of this hour." However, it must have been that in His spirit He realized that it was for the glorifying of the Father that He had come to that hour.