

Introduction:

- Ever think you had a bad day? Think again. On April 12, 1976, Ronald Wayne, one of the three co-founders of Apple Computers, sold his 10% share in the company for \$800. He got an additional \$1500 because he was willing to give up all future rights in Apple. Today, Apple Computer is the most valuable company in the world, worth \$600 billion. His 10% would now be worth \$60 billion. That's gotta hurt. **APPLICATION:** Can you imagine giving up your share in a \$600 billion dollar company? Yet, millions of people do something far worse every single day by selling their soul for whatever seems most important to them in the moment. Instead of looking at their life as an opportunity to make a long term investment in the things that please God
- Isaiah 6: His encounter with God. Devotion Fuels intercession and Kingdom Activity.

I. GOD'S FIRST PRIORITY: THAT WE LOVE GOD WITH ALL OUR HEART

- A. A couple of Sunday's ago as we were worshiping, I felt a spirit of love enter our sanctuary. It was different. I mentioned it in service. God wants us to have that depth of knowledge of His love because it will fuel our intercession and it will fuel our commission of going into all the earth.
- B. The Holy Spirit is doing this right now in Freedom Christian Center! I continue to pray into that target. "God make the first commandment to be the first place in the church worldwide and start with my heart!"
 1. This is something that we will have to intentionally cultivate. The river is flowing, but we have to step in. We want hearts that are responsive to God with whole hearted love.
 2. *"Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment."* (Matthew 22:37-38, NLT)
- C. Loving God with all our heart is the first commandment because it is the first priority to God. It is great because it has great impact on God's heart and great impact on our heart.

II. Extravagant Devotion Feeds On The Word

- A. Mary was not known in the Book of Acts nor is she recorded in church history. She is not known for ministry either. However, she is famous for being known as an extravagant lover of Jesus.
- B. *"As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, **listening to what he taught.** But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me." But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."* (Luke 10:38-42, NLT)
 1. She sat a Jesus feet. How do you do this today? By faith! "Those who come to Him must know He exists and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." Heb 11:6
 2. She sat there to hear the Word. (vs. 39)

3. She is mentioned three times in scriptures. Each time she is at the feet of Jesus. (Lk. 10:39; Jn. 11:32; 12:3 [Mt. 26:6-13; Mk. 14:3-9]).
 4. ****Reading Scripture is meant to help us to talk with God by giving us the "conversational material" used in devotional prayer.****
- C. Martha gets a "D". Mary gets an "A". Martha is distracted, Mary is attentive to the Word.
1. She is distracted by much serving. Martha was a gifted server. She was so motivated by the Holy Spirit to service. Jesus does not rebuke her for serving He rebukes her for having a wrong spirit while serving.
 2. One thing is needed: Sitting at the feet of Jesus positions us to be empowered by Holy Spirit. Jesus settled the issue of how important this heart posture and lifestyle is. There is no substitute for this.
 3. Jesus honored the wisdom and power of this lifestyle by calling it '*good!*' (NKJV)
 4. Mary chose something that can't be taken away. Oil of the Spirit, Mt 25, wise virgins. We too must choose this life style. You have to cultivate this...it just doesn't happen by itself.
 5. And I like what Jesus prophesies: "*And this will not be taken from her!*"

III. Mary "Wastes" Her Life

- A. Mary's lifestyle of choosing "good" by hearing the Word equipped her for other "good" choices. Principle: Unusually, acts of devotion come from cultivating a spirit of devotion as a lifestyle.
- B. *"Meanwhile, Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon, a man who had previously had leprosy. While he was eating, a woman came in with a beautiful alabaster jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard. She broke open the jar and poured the perfume over his head. Some of those at the table were indignant. "Why waste such expensive perfume?" they asked. "It could have been sold for a year's wages and the money given to the poor!" So they scolded her harshly. But Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. Why criticize her for doing such a good thing to me? You will always have the poor among you, and you can help them whenever you want to. But you will not always have me. She has done what she could and has anointed my body for burial ahead of time. I tell you the truth, wherever the Good News is preached throughout the world, this woman's deed will be remembered and discussed."* (Mark 14:3-9, NLT)
1. Very costly: The perfume was worth 300 denarii (a year's wages). Jesus told His disciples that He was to be crucified in two days (Mt. 26:2). Mary seems to have been the only one who "heard" Him, and thus she poured her perfume on Him (the fragrance was on both of them at the cross).
 2. Mary...wiped His feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance... (Jn. 12:3)
 3. Criticized: The apostles appealed to serving the poor as their reason to criticize her extravagance; that is, they appealed to a scriptural mandate to help the poor. Those who love Jesus like Mary will receive criticism sometimes from those who want the gift of salvation without deeply loving Jesus.

4. Why this waste: Anything above minimum commitment to God is seen as an “unnecessary waste.” To “waste on Jesus” money, exceptional musical talent, or a brilliant mind with good career opportunities is regarded by some as an unnecessary waste of one’s life and talents.
- C. Let her alone: Jesus vindicated Mary (14:6). He will openly reward devotion in the age to come.
1. A good work: A year earlier (in Luke 10), Jesus had commended Mary for choosing the “good” part in sitting at His feet to hear His word; she developed her personal history in God in this way.
 2. Memorial: Mary’s extravagant devotion is remembered by others because God remembers it.
 - a) C.T. Studd wrote, *“Only one life, t’will soon be past. Only what’s done for Christ will last.”*
 - b) What are you wasting your life on? Those seeking to be extravagantly devoted are not content with the minimum requirement of salvation. They ask, “How far will You let me go in devotion to You?”
 3. Regularly recommitting to earnestly pursue Jesus for decades is the definition of living radically before God. David sought to sustain his passion for God for decades—“all the days” of his life.
 - a) One thing I have desired...all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD... (Ps. 27:4)
 - b) Daniel faithfully sustained his prayer life for decades (from his teen years until his 80s). We are not radical or extravagant in our devotion to Jesus for seeking Him diligently for only a few months. Daniel...knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days. [605-539 BC; for over 60 years] (Dan. 6:10)