

Bite Size Bible Study

Seeing #159

By Pastor Lee

While he (Jesus) was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.

Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly.

"Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial." Mark 14:3-8 NIV

This story is about Jesus at a dinner party, when a woman pours expensive perfume on his head. Other guests are outraged because all they see is the wasting of an expensive perfume. Jesus, however, sees beyond the moment to understand that she is preparing him for burial. In Jesus's day, preparing someone for burial was a religious act. In Jesus's eyes, this woman's gesture is a holy, sacred act of worship.

The other guests miss this, seeing only a common, everyday act. They miss the power and significance of the moment because they don't have the eyes to see what's happening right in front of them.

Someone can be very religious and invoke the name of God and be able to quote lots of verses and be well versed in complicated theological systems and yet not be a person who **sees**. It's one thing to sing about God and recite quotes about God and invoke God's name; it's totally another to be aware of His presence in every moment of life.

As we learn more about Jesus' life, we see again and again is that it's never just a person, or a meal, or an event, because there's always something more going on just below the surface. Seeing that undercurrent is where real understanding begins. Jesus sees what others miss and is aware when others are oblivious.

Paul said: *I pray that he will give light to the eyes of your hearts, so that you will understand the hope to which he has called you, what rich glories there are in the inheritance he has promised his people.* Eph 1:18 CJB

Faith requires seeing what is not obvious. *Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.* Heb 11:1 NIV

To believe in God requires faith, belief and trust when we cannot see Him. There are times when we find ourselves in the deepest, darkest places of doubt and despair. It seems like it is too huge of a leap to have the faith to trust that there is a God who hears, loves, helps, and heals us. Depending on where we're coming from, that kind of faith can seem naive, simple, childish, uninformed, and at times downright stupid.

To experience this world and its endless surprises, mysteries takes seeing without the eyes. An ability to look beyond the obvious and see with the heart and intellect.

Whatever it is that we believe, whatever we trust, we are all people of faith. Whether our belief is that "this is all there is", or "we are an alien from space", or "a Christian" or "a Buddhist" or "Jewish" or "Jedi" or "that we can't know *anything* for sure"; it's all a form of faith in someone or something.

Which leads me to one more thought about seeing the God who's with us: choosing to trust that this life matters and we're all connected and this is all headed towards somewhere we have yet to comprehend. Seeing this has made my life a lot better and more meaningful. It has challenged me to look at what I am presented with each day as a training lesson and with the understanding that I have at that time to see that it is worth the effort – the good, the bad, and the ugly.

I see a purpose that extends beyond my physical years to a future time when I will be able to put what I have learned in this lifetime into practice in a new world, one where the King of kings rules and not the present rulers of this world.

I move more slowly now, not just because my body is aging, but also because I don't want to miss seeing an important event. By moving slower I see more beauty and meaning in everyday average moments.

I've discovered that events are less about the events themselves and more about whatever it is that's going on just below the surface. I see that the successes are less important than the training I get because of the event. I see it all as a gift from the God who sees us in a manner we can only vaguely comprehend.

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