

# John 12:1-11 “An Attitude Adjustment”

Preached @ Harambee Church by Pastor  
Michael Gunn on June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007

*"The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company ... a church ... a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past ... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude ... I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you ... we are in charge of our Attitude."*

**Attitude by Chuck Swindoll**

*"Devotion to Jesus and gratitude for His sacrifice will lead in fact to a service of the poor (Which will always be needed) in a manner quite different from legally required almsgiving. **It will be in fact part of the fragrance of the gospel which is destined to fill the whole world.**"*

**Leslie Newbigin** (Emphasis Mine)

## Intro

Last week we saw how easy it is for a hard heart to make decisions based on convenience and comfort instead of choosing to seek and follow God's work on earth. We also saw that although our choices do matter, God uses even our negative choices for His purposes in this world. This is awesome, because no matter how evil we become, God is still executing His plan to defeat evil and redeem His creation!

Today we will see how our perspectives are affected by how we view God. If we are jaded against God, we will view the world from that perspective. If we treasure Him over anything else, we will begin to see the beauty of His creation in the midst of an evil and perverse world.

## From the Head...<sup>1</sup>

Some commentators believe it is better to read John 12 in a different order (See footnote), which is helpful to get an understanding of the sequential order of events. Particularly John 12:19-29 as an intro to our passage. We will hit this again in a couple of weeks, but I want us to see the flow of the scenario before us. John is painting a picture for us of the worth of Christ, and how easy it is for us to fall in to miss that reality. We can substitute many things for true devotion to Christ. Christ has to be our treasure, not serving Him, not religious works of piety, which are most often motivated out of guilt, pride and fear rather than the affections of the heart.

## Service vs. Devotion? (John 12:1-3)

My goal isn't to pick on Martha, but she does have a bit of a reputation to work instead of sit, and then become frustrated with everyone for not "Serving" Jesus like she does (**Luke 10:38-42**). We are no doubt called to obedience and service to our Lord Jesus Christ, but we are first called to His feet. If our service/works are motivated by anything other than our affection for Him, we are no different than any religious person who is motivated by guilt, fear and pride. This will always end in self-righteousness and/or frustration over those that don't "Serve" the Lord. Note that Mary's act filled the house with the sweet fragrance of perfume, which is an incredible metaphor for the church's role here on earth (see **Mark 14:8-9; 2 Corinthians 2:15**)

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<sup>1</sup> For a clearer reading of John 12 read John 12:19-29 – John 12:1-17, 30 – John 12:31-42

### Unbelief and the Worth of Christ (John 12:4-6)

Judas' response is one of false piety. His concern appears to be for the poor, but in reality he is motivated by selfish gain. He fails to see the worth and beauty of Christ, and His subsequent death on the cross for his sake. When we are skeptical we find ways to attack Christ, and their followers for not using their time, talents and treasures for purely earthly pursuits. Our love and devotion to God and Christ remain purely horizontal and fail to see His work in beauty in an otherwise dark world.

### Jesus' Response to Worship (John 12:7-8)

Jesus' response isn't negative toward the poor, it is positive toward Him. We will always have the poor before us, but these people would not always have Jesus reclining with them. This response is a matter of priority. We can easily get our priorities out of whack, and begin to serve God or the poor based on duty, guilt, fear and pride, and fail to recognize that when we properly place our affections on Christ, and the gospel transforms our life doing things like helping the poor become second nature (**Proverbs 14:31; Matthew 25: 34-46**). We have the only transcendently logical motivation to help the poor, but that motivation comes from the gospel working in our lives, and not out of duty, guilt fear or pride!

Jesus fully accepts this act of worship (Which was clearly only reserved for God), and encourages it, knowing that it is by this act that that He is glorified, she is fulfilled, and the great fragrance of His grace will reach the poor and beyond!

### Our Identity In Christ Can Be Quite Costly (John 12:9-11)

Luke 14 and other passages make this truth painfully real. But in reality the reason we ought to be more motivated to sacrifice this life to help others and serve God, is because we have the most hope of a better world. If this is all we have, then it would make total sense to get the most out of it, and give up the least of what we can get. This is the heart of secular hope. "Live Strong" because this is all you have. This is why death is so devastating.

Lazarus knew this all too well. He had faced death, and now he had a different perspective, and it was because of his new testimony that many believed, but in an upside down world, he became a marked man. Living strong in Christ has a way of doing that.

### **...to the Heart**

What is it that owns your heart's affections? What is that you can't seem to live without here on earth? What is that comes between you and a relationship with Christ? We are all tangled in our idols, but we can know that Christ has forgiven us, and there is no condemnation for those that believe in Him, but we must live our lives in constant reminder that we are sinners in need to repent for our sin, and then appropriate the love and forgiveness of Christ, that brings forth joy and hope, and allows us to serve Christ out of our abundance, not out of our fear, guilt or pride!

**For Further Reading:** *"The New Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of John"* William Barclay; *"The Gospel of John,"* F.F. Bruce; *"The New Testament Commentary: The Gospel of John,"* William Hendriksen; *"Preaching the Word; John: That You May Believe,"* R. Kent Hughes; *"The NIV Application Commentary: John,"* Gary M. Burge; *"The Pillar NT Commentary: The Gospel According to John,"* D.A. Carson

### **Next Weeks Verses: John 12:12-19**

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