

John 12:1-8

“Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus’ feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, “Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii[b] and the money given to the poor?” (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, “Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.”

Last week, in the world of college basketball, is what is known as championship week. This was the week of all conference championships around the country. By winning a conference championship you automatically qualify for the NCAA National Championships. There are many teams such as Kentucky, Duke, Villanova, and Notre Dame who had already qualified, but for those teams not in the national spotlight like Wofford, Manhattan, and College of Charleston the only way in is by winning your conference tournament.

The 1983 NCAA Men's Division I Basketball Tournament involved 52 schools playing in single-elimination tournament to determine the national champion of men's NCAA Division I college basketball. It began on March 2, 1983, and ended with the championship game on April 4 at The Pit, then officially known as University Arena, on the campus of the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. A total of 51 games were played.

The ending of the final game is one of the most famous in college basketball history, with a buzzer-beating slam-dunk by Lorenzo Charles, off a high, arching air ball from 30 feet out by Dereck Whittenburg providing a 54-52 win for North Carolina State over heavily favored Houston Cougars.

This win just contributed to the nickname given to North Carolina State that year, as the “Cardiac Pack”, a reference to all their close games that year which came down to the wire — in fact, NC State won 7 of its last 9 games by 3 points or less after trailing the games all with a minute or less left in the game.

Both Lorenzo Charles’ dunk and coach Jim Valvano’s running around the court in looking for someone to hug immediately after the game have been commonplace on all NCAA tournament coverage ever since. North Carolina State’s victory that year has often been considered one of the greatest upsets of all time in college basketball history. I guess you could say that in all these games regardless of the score and/or how little time was left in any game NC State’s motto could have been “We’re Not Dead Yet!”

How many times in our lives have we faced what appeared to be defeat in some form or another and by some miracle it turned out to be a success? How many times has someone been written off and yet wind up being the main one in a miracle? Tom as he was referred to drank, and drank a lot. He was not only a heavy drinker but his was also mean, but, as Paul Harvey would say, now the rest of the story.

Tom's young daughter attended church every time the doors opened but he never did. One summer this little church was having what is called a revival. This young girl attended every night and every night she would ask her father to attend. Every night he would tell her in no uncertain terms NO! Until the last night she asked him to go and he agreed to take her.

Not long after that evening Tom became known as Uncle Tom by the community. Uncle Tom was known for driving around the neighborhood Sunday mornings picking up any children, young people, and/or adults and bringing them to church. He taught many of the adults there today as children in Sunday School. When he died, Uncle Tom had become a pillar of that church all because some little girl did not see him as a waste of time; all because some visiting minister did not see him as a waste of time; all because God did not see him as a waste of time and had not given him up for dead.

What Mary did in our passage was and for many still is viewed as a waste; In **verse 3** "*Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet.*" WOW! This woman just anointed the feet of Jesus with something which cost a year's salary and what happened? **Verse 4-5** "*But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples (the one who was about to betray*

him), said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" The same thing we would hear today. The same thing we do hear today. The same thing you say today; same thing I say. "Why did you waste those funds on that person, or this person? Don't you see that person or those people are this or that?" This is weighing real heavy on my heart today. We all say this or something like this but we need to remember they are not dead yet which means there is hope.

Do we truly believe in God? Do we truly believe Jesus is the son of God? Do we truly believe Jesus is the Christ? If we do then why are we so quick to write people off? People today are even quick to write themselves off before they are dead. Some may not lift a finger for themselves but until they are dead there is hope. **Joshua 24:15** *"but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."*

Jesus was not dead yet but Mary was anointing Him early why? Did she know something the others did not? Was she privy to information the others were not? No! Mary was not only physically alive but she was also spiritually alive; she wanted to honor God while she was living.

I've been preaching that past few weeks on being serious about our faith, about our relationship with God, and serving. But what I'm saying is far too many today are physically alive but in most cases are on spiritual life support.

But thanks to God He showed me this week through many adults and young people in Spartanburg, many here in Landrum, and many here setting up for the Youth Dinner/Auction this weekend. See at first I was like I've been getting upset that the youth have to be told to do every single thing. It amazes me how the youth of today make it through the day without someone being with them telling them breath in now breath out breath in breath out; lift your right foot now put it down and lift your left foot.

But God showed me that it's our fault, it's my fault. We would rather do everything ourselves rather than have them do anything. After all we would not want offend the youth of today. So we treat them as if they are already dead and the end result is a generation of adults who cannot and will not do anything who are physically alive, almost but spiritually they are barely hanging on. Then we stand back and become angry about how the young people of today do not know Jesus the Christ or how to do anything period.

The young see many adults sitting in pews today who use to do. Many see those who have retired from God's service. Many who helped while their children were young then called it quits because theirs are now out. We are just like the dads who coach their young all the way till they reach high school and would coach there if they could. But once theirs are too old they say the heck with those coming up I've done my time. We might help with Sunday School, maybe Children's Ministries, maybe even with the youth then most retire. Why? We're not dead yet why do we live as if we are? Why do so many live their lives physically but spiritually as if they have already died?

When the young of today see us doing nothing they in turn will do the same. When the young see us complaining constantly about how this and that is done and/or not done they will do the same. When the young see us talking, texting and disturbing others during worship they see you disrespecting those around you they will and are doing the same. Oh we're alive physically, but if we are not Spiritually alive, just sitting around then we are instructing our young to do the same nothing.

I hear ministers talking of the downfall of the church today, they talk about the evidence of the masses falling away; oh people attend services today but many strive to become anonymous and live as if they are already dead. Many take part in everything that takes place within the church but spiritually they're on life support. People, we are not dead and it's time we stop acting like we are. It's time to rise up and seek God's face. I cannot control what you do or you do, but I can what control what I do and/or don't do and I'm not dead. **Joshua 24:15** says it best "*But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord*"

This cross should be a reminder to each of us what Jesus did for us that day at Golgotha. We have forgotten what He did for us or we have taken it for granted. We use excuses why we can't **Matthew 5:16** "*In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.*" What or who does your light for? Is it just about you being busy? Is your Christian service based on specified services, times, and ministries? Or worse have you given up and stopped altogether seeking God altogether. Have you retired or worse quit are convincing yourself you've done enough.

Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 5:20**, *“We are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making His appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”* Paul was saying we are worth the saving grace of Jesus Christ. We can look around today and point out someone who is viewed as nothing and probably has been his/her whole life but one act can change all that. The act I speak of is a metaphor for the act of repentance: turning to and seeking God. Just attending doesn't do it; just studying Scripture cover to cover doesn't do it. It takes us, it takes a relationship.

Turn to God! Some may think this message is out of place here at this church today because we do so much here. Too many of us are only physically alive and at the same time near death spiritually and we need to change. Remember, one act of repentance can open your heart up to the sanctifying grace of God. It's time to change it's time to rise up from the dead. It's time we resuscitate our spiritual lives and really start living. After all, we're not dead yet.