

SUNDAY SCHOOL NOTES 13 March 2022: Reactions?

When Jesus was alive there was no TV or radio or newspaper, so people got their news just by talking to one another. And you can imagine how much talking happened after Lazarus was raised from the dead! I am sure that some people suspected that the story had been exaggerated and so many of them came to Bethany to see for themselves. There would have been a stream of curious visitors to the home in Bethany, coming to check on whether the story they had heard was true.

Meanwhile the news of Lazarus also reached the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem. They decided that Jesus was just tricking the people but they panicked. They agreed they had better kill Jesus soon to stop people following him and making life very unpleasant for everyone.

Some of the people who saw Lazarus or who heard about his resurrection believed straightaway that Jesus had done this incredible miracle. You see, they had watched him before and listened to his teaching and they knew he was not just another man.

Mary and Martha and Lazarus also knew there had been no trick. And they wanted to celebrate. Martha showed her love by planning a big dinner to thank Jesus. She was do-er, not a thinker of complicated thoughts. Mary also knew that she had been part of something very special, but she probably thought hard about how to let Jesus know that she loved him and was thankful to him. She wanted to say thank-you in the most special way she could. So she took the most precious thing she had ever had, something she would probably never be able to replace, the most expensive perfume on the market. (She hadn't even been prepared to use it for her beloved brother!) Just as supper began, she took this cream and gently treated Jesus' tired feet to a wonderful massage – remember the roads were not tarred and he had walked very far. (Matthew seems to suggest she may also have poured some on his hair.) Then she wiped off the cream which hadn't been absorbed with her hair. The rich perfume filled the house.

Judas (the disciple who eventually took 30 pieces of silver from the Jewish leaders and then led them to the place where they could capture him) was disgusted at what he saw as waste. He didn't see the love and just muttered about how much money had been wasted!

And this pretty much sums up how people today react to Jesus.

Some are just curious. They may even look on the internet and they wonder, but they think they can avoid making a decision about who Jesus is at that moment. Then they get too busy and forget to do so.

Sadly there are even some who used to follow Jesus, like Judas, who decide other things are more important and turn away from him.

Others are very anti. They think he was just a trickster and that the Bible is full of 'nonsense.' Some don't even believe that Jesus ever lived. Some just want to squash him out of their lives because it will upset things for them. They know that if they admit that Jesus is God they would have to live differently and they don't want to.

What about you and me? We all have to decide because the resurrection of Lazars raises a question that we all have to answer: Are we just curious like the crowds? Do we keep so busy we don't have to think, like Martha perhaps? Do we think he is a nuisance? (Like Judas and the leaders) Do we love him?