

Bethany

“Places in the life of Christ”



“And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.” Luke 24:50

Bethany was supposedly a small town on the slope of the Mount of Olives at the time walked on earth, but many things happened there. We all know about Mary and Martha and the raising of Lazarus from the dead but that was only one thing that happened there. It was very important but there is much more. It was a place where there was an outpouring of love from Christ, but it also had some bad aspects.

The chief priests and the scribes were after Him. His following was getting too great, and people were beginning to worship Him and wanted Him as an earthly king. One day as Christ knew His time on this earth was about to end, He went to Bethany and was eating at the home of Simon the leper. As they were eating, a woman came in with an alabaster box of very expensive ointment and poured it on the head of Christ. People were really upset with her because they thought she was wasting money and there were many poor people. But Christ told them she was doing good. Then He said “For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.” This was strange. Why wouldn’t they always have Him? He proceeded to say that she was anointing his body for burial. I think this would have really confused them. It was just after this that Judas went to the high priests and offered to help betray Christ into their powers.

During His last week on earth, He spent much time in Bethany. He was near Bethany when He sent two of the disciples and told them to find a colt that had never been ridden. They were to untie it and take it back to Christ. When the man asked why they were taking his colt they were to say “The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.” What kind of an answer was that? Didn’t the colt belong to the gentleman who had tied it up? How was the gentleman to know the Lord? Evidently the man did not argue. We don’t know if he knew who Christ was or not, but we do know that he obeyed. That colt was the one ridden by Christ into Jerusalem on what we now call Palm Sunday. Mark 11:1-4

Christ returned to Bethany after the resurrection. When He talked with the disciples after the resurrection, before He ascended into Heaven, he told them many things and how they would understand the scriptures. As He was going to leave, he said “Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye

be endued with power from on high. And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.” Luke 24:49-51.

There are a couple places in Bethany that are visited as tourist attractions. One is the tomb where Lazarus was supposedly buried when Christ raised him from the dead. The other is the house that supposedly belonged to Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. But to me, I would rather stand in the place where Christ gave His blessings to the disciples and then ascended into Heaven. I can’t imagine what the disciples must have thought. What were they going to do now?

Today, we know so much more. Time has been generous to us. Many people followed these disciples as they went out to preach and because they did as they were told, we have a wonderful knowledge of salvation.

Does this small town that Christ visited have anything to offer us? Judas decided to betray Christ at Bethany, but Christ forgave the woman with the expensive perfume at Bethany. He ate with Mary and Martha there, and raised His friend Lazarus from the dead. But most important was the love He shared with all of us just outside the town before He ascended into Heaven. What a wonderful blessing.

Prayer: Thank You for all Your blessings. So often we see the bad instead of the good. We dwell on Judas instead of the unnamed woman who gave her expensive perfume to anoint Christ. Help us to give our love in an unselfish way so that others will know Your love and salvation. Amen

1. Why do you think Judas betrayed Christ?
2. Can you imagine the feelings that passed through the woman who anointed Christ with perfume? What did she know?
3. Mary and Martha are often talked about as hostesses. Each had a different contribution. How can we be host or hostess to Christ?
4. Would we be willing to give your car to a couple people who just said “The Lord needs it.”?