

FOCUS ON JESUS!

Hebrews 12:2

Budoï, Romania, 9. February 2014

John 17:22-23 May **they be one** as We are **one**.

²³ I am in them and You are in Me.

Matthew 26:7-13 a woman approached Him with an alabaster jar of very expensive fragrant oil. She poured it on His head as He was reclining at the table. ⁸ When the disciples saw it, they were indignant. "Why **this waste**?" they asked. ⁹ "This might have been sold for a great deal and given to the poor." ¹⁰ But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a noble thing for Me. ¹¹ You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have Me. ¹² By pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she has prepared Me for burial. ¹³ I assure you: Wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told in memory of her."

Mark 9:38-40 John said to Him, "Teacher, we saw someone¹ driving out demons in Your name, and we tried to stop him because he wasn't following us." ³⁹ "Don't stop him," said Jesus, "because there is no one who will perform a miracle in My name who can soon afterwards speak evil of Me. ⁴⁰ For whoever is not against us is for us."

John 21:21-22 When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord-- what about him?" ²² "If I want him to remain until I come," Jesus answered, "what is that to you? As for you, follow Me."

0. INTRODUCTION

- relationships between Christians - great stumbling block to evangelism
- different kind of differences - (1) doctrinal, (2) formal, (3) psychological
- the commandment *to love* - make friends out of enemies; look for the good in your friends
- **Heb 12:2** Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith
 - Christian life is full of interesting things and aspects we could ponder on but the true goal of my Christian life is to become a perfect present from the Father to His Son Jesus
 - He is the source of my faith = my life starts with dying with Him
 - He is the perfecter = my future resurrection, but also in the area of my relationship with Him – when I'm born again I begin to be His disciple and I need Him to teach me how to follow and I need to let Him work the good deeds through me (LORD... all that we have accomplished you have done for us. Isaiah 26:12).
 - What hinders us in fixing our eyes on Him?

1. SOCIAL DIFFERENCES

1.1. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

- the woman with the precious ointment; Acts 19 - Demetrios and his business (Artemis of the Ephesians)
- **James 2:2-4** For if a man wearing a *gold ring* and *fine clothing* comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, ³ and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or, "Sit down at my feet," ⁴ have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?
- Saul - David envy, jealousy
- Miriam, Aaron - Moses (Nu 12)

1.2. CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION

- comparing appearances, wealth...
- prosperity gospel - "Cadillac faith"

1.3. HOW DOES JESUS COME INTO IT

- **2Co 8:9** For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.
- **1Tim 6:17** Instruct those **who are rich** in the present age not to be arrogant or to set their hope on the uncertainty of wealth, but on God,¹ who richly provides us with all things to enjoy.
- **Luke 12:21** "That's how it is with the one who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

Get so inspired by Jesus that you will love to give Him everything you have. Let Him be so important to you that you wouldn't think (like the disciples) "Why this waste?". Don't worry about what you're going to eat or wear but trust Jesus. If you're rich, don't let wealth hinder you in fixing your eyes on Jesus.

2. RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

2.1. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

- the man casting out demons (Mark 9:38-40) = we often have an exact idea how the following of Jesus ought to look like
- the tribes building an altar (Joshua) **Joshua 22:11-31** And the people of Israel heard it said, "Behold, the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh have built the **altar** at the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region about the Jordan, on the side that belongs to the people of Israel." ... **22:16** building yourselves an **altar** this day in rebellion against the LORD? ... **22:28** 'Behold, the copy of the **altar** of the LORD, which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifice, but to be a witness between us and you.'... **22:31** Today we know that the LORD is in our midst, because you have not committed this breach of faith against the LORD. Now you have delivered the people of Israel from the hand of the LORD."

2.2. CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION

- forms of worship
- denominational affiliations
- unimportant doctrinal differences

What do I care more about – about e.g. how a song is being sang during the worship time or whether Jesus is in the centre of the worship?

2.3. HOW DOES JESUS COME INTO IT

- **Rom 14:15** *By what you eat*, do not destroy that one *for whom Christ died*.
- Mk 9:39 ... "because there is no one who will perform a miracle in My name who can soon afterwards speak *evil of Me*."
- **Phil 1:17-18** the others proclaim Christ out of rivalry, not sincerely, seeking to cause *me* trouble in my imprisonment.^{1 18} What does it matter? Just that in every way, whether out of false motives or true, Christ is proclaimed. And in this I rejoice.

3. DIFFERENCES IN CALLING

3.1. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

- Peter & John (John 21:21-22)
- Jacob and Esau
- Joseph's brothers

3.2. CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION

- missionaries, evangelists...
- politics or anti-political Christianity
- practical vs. theoretical ministries (preaching vs. theology)
- *amateur providence* [CHAMBERS]

3.3. HOW DOES JESUS COME INTO IT

- **John 21:22** "If I want him *to remain until I come*," Jesus answered, "what is that to you? As for you, follow Me."
- **Rom 11:13** In view of the fact that I am an apostle to the Gentiles, *I magnify my ministry*
- 1Cor 12 - the body of Christ **1 Cor 12:21** So the eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!"
1Cor 12:22 those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are necessary.

Stop comparing yourself and your calling with someone else's. E.g. when someone has a calling to evangelize and you don't, don't fix your eyes on that but focus on Jesus and you'll see how to follow Him in your situation and with your gifting.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- Do not let *economic* issues separate you from those who love and follow Jesus.
- Do not let *religious* forms separate you from those who love and follow Jesus.
- Do not let *your calling* separate you from those who love and follow Jesus.