

**Esther 2:9,12 John 12:1-8  
Sit, Soak & Soar  
New Year's 2016**

**Well we are day 3 into a New Year – 2016 Crazy right?**

A)How are those **New Years Resolutions going?**

B)According to Forbes magazine, **40 percent of Americans make New Year's resolutions**, but only 8 percent keep those resolutions.

C)If you ever have made a New Year's resolution and failed – 1)the following year – you try to make them more realistic

**One man who made a resolution about getting in shape resolved to work out five days a week. – Failed**

- The next year, he resolved to **work out three days a week**. – Failed again
- The Next year – super realistic, he planned to work out **one day a week**. Failed again
- Finally, he just resolved to **drive past a gym at least once a week**.- So far he was doing pretty good on that one.

**Another person's goal: to become more well read!**

**Commit myself to reading more**

- 2011: I will read at least 20 good books a year.
- 2012: I will read at least 10 books a year.
- 2013: I will read five books a year.
- 2014: I will regularly read the newspaper this year.
- 2015: I will try and finish the comics this year.

**Normally, resolutions include a list of things you want to do.**

A)But I want to encourage you today to take a moment to focus on **the person you want to be**.

B)It is always a mistake to decide what you want to accomplish before **you first determine who you want to be**.

C)So Instead of merely focusing on weight loss and exercise (**there is a place for that**),

1)Let's focus primarily on our relationship with God in this coming year.

D)It is really possible to change—to be a “new you” in 2016

**This morning I want us to see what we can learn from two women in the Bible – One from the OT and one from the NT**

A)Start in the OT with Esther!

B)The story of Esther is a Fascinating story in the Bible – where a young orphan girl is chosen to be the next queen in Persia.

C)God ends up using this young girl to save her people, the Jewish people, from Annihilation and preserve the line of the Messiah.

**King Ahasuerus or Xerxes was in need of a New queen –**

A)His advisors suggest they have a Miss Persia Pageant

B)400 young virgins from throughout the 127 provinces of Persia

C)Each one of the girls would get one date with the King – sort a Miss Persia meets the Bachelor idea

**A young Hebrew Orphan named Esther was one of the girls chosen even though she didn't want to be.**

A)She was a beautiful girl inside and out. And she was placed in the care of a Eunuch named Hegai

B)It was his job to get the girls ready to go before the King – Something about Esther impresses him – Esther 2:9

<sup>9</sup> And the young woman pleased him and won his favor. And he quickly provided her with her cosmetics and her portion of food, and with seven chosen young women from the king's palace, and advanced her and her young women to the best place in the harem.

**Skip to verse 12**

<sup>12</sup> Now when the turn came for each young woman to go in to King Ahasuerus, after being twelve months under the regulations for the women, since this was the regular period of their beautifying, six months with oil of myrrh and six months with spices and ointments for women

**C)It was quite a process getting these girls ready for their one date with the King!**

D)The girls would spend **1 year getting ready** – process that included Purification and Spa treatments

1)One whole year - **Guys you thought your wife took a long time to get ready.**

**So Esther catches the eye of Hegai – something about her that he really likes**

A)Notice that phrase again in V.9 **she obtained his favor**

B)The literal translation of the original language is pregnant with meaning

1)It says **She lifted up grace before his face.**

C)That is an awesome expression – one worthy of taking note of.

1)**Her countenance was grace magnified –**

D)Grace in a person has been defined this way:

**“favor,” “goodwill,” and “lovingkindness”**

**Here she is taken against her will – thrust into this pageant– there is an atmosphere of competition that had to be intense – cut throat**

A)In the midst of all that Esther did not display a Sour attitude.

**B)She didn't display a “it is all about me attitude”**

C)Instead she chose to model grace before this influential servant of the king

1)Helpful – Loving – she is others centered -

**There was an air of Grace about her!**

A)Something about Esther that was so different from the rest of the girls.

B)**Similar thing said of Daniel** – he was of a different Spirit!

C)I have seen this over the years - Some people – there is a spirit of grace about them that makes them really attractive.

D)**Single brothers and sisters** – this is what you want others to see in you. – Different Spirit –

1)Something of Jesus radiating from your life

**So These girls would spend a year getting ready to see the King –**

A)**THEIR PREPERATION** involved **Purification and Beautification.**

B)6 months soaking in oil of myrrh and 6 months soaking in Spices

C)I can't help but see some spiritual symbolism here for us in this point of the Story!

**See As believers living here on this planet we are supposed to be getting ready to see A King!**

A)Not a Pagan King – the analogy definitely breaks down there –

B)But we are to be getting ready to see a King – **The King of kings – KING JESUS**

C)King JESUS coming back one day for his Bride and I think that day is closer than we think.

D)We are living in the last days:

**There is not one prophecy that still needs to be fulfilled before Jesus returns.**

A)If we were to liken this to a Football game – we are in Over time and have been for a very long time.

B)But as we look at the world around us – See Russia – Iran – Syria all coming into a coalition of Forces – All against Israel.

1)**Evidence of what was prophesied in Ezek 38** – invasion of nations against Israel – Could happen before the Rapture or shortly there after.

**C)Advancement in Technology** – Movements from around the globe to move to a cashless Society.

D)The Bible says that Israel would be abandoned as a nation in the last days – stand alone with only God to protect her.

**E)We have seen that happening** – especially in the last 8 years of our Current President being in office – US support of Israel has changed dramatically

**We could talk about the breakdown of morality in the world – the growing sexual perversion – the increase in Violent Crime – Terrorism**

A) All of which are signs according to Matthew 24 of what would be happening in the days leading to Christ's return – **DAYS OF NOAH**

B) We are living in those days!

C) King Jesus promised **ONE DAY** to Come for His Bride

D) His Bride is to be getting ready for Her Bridegroom

**So How are we to Prepare to see our King? – Like Esther did - Purification/ Beautification**

A) 1<sup>st</sup> **Purification** – John in his epistle speaking of that day – **“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. <sup>3</sup> And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”** 1 John 3:2,3

B) The day is coming when we are going to see our King – when we see HIM – discover **we have been changed to be like Him – HOPE!**

C) **AND as THOSE who have that HOPE – what are we doing now – PURIFIES HIMSELF/ HERSELF**

D) Get rid of the junk – the carnality – the questionable practices

**Starts with this prayer: Psalm 139:23**

**Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.**

A) **It starts in other words by an examination:** Spiritual Check up – Search me Lord – anything in me that needs to go - Reveal it

1) Anything hindering my spiritual progress – anything – weighing me down

B) As your Bride – I want to be ready when – you come!

C) All the ladies in the audience can identify with that picture!

**Think about how a Bride today gets ready for her wedding day.**

A) **Stripping away:** Old pictures of boyfriends and remnants

B) **Stuff she is not going to need for new house.**

C) **She has to take inventory – Make adjustments – get ready to live**

D) She might go on a diet –

1) Get her hair done – nails done

E) **Careful of her wedding dress** – She is not going to put on and Drive to the church – Drive through at Taco Bell – Bean Burrito – Stain

**We need to take Spiritual inventory:**

A) See any wicked way - Carnality – Not a time to be playing around with sin

B) Jonathan Edwards famous preacher in the 1700's said that **“he resolved never to do anything that he would be afraid to do if it were the last hour of his life.”**

C) **Maybe there was something you were doing yesterday that you really would have been ashamed of if it were the last hour of your life.**

1) Or maybe you are planning to do something today or tomorrow or next week that you know would not be the right thing for you to be doing **if it were the last hour of your life.**

D) **If that is the case, then I suggest that you change your plans.**

1) I suggest that you get your life in a place where you don't have to be ashamed of what you are doing

E) **A place where you will be ready, no matter how or when God calls you into His presence.**

**Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me**

**So Esther's Preparation would involve – Purification – And our preparation will need to involve a PURIFICATION AS WELL.**

A) **But another part of her preparation was her Beautification** – She would soak every day for 6 months in these baths - **oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes**

B) Another 6 months in spices – soaking to get ready to see the King!

C) We too are to be those in our preparation that we are to be soaking in some things.

### Soaking in the Word

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. - Romans 12:2

A) Don't be conformed to this world – don't let this world – mindsets and ideologies squeeze you into its mold

B) Listen when all we do is soak in the culture of the World – music – movies – TV shows/ political pundits

1) **College Professors - Magazine articles** – all begin to shape your thinking – your mindset – our outlook on reality.

C) Paul says Don't be conformed to this world - but be transformed by the renewing of YOUR MIND

### Our minds are renewed when we soak in the Word OF GOD! –

A) See things come into clarity when we see them through the lens of Scripture.

B) We see God more Clearly - We see ourselves more clearly – we see the world more clearly.

C) Let me suggest to you a **KEY TO BIBLE STUDY and Bible reading**

1) Look for Jesus – See how the passage relates to Jesus – points to Jesus

D) Much of the OT looks ahead to Christ – The NT looks back

### Paul the apostle made a remarkable statement about this is 2 Cor. 3:18

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed** into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

A) As we behold him – we are being transformed – there is a transformation that is taking place in our hearts.

B) Suggestion as we start the new year – **READING PLAN - One year Bible – Gospels -**

### Focus is on JESUS

1) I am doing something new – Starting New Year looking at Chronological look of the Gospels

C) Start with a Gospel – Pic Mark

### D) FOCUS ON THESE THINGS:

1.) **What does the passage tell me about Jesus** – his character, his attributes, and his conduct?

2.) **What is Jesus saying?**

3.) **How does he treat people?** How am I like that person in the story?

4.) **How can I treat the people in my life the way that Jesus treats the people in this story?**

### Commit yourself this year to consistently soaking in the Word of God – looking at Jesus

A) **HERE IS GOING TO BE THE** result – Transformation is going to happen. – You are going to become more like Jesus

B) The fragrance of Christ – the Fragrance of grace is going to radiate from you!

### How are we to Prepare to see our King?

➤ **We Soak** – in His presence in the Word

➤ **We Soak - in His presence in Worship**

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. Hebrews 13:15

A) We have an amazing picture of this in John Ch. 12 – Mary

### B) Chapter 12 begins the final week in the life of Jesus

Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead.

3 Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled

with the fragrance of the oil. 4 But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, 5 "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" (Years wage)

6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

7 But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. 8 For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

So here we have this very familiar story – Mary anoints Jesus' feet with this very costly perfume.

A) Several things we learn from her example. –

B) Worship is costly: In her case it cost her financially –

1) Many Bible commentators agree that this was probably her Dowry – what a Jewish girl's father would give to the man she was going to marry.

C) Mary is the sister of Martha and Lazarus and it seems their parents are dead

1) Perhaps her Father gave her this as a Dowry – she decides to pour it over Jesus –

D) Costly – Extravagant act of worship – Symbolic – her desire Spiritually to be connected to Jesus

When we WORSHIP JESUS in the giving of our tithes and offerings – it also is costly – others might seem – Extravagant – they can't believe you do that.

A) It might cost you time – to sit at the feet of Jesus – to worship him

B) Might cost you the ridicule of others who think you are wasting your time – your talents – your resources by giving them to Jesus.

C) So to soak in His Presence in Worship is costly.

But this type of Devotion has great Reward:

A) Mary poured that fragrance on Jesus and then – wiped his feet with her hair – All an act of Worship

B) That fragrance that was on Jesus – That Fragrance that filled the House, was NOW on MARY

1) Mary ends up smelling like Jesus

C) Every where that Mary went SHE SMELLED LIKE JESUS!

D) That my friends is what happens when we soak in His presence in Worship!

1) His Fragrance ends up on us!

E) Think about this: The Disciples could smell the Fragrance – but they didn't have the Fragrance.

1) They didn't leave with it – Their fragrance was NOT GOOD!

This is what I find so interesting about times when we are gathered like we are today.

A) We have come into this place today AND we have worshipped.

B) Many of you have smelt that Fragrance – but only some of you will leave with that Fragrance on your life.

C) Why is it that some smell the Presence and others leave with it?

D) What is the Difference? – Those who leave with it – Came with it.

In other words when they come here and engage in worship it is merely the overflow of that which is already going on in their hearts.

A) Their Alabaster box has already been broken during the week in their own personal Devotion time.

B) They have already been sitting and soaking in the Lord's presence in their time in the word – in their time of Devotion.

C)What happens here is just the overflow of that.

**They are the ones who are not so easily distracted by the volume of the music or the lack there of.**

A)They are the ones who are not overly concerned with what others are doing or not doing

B)**Their focus is on Jesus** – They are excited to get here and to worship with their Brothers and Sisters

1)Their lives already have that **Fragrance of Grace radiating from their lives**

C)**Visiting Applegate Christian Fellowship –**

1)I am starring – There was a Fragrance in that place

**Here is the cool thing about this reminder – all of us can do this!**

A)We Can't all be Evangelist like Greg Laurie / Scholars or Theologians

B)**But we all can soak in His Presence in the Word** – We all can Soak in His Presence in Worship

C)If we make that our aim – focus in 2016 –**Sit and Soak** - In His Word – in His Presence in Worship

1) **Result** – we will be ready to see our King

D) **We will be being transformed** to become more like our King – **treat others** – kids, spouse, co-workers - **like Jesus treats us** –

1)His Fragrance will be on us – treat others

E)2016 will be a year where we SOAR

1)Formula for 2016 – Sit/Soak= Soar

**Two final thoughts: You were made to worship  
Made to Know God – TODAY**

2<sup>ND</sup> Because Mary made it her practice to sit at His feet – SHE was clued in

A)FOR HIS BURIAL

CROSS TODAY