

A Godly Woman Prepares for Jesus' Death

Matthew 26:6-13

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Introduction

Last week, we began Matthew 26.

- In this chapter we come to that portion of Matthew's Gospel in which he begins to give us an account of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - This is the very heart of the gospel. You will do well to give earnest attention to it.
- Just now we are looking at the way various individuals and parties prepared for Jesus' death...
 - Last week, I contrasted the way God the Father and the Jewish leaders prepared for it...
 - Both God and the Sanhedrin had purposed that Jesus should be crucified,
 - In one sense they had the very same purpose, but the character of their purposes was entirely different.
 - God's purpose for Jesus' death was gracious,
 - the Sanhedrin's purpose was selfish.
 - God's purpose was wise,
 - the Sanhedrin's purpose was foolish.
 - God's purpose was sure,
 - the Sanhedrin's purpose was unsure.
 - From this we can learn that although wicked men carry out the very thing that God had purposed before to be done,
 - yet, they are worthy of punishment because their reason for it is rebellious and wicked.
 - Many people stumble at the Bible's teaching that all things (even the deeds of the wicked) conform to God's plan, but the doctrine of the cross shows us how in the very same act, God is just and man is unjust.
 - This principle can be applied to all the deeds of disobedient creatures...
 - They do nothing but what God has secretly planned, but for them it is wickedness rather than obedience.

This week, I want to look the preparation of a godly woman for Jesus' death.

- The account of her preparation is found in Matthew 26:6-13.

- Actually, her story is found in Matthew, Mark and John.
 - We will focus on Matthew's account since Matthew is the book we are studying.
- But there are some things we learn from the other gospels that are not found in Matthew's account and they are helpful for you to know as I introduce this godly woman to you.
 - For example, John tells us that the woman who anointed Jesus was Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, who lived in Bethany.
 - These siblings often provided hospitality for Jesus when He came to Jerusalem. Bethany was only a short walk from Jerusalem.
 - Mary is the one who was commended for sitting at Jesus' feet to listen to His words when Martha was flustered with much service.
 - Mary's brother, Lazarus, was the one that Jesus raised from the dead after he had been in the grave for four days.
 - They seem to be a fairly wealthy family as they were able to house and feed Jesus and his twelve disciples.
 - So Jesus had quite a history with this family.
- Matthew tells us that the house where Mary anointed Jesus was that of Simon the Leper—
 - Simon must have either been a neighbour of Mary and her siblings, or perhaps even their father.
 - It may be that he was no longer living, because all we are told about him is that this even took place in his house...
 - But if he was living, we can be sure that as a friend of Jesus, he was not longer a leper.
- John also informs us in his gospel that Jesus had arrived at the house of Mary, Martha and Lazarus six days prior to the Passover.
 - It seems likely that this was the time He got into town and took up his lodging with them...
 - Then, a few days later—
 - two days before the Passover if Matthew is speaking sequentially with respect to Jesus' saying in verse 2—
 - they seem to have prepared a special banquet for Jesus, having many things to give thanks to Him for.
 - None of the gospels actually state the time of the banquet,
 - but whatever the case, they were showing their love to Jesus.

Children, I wonder what it's like at your house when you have somebody coming to stay with you and you are planning a lot of nice things for them?

- Last month, Junior had a very bad attitude...
 - His Uncle Callus and Aunt Contentious were coming to visit.
 - Junior didn't like it when they came. They were always getting into quarrels with each other, and seemed to always be displeased.
 - Junior understood the Proverb that said it is better to live in the corner of the housetop than in a house with a contentious woman.
 - He didn't like the idea of having to give up his bedroom for them and of having to clean up all his toys.
 - He was not even very excited about helping his mom in the kitchen.
 - He had had to be chastened a couple of times for his bad attitude.
- But this week, Junior has a very different attitude!
 - This week Uncle Generosity and Aunt Grace are coming to visit!
 - Junior was very happy to get his room ready for them...
 - In fact, he asked his mother if he could make a special welcome sign for them and could let them have the chocolates he had been saving from his birthday!
 - Junior was thinking of all sorts of things he could do for them.
- Now I have a question—
 - Why did Junior find it so much easier to give to Uncle Generosity and Aunt Grace than to Uncle Callus and Aunt Contentious?
 - That's an easy question, isn't it!
 - He loved Uncle Generosity and Aunt Grace!
 - Because he loved them so much, he wanted to do all he could for them.

That is the way it was for the woman who anointed Jesus' in Matthew 26:6-13.

- She greatly loved Jesus and because she loved Him so much,
 - she thought she could never do enough for Him.
 - She was always looking for more to do!
- In her preparations for Jesus' death, Mary gives us a beautiful example of what true love for Christ **ought** to look like.
 - In verse 13, Jesus decrees that what she has done be told as a memorial to her.

- v. 13: Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.
- It is clear that Jesus is greatly pleased with what Mary does for Him in this account!
 - He wants this love of hers to be remembered all over the world when the gospel is preached because this is the kind of love that every person **ought** to have for Christ when the gospel is heard, and the kind of love that every person **will** have when the Gospel is truly believed.
 - Truly, what else can you do when you really believe that God's Son left the glories of heaven to come here for no other reason but to save sinners...
 - that because of His great love for you,
 - He emptied Himself of His glory and came into this sinful world that He Himself made...
 - and that He subjected Himself to all kinds of suffering, disrespect, shame, humiliation, and torture...
 - and even that He submitted Himself to bear the full weight of God's curse that He had justly put upon human sin?
 - He Himself became our shield, as it were, so that all the fiery darts of God's wrath struck Him instead of us.
 - As the poet said,
 - What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul...
 - What wondrous love is this, O my soul.
 - What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of Bliss
 - to bear the dreadful curse for my soul for my soul,
 - to bear the dreadful curse for my soul.
- This is the message of the gospel that Jesus speaks of that will be preached in all the world after He is gone...
 - The context of this expectation is remarkable...
 - In verse 2, He had just said that he would be crucified in two days, and now He says with all assurance that the gospel of His death will be preached all over the world!
 - Here He was with His twelve disciples and a few friends, and death just two days away,
 - He was, relatively speaking, a rather obscure man, and his disciples were but common men...
 - But He anticipates that the news of His death will be preached as good news all over the world.

- And indeed it has been preached all over the world...
 - Here we are in this very assembly today, 2000 years later,
 - speaking of this good news in a language that had not even been born in Jesus' day and in a land that would have been entirely unknown to Jesus' disciples.
 - Here we are, in a world so different, with our computers and space shuttles speaking about the good news of His death.
- And indeed what wonderful news it is to all who believe!
 - His suffering death is the good news to you who believe that your sins are fully forgiven...
 - That the wrath of God that would have sent you to the Lake of Fire forever has been fully absorbed by Jesus Christ.
 - That by trusting in Him, you have now become a recipient of His grace that transforms you and restores you to God...
 - And that you have become a recipient of God's everlasting mercy...
 - And that in the future, you will receive the very inheritance of Jesus Himself for all eternity...
 - the inheritance of heaven where you will live in joyful communion with God with no shortages and no sorrows and with such a fullness of happiness and peace that you will be satisfied forever and ever.
- Indeed what wondrous love is this!
 - Who, understanding such gospel love, could ever reject such gospel love?
 - Who, having received it, could not but love the Son of God who gives it with an exuberant love that could never abate!
 - He has taken infinite wrath for you in order that you might not bear an eternity of wrath,
 - and that you might delight in an eternity of joy and peace!
 - Jesus saw in this woman, two days before His death, the very love that was to spring forth in all the earth after His death was preached!
 - He looks this love in dear Mary of Bethany with joyful anticipation as the love that will be reproduced in every believer—
 - as the love that will adorn His church through the ages in measure,

- and as the love that will adorn Heaven in all its fullness for ever and ever.
- He says, “Let this be told as a memorial to her!”

TRANS> And so now, brothers and sisters, I want to do just that!

- I want to show you this great love that sprang up in Mary before the time!
- I want to show you this great love in her that was a precursor to the love that would break forth in the world when it was at last understood that Jesus came to die in order that He might free us from our sins.
 - I want to show it to you because it is the loving response that you ought to have as soon as you hear the gospel...
 - If you don’t have it, I urge you to get it!
 - And if you do have it in measure, I know that you want to have in greater measure.
 - It is a delightful thing to see...
- First of all, I want you to see that

I. Mary’s love was extravagant.

A. Mary showed her love to Christ by anointing Him with oil when He was reclining at the table...

1. There was nothing unusual about anointing one’s guests with oil.
 - This was a customary way of showing hospitality to your guests in those days...
 - It was a way of loving them and of showing kindness to them.
 - The oil would cause them to shine, and it would provide a sweet fragrance that was very pleasing.
 - If someone were to pour oil on you at a special dinner in our culture, you would probably not appreciate it very much!
 - But in Jesus’ day, this was a normal expression of care for one’s guests and a thing that was very much appreciated.

TRANS> So while the action of Mary itself was not extraordinary,

2. There was something that made it very extraordinary about the oil Mary used!
 - a. We are told that Mary took an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil and emptied its contents upon Jesus!

- Alabaster was used to make containers for very precious oils because it was believed that it best preserved the oil.
 - Often, the alabaster container was one that had to be opened by breaking the thin neck of the bottle.
 - In the other gospels we learn that Mary broke this bottle.
 - Such a container would not have been used unless the oil was very precious!
 - Perhaps we could equate it today to getting out a very expensive bottle of wine in honour of a special guest.
- b. In Matthew we are told that this oil was very costly, but just how costly was it?
- In Mark the cost of this oil is estimated at more than 300 denarii...
 - A denarius was a days wages for a soldier or a labourer,
 - so 300 days wages would be the wages of labouring man for an entire year!
 - To put it in our context,
 - it would be a \$25,000 to \$30,000 bottle of oil that Mary emptied out on Jesus—right there on a single evening!
 - \$30,000 gone, just like that!

TRANS> You can see why I say that her love was extravagant!

B. Understand that it is the very nature of love to be extravagant...

1. Song of Solomon 8:7 says:

- Song of Solomon 8:7: Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it. If a man would give for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised.
- When he says that all the wealth of his house would be utterly despised,
 - he means that he would count it as nothing—no sacrifice—very little to give up!

2. True love is a busy, serving, generous thing that does not count the cost...

- It gives all it can for the thing it loves...
 - True love wants to give—it is constrained to give—it is delighted to give and to have something to give!
 - It is very creative and busy, it is always looking for ways to express itself.
 - It can never do enough for the one it loves.

C. Isn't this so?

1. What does a person do if he loves the movies?

- He will give himself to it—he will spend his hard earned money to go to the theatre, he will give up many hours of his week for it...

a. And what if a man comes to love a woman?

- He will forsake all other women for that woman...
 - He will give her his time and his energy and he will take her into his home and provide for her and share his life with her and everything he possesses.
 - He will rearrange his schedule for her and be devoted to her.
 - Like Jacob, he will work for his Rachael for seven years and it will seem but a short time to him because of his love!

b. And what if a person comes to love money?

- Well if he loves to spend it, he will spend even what he doesn't have, and if he loves to have it, he will hoard it up...
 - He will work and sweat and give long hours to the pursuit of it...
 - He will give his life to it, and even forfeit his own soul for it!

c. And isn't it true that the greater your love for something,

- the more freely you give yourself and all that you have to it?
- A man dying of thirst in the desert will pay a very high price for water and be glad...
- A man dying of cancer will spend all he has on the physicians if he loves his life...
 - The only thing that will keep him from spending everything will be the love he has for his wife or his children and his desire to give them an inheritance.

2. Now I want you to think about how the true love of a believer for Christ is shown...

a. It is shown by your extravagance for Him...

- You will give things that are very precious, and they will seem as nothing to you.
 - Luke 14:26: "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.

- Jesus is not suggesting that we are to hate them in a malicious way...
 - He is using the word hate in the same way that Solomon used it when he said that a man would give all the wealth of his house for love and despise that wealth...
 - He means that ones family will be a small thing to give...
 - He means that as soon as you must chose between pleasing them and pleasing Him,
 - you will choose to please Him.
 - He means that He will be more important to you than your own mother and than your own life.
- b. It is this extravagance of love that produces martyrs!
- 1) They prefer to give their lives rather than deny Christ!
 - They prefer to be stripped of all their goods and tortured rather than do anything they know to be contrary to His will.
 - They will confess his truth if it means they must go to prison.
 - 2) It is the extravagance of love that caused Vince and Julie Ward to leave all the comforts of Canada to go and live in a bug infested hut with temperatures in excess of 50 decrees and exposures to all sorts of sicknesses...
 - they did it because of love for Jesus.
 - Their act of love is extravagant, but yet it is but a small thing for Jesus.
- c. Love will make you extravagant in living the Christian life...
- 1) It will make you extravagant about prayer—
 - so that you will stay awake at night praying that He would show you His glory and make it known in the world, that His kingdom would come, that He would give you grace to do His will and deliver you from your sin.
 - so that you will take time out of your busy schedule to pray...
 - 2) Love will make you extravagant about telling others of the glory of Christ...
 - You won't be satisfied until others come to know His glory and worship Him...

- Love will make you creative to find ways to get others to hear his word.

3) Love will make you extravagant about commandment keeping.

- It will cause you to look at the commandments, not to see what is the least that you can get by with and say you have kept them...
 - but rather to see how fully you can fill your life with obedience...
 - you will want to apply them to every nook and cranny of your heart.
- You will chose to lose your job if keeping your job means you must cheat, lie, or break any of God's commandments...

4) Love will make you extravagant about the worship of God in every way you can.

- You will worship him in private, worship him daily in your family, worship him in the assembly on the Lord's Day...
 - You will sooner miss work or sleep than miss worship!
 - You will be extravagant about it because of love.

3. Oh, brothers and sisters

- We need more of this Christian love—this extravagant love for Christ!
 - It is not very common in our world today.
 - There are not many who pour out what is precious on Christ and think nothing of it because of love!

TRANS> One reason this may be so is because extravagant love for Christ is always criticised in this world...

- This is the second characteristic of Mary's love...
- First, is was an extravagant love,
- Secondly,

II. Mary's love is a criticised love... it was criticised for its extravagance.

A. Verse 8 tells us that it was none other than Jesus' disciples who criticised it!

- Matthew 26:8: But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor."

1. Look at that! These guys were angry at this woman's devotion!

- How could they be so cold, so callus?

- Here was Mary showing honour to her Lord and they have the audacity to call it waste!
- Who ever heard of such a thing?

TRANS> I speak with sarcasm...

2. How very common this attitude is among Christians today!
 - a. This woman poured out a thirty-thousand dollar bottle of perfume on Jesus!
 - Thirty-thousand dollars gone—just like that!
 - Wouldn't you have been disturbed if you had been there?
 - "What is she doing?"
 - "Is she crazy?"
 - b. Would you not start to think about all that could have been done with that stupid bottle of perfume instead of pouring it out like that?
 - Just think of all the things you could buy with a whole year's wages!
 - All gone, in one foolish moment!
 - And think how far it would have gone in a third-world country!
 - How many it could have fed!
3. You will notice that when the disciples speak, they speak about giving it to the poor.
 - a. You can be sure that they had thought about how **they** might have used it if only it had been given to **them**...
 - but it sounds a lot better to talk about the good it might have done for the poor...
 - Those who are poor (and envious) like to think about how they themselves might have better used their rich neighbour's money.
 - b. Remember that the disciples themselves were poor...
 - They were financially supported by Mary and others like her...
 - She and her family were giving them hospitality even at this very moment, and had very often done so in the past...
 - She was one of the women mentioned in the gospels that supported Jesus and His disciples.
 - You can be fairly certain that as one of her benefactors, they were thinking how nice it would have been if she had given that money to them.

- c. I think I need to say something about this problem of envy because it is a huge one in our society...
- 1) The Bible makes it clear that a person can be wealthy and still be righteous.
 - And not only that,
 - but a rich man who is blessed of God can have a lot of nice things that don't serve any particular purpose except to look nice or provide pleasure.
 - Job was a man like that—he cared for the poor and needy, but also enjoyed nice things.
 - In Job 29:6, he remembers the days:
 - When my steps were bathed with cream, And the rock poured out rivers of oil for me!
 - 2) We have to remember that our God is a God who made precious things like diamonds, gold, silver, and the precious oil that Mary poured out on Jesus' head.
 - a) He is not a God of efficiency, but a God of extravagance.
 - He has billions of stars blowing off all kinds of energy into space that could be used to heat our homes!
 - Many of them can't even be seen by us!
 - He has sea creatures that haven't even been discovered yet.
 - He makes flowers in places where no human eye will ever see them.
 - He gives us all sorts of foods with thousands of different tastes, and He gives us silly looking creatures like snails and rhinoceroses.
 - b) Too often Christians have thought that utility and efficiency are next to godliness.
 - They have supposed that the Lord always sanctions thrift!
 - Some of this has been because we have such a problem with covetousness and always have to watch out for greed that will swallow up our whole life with selfishness if we are not careful...
 - But the solution is not to decide that things are all bad and that we should only take what we really need.
 - That is the world's way of dealing with the problem...

- That is the error of the monks and hermits in the early church.
- You see, God has given us many things for sheer enjoyment!
 - Rather than indulging every once in a while with a guilty conscience,
 - we ought to indulge with thanksgiving as we have opportunity!
 - When we indulge against our conscience, that is a sinful act itself and will lead to a hardness of heart...
 - You must never do anything that violates your conscience.
- But understand that in Timothy, Paul call commands to abstain from marriage and certain foods a doctrine of demons...
 - A hermit in a cave is an ungodly man, even as a man in a brothel is an ungodly man...
 - But these are not the only two options...
 - and neither should we think that as long as you stay in the middle between the brothel and the cave you are okay...
 - Many times the one in the middle is the one who has the sins of the hermit and the sins of the man at the brothel at the same time!
 - These sins don't cancel each other out!
 - A man who gives to the poor and who remembers his tithe does not sin if he also eats good food with thanksgiving and panels his house with cedar with thanksgiving...
 - He has honoured God and given glory to His name as the one from whom all blessings flow.
 - But neither has the man who leaves all the comforts of this world to go and preach the gospel in Sudan sinned.

3) And so Christian brother and sister,

- be careful that you don't fall into this sin of the disciples.
 - Mary had used \$30,000 before to feed the hungry and she would have many opportunities to do it again,

- but this time she chose to use \$30,000 to honour the Lord with a special anointing.
- Her heart was full of love for Christ and this is way she decided to express that love.
- It was a way of showing Him how much He meant to her.
 - She was criticised for extravagance by those who were covetous!

TRANS> But now, let me draw out the principle here...

B. The principle is that you **will** be criticised—even by other Christians—if you have extravagant love for Jesus Christ.

1. Those who truly know Christ and follow Him will be criticised for it!
 - Just look our society today!
 - If you oppose abortion, all forms of sexual immorality, and cheating the government a little by doing some work under the table,
 - you will be called an extremist—
 - especially if you oppose these things for Christ’s sake.
2. If you sanctify the Lord’s Day instead of going to the park with the family during the hour of public worship,
 - you will asked if you don’t love your family any more...
 - and if you decide to move to a foreign land to bring the gospel to it, you can be sure that you will be accused of wasting your life.
 - If someone finds out that you are tithing or supporting missions, they will accuse you of not caring enough about your family.
3. I know that some of you who have chosen to home school your children have been accused of foolishness and even of not caring for your children!
 - People who are more distant to you won’t usually say what they really think—they will be nice...
 - but your family will often heap on the criticism...
 - “You could be out working, making something of yourself!”
 - “You are depriving your children of socialisation!”
 - “And oh what an awful thing that you are going to teach them that God created the world instead of the scientific view that everything just sort of popped into being without a Creator.”

- “If you keep teaching that sort of thing, the authorities will have to deal with you!”
 - “We can’t have children growing up in our land who think they have obligations to God!”
4. And if you discipline them in a godly way,
- it is called child abuse.
 - Teaching them good manners and to show respect is to stifle them...
 - Teaching them to pray and seek the LORD is brainwashing (its better to let Hollywood brainwash them).
5. If you pray for two hours a day, people will say that you wasted your time...
- but if you watch television for two hours a day, that is normal.
 - Strange, isn’t it?

TRANS> Brothers and sisters,

- if you serve Jesus Christ in this society, people will think you are extravagant!
 - It doesn’t take a lot to draw up criticism!
 - As soon as they know that you believe the Bible to be God’s Word and that you have made it your only rule of faith and obedience,
 - that is enough to draw up all sorts of criticism...
 - even from those who call themselves Christians!
 - You will be called an extremist and you will be persecuted!

So then we see first of all that Mary’s love was extravagant and secondly, that because it was extravagant, she was criticised for it.

- And now I want you to see lastly that...

III. Mary’s love was praised by Jesus.

- This is very comforting!

A. In verse 10, He says to His complaining disciples:

- v. 10: "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me."
1. The word **good** in the original is *καλον* which means a fine deed, a beautiful thing...
- a. We might translate it that way...
 - “She has done a beautiful thing for me.”

- b. Here you see that Jesus does indeed commend beauty!
- 1) He is the LORD of beauty...
 - As we have seen, He Himself has made beautiful things and things that have no other purpose than to beautiful and pleasant and make us glad.
 - He has adorned flowers with colourful petals and butterflies with beautiful wings...
 - He has made waterfalls and decked the oceans with blue waters and all variety of fish.
 - 2) He delighted in Mary's expression of love because it was beautiful.
 - He did not need it, but by it she expressed her devotion and honour.
 - Her heart was overflowing with gratitude and she had to express it somehow.
 - Husbands, you do well to give your wives flowers or jewels, or to purchase beautiful things for them in the home...
 - And wives, you do well as the keeper of the home to keep a lovely and attractive place.
 - Wherever Christianity has gone, beauty has always gone with it.
 - Psalm 65 speaks of God passing through a land a leaving behind him abundance and fruitful fields alive with rejoicing.
 - 3) It is anti-Christian to oppose beauty and beautiful works!
 - Of course we are to oppose covetousness and the terrible problem of always wanting to live above our means...
 - This is so common today—and the beauty that covetousness produces is a beauty that is spoiled by man...
 - The same diamonds and the same gold are possessed, but they do not sparkle because the man himself ruins it...
 - He has a feast, but it is a feast with strife instead of a feast with rejoicing.

TRANS> But it is very disappointing to see that in our society,

2. Beautiful deeds, loving deeds, are disappearing very quickly!
 - a. We still have a lot of beauty that is left over from the days when Christ was more directly honoured...
 - But more and more it is ruined by covetousness and not sanctified by thanksgiving to God.

- Many people still feel that they ought to love one another which is a thing they learned from Christ,
 - but even this is being swallowed up by selfishness.

- b. If we are to make an impact in our society, it will be done by the exercise of beautiful deeds...
 - Husbands, you need to pray that you would love your wives as Christ loved the church and that you would express that love with beautiful deeds of every description...
 - Wives, you need to pray that you will respond to your husbands with loving devotion that does beautiful deeds of honour for them...
 - And children, you need to pray that you will honour your parents with beautiful deeds and that you will love your brothers and your sisters with beautiful deeds.
 - We need to pray that our church will be full of beautiful deeds for Christ, and that we will reach out to the stranger and to the hurting and to the needy.

- c. We need to be extravagant in our love...
 - Jesus will not call you foolish—He will say that you have done a beautiful thing for Him!
 - We may be able to win a debate with unbelievers—because unbelief is very foolish...
 - but if we have no beauty, if the savour of Christ is not with us, if we have lost our light and our love, nobody will care about His kingdom.

- 3. But you might say,
 - “This is all good preacher, but you have shifted on us!”
 - Jesus was pleased because Mary poured the oil on His body to honour Him, and you are talking about loving each other...
 - But no, I have not really shifted...
 - Don’t you remember what Jesus said in Matthew 25?
 - “If you have done beautiful deeds to the least of these my brethren, you have done beautiful deeds to Me!”
 - Jesus counts it as done to Him when you do it to His people.
 - We are to show our extravagant love for Him by pouring the fragrant oil of love on one another!

B. But where will you every get a heart to do such deeds?

1. You say,

- “I find that I am cold and indifferent—I don’t have the love that I need to pour out all that I have on others.”
- Where does this love come from?

2. This extravagant love comes from faith in Christ...

a. You can never have it until you come to understand that He came to this world to die for sinners...

- He poured out everything He had for us so that we might have the forgiveness of sin...
- I already spoke about that in the introduction...
 - He saw that God’s wrath and curse was going to fall on us, and he came to cover us so that it would all fall on Him instead.
 - We committed the crime and He came to suffer the penalty!
 - Talk about beautiful deeds of extravagant love!
 - There is no love like His love!

b. And once you have come to accept what He did for sinners—once you have begun to trust in Him and have received the assurance that your sins are forgiven by His pouring out of Himself for you...

- You can’t help but pour yourself out for Him!
 - If He has done such a beautiful deed for you, you will be compelled to do beautiful works for Him!
 - Especially when you know that His main reason for pouring Himself out was not just to bring you pardon,
 - but to set up a kingdom of people that do beautiful deeds!
 - Faith that receives His beautiful deed is faith that cannot but produce its own beautiful deeds.

3. This is exactly where Mary’s love came from...

a. Jesus says that she anointed His body for His burial!

1) Look at verse 12: He says:

- v. 12: For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial.

2) Mary seems to have been ahead of the others!

- When Jesus told the others that He was going to be crucified at Jerusalem, and when He told them now that He would be crucified in two days,
 - it seems to have gone in one ear and out the other...
 - They were too busy arguing about who would be the greatest in His kingdom.
- 3) But not with Mary!
- She was not involved in the arguments about who would be the greatest. She was the one who sat at Jesus feet and heard His word...
 - She had seen Him that her brother would live after he had been dead for four days and then call him to come out of the grave.
 - Now when He said that He would be crucified in two days, she believed it.
- b. And because He would be crucified—dying the death of a criminal—Mary had wanted to anoint His body for burial...
- Some people think that Jesus simply attributes her act of love to His burial and that she herself made no such connection,
 - But it makes a lot more sense to take His words literally when He says, “She did it for my burial...”
 - to suppose that this was in fact her intention!
 - to suppose that she realised that her precious Saviour was going to pour out His life for sinners!
 - And that the pouring out of her oil was an expression of her love and gratitude to the one who was pouring out His life for sinners.
- c. That’s why her extravagant love is a model for the love that would spring up in the world after Jesus was crucified and raised again...
- 1) Mary already understood what the eleven disciples were soon to understand.
- The very dying love of Christ that set their hearts on fire to preach the gospel of His death, burial, and resurrection,
 - and that stirred them up to pour their lives out for Him had already set Mary’s heart on fire and stirred her up to pour out her life for Him!
 - That’s why she dumped the bottle of \$30,000 oil on Him and thought it a very little thing!

- 2) Brothers and sisters, you all have precious oil to pour on Him too...
- And if you understand how He poured Himself out for you, you will find nothing better to do with your oil!
 - And none of you will do it in the same way...
 - You will be creative—you will be yearning to pour out love and you will find all sorts of ways to do it...
 - And people will say you have been extravagant,
 - but Jesus will say,
 - “Why do you trouble her—she has done a beautiful thing for Me!”
 - And He will never forget what you have done.
 - He will remember it with delight forever.