

## Gospel of John Chapter 12A

**IN the Narrative that we will be studying this morning from John chapter 12 we will encounter Two Great Loves. In reality they are two opposing passions that drive two different individuals to perform two extraordinary actions.**

**The first individual who will capture our gaze is Mary, the sister of Lazarus:**

**The Beautiful act of anointing Jesus feet, performed by Mary comes from a heart overflowing with love for her Lord.**

**Like a beautiful gem, this morning we will hold Mary's affection up to the light and twist and turn it to capture as much of the beauty as we can.**

**The second individual we will focus our attention upon will be Judas. Like Mary Judas is motivated to act by a powerful love. **BUT Judas' love is NOT a love for the Lord Jesus it is a LOVE for this present world and the things of this world.****

**In his epistle the Apostle John provides a stern warning to all who would set their affections on this present world.**

1 John 2: 15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

**Today we are going to find that Mary's Love for the Lord Jesus manifest itself in 3 ways:**

- **Costly Adoration**
- **Act of true Humility**
- **Expression of deep Intimacy**

**Mary's expression of love for the Lord Jesus was COSTLY, HUMBLE AND INTIMATE**

### **Judas' Love for the World**

- **Is expressed in a loud Objection to Mary's affection.**
- **His words were spoken with great Deception**
- **His actions revealed his Rejection**

**As the Narrative opens we are less than ONE week away from the crucifixion.**

**The plot to destroy Jesus has grown more and more intense since the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead.**

John 11: 47 So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the Council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. 48 If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

John 11: 57 Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.

**For a short time Jesus avoided Jerusalem but as chapter 12 opens we see him purposefully taking steps toward the cross. He returns to the home of Lazarus where a party has been planned in his honor.**

- **INVITATION** – A dinner party to honor the one who raised me from the dead! Signed Lazarus
- **Imagine the crowd that gathered to see the one who had been raised from the dead sitting alongside of the one who is “the resurrection and the life.”**
- **OF course Martha was overwhelmed with the details of serving: would there be enough food, would everybody fit into our house, NO let’s move it to Simon’s house, do we have plans for the overflow?**

John 12:1 Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at the table.

**When Mary enters the room she is carrying an alabaster filled with perfume.**

- **AT first no one would have been surprised as Marry approached the Lord Jesus with her perfume.**
- **In those days, when people gathered socially it was normal to bring out the perfume.**
  - **The homes did not have showers, only royalty had bath tubs.**
  - **Mennen had not yet invented the “Speed Stick.” Deodorant was still a “secret.”**
  - **Those who gathered after a long day’s work in the fields need a dab of ointment on their foreheads to mask the pungent aroma of the non air conditioned room.**
- **What Mary does with her ointment is unexpected and actually quite startling:**

**Mary’s Love for the Lord is: COSTLY, HUMBLE, INTIMATE**

John 12: 3 Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

**Costly:**

**Mary breaks the alabaster box pouring the entire POUND of ointment over Jesus.**

**If we include all of the other narratives along with John’s it seems that Jesus was covered from head to toe with the precious ointment of spikenard and the entire house was filled with the odor of this costly perfume.**

- **The objection of some in the crowd point to the fact that this ointment was worth 300 denarii. ONE denarii is equal to ONE day’s wages.**
- **The Median annual household income in the United States in 2012 was \$50,100. Or 192.69 day.**
- **If you work 6 days a week you would work 312 days a year: This ointment is worth 300 days wages. Safe to say in our economy approximately \$50,000.**
- **Most likely, this Spikenard was the MOST valuable commodity the family owned and Mary breaks the box and pours the entire contents out on the Lord Jesus.**
- **This was truly a sacrificial gift. Family heirloom, Family savings. Possibly even Mary’s Dowry: giving up her wealth, her hope for a mate, her future.**

**Is there a COST to your expression of love for the Lord? Is your life marked by sacrifice?**

- **Does that COST involve: Your Treasure? Your Time? Your Talent?**

**Matthew 4:20, Mark 1:18, Peter, James and John left their nets, abandoned the family business to follow Jesus. That must have been a costly sacrifice.**

**Matthew 9:9, Matthew himself left a lucrative vocation collecting taxes for the Romans to follow Jesus.**

**Luke 19:8, And Zacchaeus (at the expression of his faith) stood and said: “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.”**

**Many believers squirm when the Word of God touches these sensitive areas of life...**

**When the Holy Spirit touches our “M&M’s” Morality and Money. Financial sacrifice is uncomfortable. It takes an act of God to set our moral compass on true north.**

Everything that Mary has, all that she is, all that she owns she lovingly yields up to the Lord. **BUT Notice** that her lavish gift was not sought by the Lord, it was not required of him, Mary’s gift was a pure expression of affection, voluntarily yielded from a heart of love.

### **Humbly:**

Note here in John that Mary anoints Jesus’ FEET with her costly perfume.

**Mary’s actions took place at a time and place in which dealing with the feet was considered demeaning.** No Jewish person, not even a Jewish slave – dealt with anyone’s feet except his own. The task of cleaning and anointing feet was reserved for the lowest of Gentile slaves.

- **IN a day** when every family had their own livestock and worked the fields in open sandals, feet picked up things that would cause a good Jew to be considered “UNCLEAN.”
- This is why it was such a scandal when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples.
- Mary humbles herself, taking the place of the lowest servant and graciously ministers at Jesus’ feet.
- As a matter of fact, every time that we come upon Mary throughout the Gospel of John she is found at Jesus’ feet.

### **Mary’s act speaks of INTIMACY.**

In the narrative we find that Mary takes down her hair, using it as one would use a rag to wipe the excess perfume from the feet of Jesus.

- In ancient times a woman would never let down her hair in public. As a matter of fact, if she did so it was grounds for her husband to divorce her. If a single woman let down her hair in public, it was possible that she could be stoned to death.
- The letting down of the hair was reserved for the home and only in the presence of her closet family members.

**BUT Mary’s expression of pure devotion completely disregarded the cost; BOTH the monetary cost as well as the probable cost to her reputation.**

John 12: 3 Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

- **ALTHOUGH** the entire house **was FILLED** with **the fragrance** of the perfume the **lingering effects** of **Mary's devotion** would be something that was uniquely shared between she and the Lord Jesus.
- This ointment of Spikenard **had a lasting aroma** that would have remained BOTH on the **Lord Jesus** and **on Mary for Weeks**. So, Jesus literally went to the cross with the **aroma of Mary's affection** rising as sweet incense to his nostrils.
- As he bore her sin he would also bear a reminder of the ones for whom he was dying.
- Mary would **walk away from dinner bearing the aroma of Christ**.

2 Corinthians 2:14 But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. 15 For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing,

**Moving from Mary's Affection we come immediately to Judas' Objection:**

John 12: 4 But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said,  
 5 "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?"  
 6 He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it.  
 7 Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial.  
 8 The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."

**While Mary expressed her sincere Love for the Lord; Judas counters with an expression Love for the World**

- His love is expressed in a **loud Objection** to Mary's affection.
- His words were spoken with **great Deception**
- His actions revealed his own **Rejection**

**OBJECTION:**

John 12: 4 But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said,  
 5 "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?"

- A year's wages would go far in feeding hungry people. \$50,000 buys a lot of groceries! Here in the Food Bank we can feed 80 families for less than 1000.
- Judas' protest was so persuasive, his seemingly righteous indignation is so convincing that the **other disciples** immediately **joined in his public outcry**:

Mark 14:4 There were some who said to themselves indignantly, "Why was the ointment wasted like that? 5 For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they scolded her.

- See how easily the **majority** of true disciples can be led astray by the **outspoken deceitfulness** of one individual.

Caring for the POOR, that is a very good thing. **The fight for social injustice**, ministering to societies most needy **has definite value**,

**BUT** the greatest need of mankind is NOT social justice it is salvation from sin.

- **If Jesus came** to provide social justice **he failed!** **If he came** to provide salvation **he triumphed!**

**There is a deceitfulness at work in the church today, much like what we are reading, it influences believers to abandon MARY like behavior and embrace the philosophy of Judas.**

- **Mary is always found at Jesus' feet, studying every Word that comes out of his mouth, worshipping him with all of her heart and all of her treasure.**
- **JUDAS is an advocate for the poor. He is more interested in transforming society than worshipping God.**
- **Many in the church have abandoned the Word of God to focus all of their efforts on transforming society. But society is transformed through the Gospel, one heart at a time.**
- **In reality, Judas' concern for the poor is only a cover-up for his own covetousness.**
- **His cry is a façade. He didn't care about the poor. He was upset because he missed an opportunity for a personal financial windfall.**

**DECPTION:**

John 12:6 He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it.

John Mac, "Judas has cast his lot with Jesus, expecting him to usher in the messianic kingdom that the Jewish people looking for. As one in The Inner Circle, Judas eagerly anticipated and exalted position in the kingdom. But now, for him, that dream had turned to ashes. Jesus had so antagonized the Jewish leaders that they intended to kill him. Not only that, the Lord himself warned the disciples that his death was inevitable. Disillusioned, Judas, facing the end of his ambitions, decided to at least get some financial compensation for the three years he had wasted on Jesus."

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

- **The deceitfulness of our sinful hearts seeks to justify our corrupt behavior on the basis of what we think we are OWED.**
- **I worked all that overtime last week, I deserve to slack off a little bit this week. After all I came into work and I really don't feel very well.**
- **If Judas was anything like the rest of the disciples he surely sacrificed his comfort and lifestyle over the 3 years walking with Jesus,**
- **So it is only right that he helps himself to a percentage of the ministry income.**
- **He handled ALL of the finances and expenses without ever asking for a salary and that was a lot of work! After all this is a BIG ministry.**

If our principal treasure be as we profess, in things spiritual and heavenly, and woe unto us if it be not so! On them will our affections, and consequently our desires and thoughts, be principally fixed.

—John Owen

A godly man preferreth grace before goods, and wisdom before the world.

—Richard Bernard

## **REJECTION**

7 Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial.

8 The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."

**Jesus rejects the objection of Judas, He will not allow Judas to detract from or to distort the beauty of Mary's timely expression of affection.**

- **Somehow she senses his impending death and honors him while he is still alive to receive that honor.**
- **SHE understands that she will not always have him present with her, so she takes this opportunity to display her deep love for him.**
- **Jesus will not allow Judas to cast a cloud of doubt over such a brilliant display of heartfelt worship.**

**When I began this teaching today I said we would encounter Two Great Loves, two opposing passions that drive two different individuals to perform two extraordinary actions.**

- **Mary's love for the Lord is a glorious display of worship. She willingly yields everything of value to the one who is the object of her affection, the Lord Jesus.**
- **Judas' love for this world and the passing riches that it contains began a downward spiral that would literally lead him to self destruction in only 6 days.**
- **Mary willingly gave up her entire life savings, her future out of a deep affection for her beloved Savior.**
- **Judas loved the wealth of this present world so much that He sold the Lord Jesus for 20 pieces of silver that he wasn't able to spend.**

1 Timothy 6:7 for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. 8 But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.

9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

**WHERE IS YOUR TREASURE?**