

Series: John

Title: How one woman showed her love for Jesus

Text: John 11:55-12:11

Will you take your Bibles, please, and turn to John chapter 11. There are notes in your bulletin. We encourage you to follow along with us, as we study God's Word. John 11 beginning at Vs 55 and read to chapter 12 verse 11.

(Read 11:55-12:11)

Prayer

Father we thank you again for your word. And we recognize that here is the truth. We need to know about Jesus Christ and about ourselves and about our world and about what is necessary to have everlasting life. Father, we pray that in this time together in your Word ~~that~~ that you will speak to every heart that is here. We know that each person has particular needs today. Things that are pressing in upon us..burdens and trails...testings of every kind. And Father we pray that your Holy Spirit would minister to everyone as we know he can do. ~~Thank you~~ We thank you for this time. We pray that the message that we find in this event in Bethany when Mary anointed the feet of Jesus might transform many of us. As we realize what the priorities are in our life. And we ask this in Jesus name...Amen.

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Of course an amazing thing has happened in John chapter 11. A man has been raised from the dead. That is the third occasion in which we have very spectacular results from the healing ministry of Christ. That in some way were fulfilling the O.T. terms of him being Messiah.

In John chapter 5 he healed the lame man. Which the Bible says the Messiah would do. And in John chapter 9 he healed a man who was born blind. Which the Bible says that the Messiah would do.

The Messiah was also to raise the dead. And in John chapter 11 Jesus did that also.

And so it was an amazing thing. And there was no question about it. People were excited about what happened when Jesus raised a man from the dead.

Probable no other miracle served as the immediate setting and background of what happened in the triumphal entry of Christ, like the miracle that happened 6 days before the passover. And that was at Bethany. A ~~miracle~~ ~~in which~~. The miracle of Lazarus was certainly the key thing, And every body's attention was centered upon it.

But another miracle was happening there. And that is a woman was telling all those at a supper that she believed what Jesus taught was actually going to happen. She believed that he was going to go into Jerusalem, which was just a few miles away from Bethany, that he was going to be betrayed, that he was going to die on a cross, and that he was going to be buried. And in a most amazing way this woman came with a box of ointment and prepared the body of Jesus for his own burial six days before he actually died.

It is quite a story. I don't know if you have really studied it from the impact of what she was doing. It is quite a thing that happened here.

( ) Let's look at the situation that face him in these last few verse of chapter 11.

(1 ) First of all, as to the PASSOVER. We are told in Vs 55 that the Jewish passover was at hand. And so many were coming from the country up to Jerusalem, in order to purify themselves.

The question might be why did they come up so early if the Passover didn't start for a number of days. Well, according to Numbers chapter 9 verses 10-13, anyone who had touched a dead body, either an animal or a human being, and there were other laws about uncleanness, they were to keep the Passover, but they were to do it one month later. In Number chapter 31 verses 19 and 20, we learn that a person was required to take 7 days for cleansing. And it was usually the custom, then, for the Jews to arrive at least one week preceding the feast day. In order to go through the ritual of washing and cleansing, so that by the time the feast came they could partake of it and be sure of the fact that they had no uncleanness in their life.

So, these great host of Jews flocked down those roads from all parts of the country heading toward Jerusalem in order to be there a few days before Passover.

To arrive at least 7 days before the Feast so that they could purify themselves.

(2 ) The second thing that I want you to notice about this situation facing him was the ~~plot~~ plot that had been definitely laid out against him.

We read in verses 56 to 57 that some of ~~the~~ crowd ~~that~~ had come up to Jerusalem to cleanse themselves were seeking for Jesus. And they were asking the question: I wonder if he is going to come?

AND if you think back a little bit you know that Jesus is going to come. There is no question about it. Jesus is going to be there. But they wondered if he would because of the hatred that he faced in these public feast. He already faced an attempt upon his life. At one feast they tried to stone him. They tried to arrest him. They tried to take him by force. But he escaped these attempts. So, the question is will he come.

Will, obviously he will come. Because he all ready attained the two previous passovers recorded in this book in John 13 and John 6:4 where he feed the five thousand, It was required according to O.T. law for every Jewish male 20 years and older to attained three feast out of the seven feast of Jehovah. They were the feast of Passover, the feast of Pentecost, and the feast of Tabernacles.

In chapter 5 verse 1 Jesus went up to a feast. The name of it is not mentioned. But I believe it was the feast of Pentecost.

And in chapter 7 verse 2 to 10 I learn that Jesus went up to the Feast of Tabernacles inspite of the opposition that was against him.

Yes, Jesus is going to come. But on this occasion it is a little different ~~story~~ story. Because ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> plot against Jesus is now from the standpoint of those unbelievers going to be fulfilled. They are going to take him. But, also, from the standpoint of prophecy, ~~it~~ <sup>he</sup> is going to be fulfilled. Because now is the time for Jesus to die.

The Bible says in Vs 57 that the chief priests and the Ph<sub>a</sub>risees had now given orders that if anyone knew ~~where~~ where he is they should ~~tell~~ tell them so that they might seize him.

So, the sence is now set. But what happened is not what they planned. They were hoping that when they found Jesus they could secretly go out and arrest him and secretly do away with him. Little did they realize that in a few days all of Jersuehm would go out and throw palm breaches in his way and crying out: HOSANNA! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD. It sort of changed their plans for the moment.

But, not ~~axxx~~ according to prophcey. Because the Bible teaches us that Judas was prepared by God to betray Jesus. And you heard me right. He was prepared by God to betrayed Jesus.

So, you see, even though the chief priest and Pharesees had their plans delayed. In reality God is helping their plans by having Judas come to them to betray Jesus. And the reason Judas came to them is the story we find in chapter 12. DID YOU KNOW THAT?

This story of Mary anointing the feet of Jesus is the reason Judas went to the religious leaders to betray Jesus. And I hope you see and understand that as we look at this wonderful story in John chapter 12.

( ) Now, in these first 8 verse of John chapter 12 we have the story of this supper at Bethany. And I would like you to notice, first of all, its connection to other accounts. There is a problem here in the Gospels. Its connection to other accounts.

There are two other accounts that are similar to this. They are similar. But some differences that should be noted.

First of all, Matthew chapter 26...Matthew 26 (The other account is in Mark 14) Matthew 26 and Mark 14. And some Bible teachers feel that this is a separate occasion from John 12. I do not believe that. I believe it is the same occasion. And I want to try an answer the problem that most people bring up. Now, in our passage of John chapter 12 verse 1 it says that six days before the passover they had this supper at Bethany.

In Matthew 26 vers 1 it says that....(READ Vs 1-14)

That little word "then" is very important in the Greek text as well as in Englisht. It means: "Immidiately upon this occasion."

Then is when Judas decided to betray him.

Now, there are several problems. In our text it says 6 days before the Passover. In Matthew 26:2 it looks like it says 2 days. Also, in John 12 it is a supper for Lazarus. And Martha and Mary are there. And there is no mention of Simon the Leper. But in Matthew Simon the Leper is mentioned. And there is no mention of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary.

So, we have these few little problems.

First of all, in regards to the two day problems. I do not believe that we have a problem at all. I believe the supper happened 6 days before the passover. And that the two days fits right where it is suppose to be. Two days before the Passover is when the assemble of the Sanhidren got together to take care of Jesus and to kill him.

The events fit. The sermon on the Mt. in Matthew 24 and 25 was preached after the triumphal entry. All these events fit in.

But the point as to why he puts in the supper at this point is to back up to an event four days before which gives you the immidate occasion as to why the Sanhidren was meeting together to plot the death of Jesus two days before the Passover. Because Judas has now sold Jesus down the river as it were. He sold him for 30 pieces of silver.

So, it is not a conflict. It is not saying that the supper happend two days before. No, the Priest were gathering together to plot the death of Jesus two days before the Passover. And it goes back to the occasion of the supper to show you the immidated reason why Judas went out to betray Jesus.

Now, let's look at Mark 14. This does bring up an interesting point. And that is that the supper did happen in a home of a man who was a former leper. Obviousely he was a former leper or they wouldn't be in his home.

Some have suggested that he was the leper in Matthew 8 who got healed by Jesus. I don't know. I have no way of knowing. But, I will tell you one thing. I don't think it is wrong to believe that Jesus healed that man. And that is why he had a supper for him in his home. And it was in Bethany. And Bethany is not that large of a town. It is a little town about two miles from Jersulem.

And so who ever is there would have been invited as a guest in that little village, Which of course would have included Lazarus and Martha and Mary.. Because Jesus had just raised Lazarus from the dead.

Why not have a supper. Listen, he just raised you from the dead and he healed me of leprosy. Let's have a big blow out. I mean let's do it. And do you know who we ought to have serve? Do you know who we ought to have serve this meal?.....Right on!.....Martha! Martha!

Martha who once was doing so many other things. But not now. She is doing just what God wanted her to do. She is serving the Lord. This is beautiful. Look at Mark 14 verse 1..."Now the feast of the Passover and Unleavened Bread was two days off; and the chief priests were seeking how to seize Him and kill him."

So, in Mark 14 and Matthew 26 we learn that the two days is the discussing the problem of the Priest getting together to kill Jesus. They refer back to the meal that happened early because that is when Judas finally decided to betray Jesus based on what happened. We will find out why in a moment. So, let's come back to John chapter 12.

Now, I know that was a quick study of those three passages. But let me put the story together for you from all three accounts, as we look secondly, at the circumstances involved. First, the connection with all three accounts. Secondly, the circumstances that were involved.

Let me lay them out for you.

Number one, it was in a home of a man called Simon the Leper. A man who was probably healed by Jesus.

Secondly, we learned that Lazarus was there. That is not a causal remark. The point is that he had been raised from the dead. And he is the guest of honor. There he is. Man! it is great to see you alive. What was it like to be dead for four days? Can you imagine the conversation around that table? "Hay! what did it feel like under all that linen cloth? Did you feel funny standing there with all that cloth and no body was going to take it off?"

Boy! you talk about table conversation. I bet it was a great time of praise and thanksgiving....

Lazarus has been raised from the dead. Simon the leper has been healed. What a dinner. What a meal. What conversation must have gone on.

(3 ) And the third fact we learn about the circumstances is that Martha is serving. What a precious note here in the Bible. It didn't need to say that. But, every word in the Bible is important. And Vs 2 says that Martha was serving. Before she was distracted, she was accusing Mary of not wanting to help because Mary was sitting at the feet of Jesus and learned from him. And Jesus had said to Martha, "Mary had chosen the good part and you haven't." "You haven't chosen the best thing, Martha."

But, isn't it encouraging to learn that Jesus didn't tell Martha to stop serving? You see, Martha got strengthened out on her priorities and she is back serving again. That is a precious thing. That is really neat.

You know, the important thing is what is really first in your life. That is really important. Jesus became first in her life and that made all the difference.

I also like what it says in Vs 2.. "They made Him a supper." It was a joint thing. Everybody got together for this meal. It was an important time.

Now, Mary did an unusually thing. And I believe there is a problem here as to whether or not it was really done. I just share this with you.

It could very well be that the common custom of providing it, that is the oil for the hair and the water for the feet, was not done again. Some have concluded that. And so Mary was doing what was expected. In other words, she had forgotten to do it earlier. And now she is doing it. It is sort of like the case in John 13. As the disciples gathered in the upper room and Jesus washed their feet. There is a problem as to whether they had already washed their feet or they hadn't.

I have the feeling, knowing the situation of Martha's concern for details, I believe that Martha had the basin of water at the door and had the anointing oil for Jesus, and thus the custom was taken care of as the people entered the house. And so what Mary is doing now is very unusually and surprising. She is doing something that no one expected her to do. You must understand that....

What she was doing was not the common custom. It had already been done and was taken care of. And they were now, as the text says, at the table.

You say, "How did Mary get to his feet. Did she crawl under the table?" NO..in ancient times they reclined at couches as they ate. Usually there was a central table in the middle where they had the food. And you would recline usually on one arm and take the food with your free hand and eating.

So, the feet would be outside the main eating area. And so it would be very easy to get up and wash someone's feet.

So, make sure the circumstance of how this happened are clear in your mind.

Now, Jesus according to Mark 14 and Matthew 26 was also anointed on his head. Which causes us a problem at this point by saying "why did she anoint him on his head as well as his feet if she had already done this when he ~~enter~~ entered the house?"

You see, that is the view I take. So why did she anoint Him? I want to tell you that I believe Mary was also doing that under symbolism that was very precious. You know, in the O.T. a priest was to be anointed on his head. The Bible teaches that. In fact if you have been reading the Bible along with us you would have read that. About Aaron and his sons. They were anointed on their heads.

Also, the Bible teaches that the prophets were anointed with oil on their head. And one other thing, the Bible teaches that Kings were also anointed with oil on their head.

What a beautiful thing as Mary broke that jar of ointment and poured it, says Matthew 26 and Mark 14, on his head. And she was reminding everyone that ~~here~~ here in one person was: prophet, priest, and king. And ~~§~~ deserves all the honor and glory. That was a fantastic thing she did. As she poured it on his head ..thus giving a testimony as to who Jesus really was: Prophet... Priest...and King.

There is no question that Mary had insight on this occasion. Because she believed that Jesus was going to die. She believed that he was going to be buried.



One other thing before we leave this. In fact there are so many things in this story that I would like to share with you. I just haven't got the time. But, it is really a fantastic story. There are so many little details.

But the typolocal here is really great. Let me show you what I mean. Lazarus is raised from the dead. And Mary and Martha and Simon the Leper are there. And they are eating a meal that has been prepared for Jesus. And I thought "How wonderful". Because this is a type of the marriage supper of the Lamb. As resurrected saints and those who are going to be going into the millium are going to be seating down with Jesus at a supper. And the one to be anointed and the one to be praised at that occassion is Jesus. Who is the lamb, himself, the great bridgroom. And what a precious symbolism that is.

And Mary ..beautifully representing what saints are going to be doing in the Millium..the thousand years reign of Christ upon the earth- as they are going to worship like Mary-I tell you it is wonderful- We are going to worship like we have never worshipped before. We are going to see that Jesus is number one. And we are going to see him in all his glory.

But, also we represent ourselves in Martha, .Martha was serving. And the Bible says that the Saints are going to serve him forever. This is all so wonderful in typolical. Resurrected now and seating down with Jesus at a meal. Really great.

(3 ) Let's look, in a third place, at the commitment of Mary. In Vs 3, we are told that she took a pound of ointment of spikenard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment.

Two things here that I want you to see...

(1 ) First of all, as to the money that was involved. It reveals the commitment that Mary had. The money involved. We are told in Vs 3 that it was very costly. The same thing is said in Matthew 26 and Mark 14.

And in Vs 5 when Judas was attaching what she had done, he said, "why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii, and given to the poor."

Now, a denarius is one day's wages. So, almost a years salary was in that ointment.

So, let's put it into perspective. If you make \$20,000 a year. That ointment would cost \$16,400.

And you see, Judas was seating their. He was the treasurer of the group. And they had needs in the group, let me tell you. And he watches this woman take a jar of ointment costing \$16,400 dollars and breaks it and pours it all over Jesus. He just could not justify that at all in his mind.

But, would we have been any different. I just wander what our Board would have done if one of you ladies had taken something valved at \$16,400 dollars and poured it over anyother persons body? ..HAY! THAT IS A LOT OF CASH...Are we so sure we would not react like Judas?

She wasted that ointment(quote-unquote) on Jesus. Would you feel that way? \$16,400 dollars--wasted. You know, that is what it cost to support a missionary for one year. You see, that was Judas's argument. "Hay, that could have been used for the poor." "Let's get a work going and give that \$16,400 dollars to the poor. And really do something for Christ." "Instead of just wasting by pouring it on the feet of Jesus."

The money here is very important. It was costly. It was expenseive. And the commitment that Mary made is a challenge to everyone of us. Do we really understand that Jesus wants to be first. And that this is nothing.... this is a drop in the bucket compared to His worth. And what He does for us. Why! what he did on the cross is worthy 5 million pounds of this ointment. Who are we to say on any ocassion, like Judas, that this should have been sold to the poor. This is quite a statement. The money involved teaches us something about comitment.

(2 )And secondly, the manner in which <sup>she</sup> he did this. Two things stand out in my mind about what she did.

(1 ) Number one, she put the ointment on his feet. I am not so alarmed about putting the ointment on the head. Even thought the symbolism there about Prophet, priest, and king is fantastic. Yet, it was customary.

But, putting the ointment on his feet is just about the most revolting thing that she could have done. Can you imigine those feet that had been soiled and hard from walking the countryside?

And then putting this costly ointment that usually beautified the faces of laidies in Rome, to put this ointment on the feet. ~~And~~

(2 ) And then, in the second place, to have the nerve to wipe his feet with her hair. Now, that is really something.

I wander how many of us would have done the same. You say, "Well Mary was the woman of the street."....Be carefully....We don't know that...She wasn't Mary Magdalene. That was another gale. I don't know that you know that She wasn't the woman who was a sinner off the streets in Luke chapter 7. I don't know that you can say that. As a matter of fact, the testimony is that Mary was a woman who was learning from Christ all throughout His ministry. WHO IS TO SAY WHAT MARY'S BACKGROUND WAS. She was no woman of the street accouding to the Bible. She came from a fine home in Bethany. She had a sister and a brother. We don't know anything else. Why read something into it.

I wander what fine person here would do the same. But the ointment on those callous feet so often dirty from the roads of that day. And then would wipe the feet with your hair. WHAT A TREMENDOUS THING SHE DID.

You know, the thing that hite me, in addition to all that is being said here, is what happened in chapter 13. You talk about preparation for chapter 13. WOW!!Chapter 13 is dealing with the washing of the disciples feet by Jesus. And telling them to wash one anothers feet. And Peter said, "Hay! not me, man! You are not going to wash my feet."

Think of the preparation in John chapter 12, of a woman pouring that costly ointment on the feet of Jesus. And then wiping his feet with her hair. No sacrifice was to great for her. She was above that. She humbled herself like few of us have ever humbled ourselves.

And I believe that many of us fail to see that if we really love him it has ~~to~~ be deminstrated. And in that moment she showed her love for Jesus, like few of us have ever shown. She wiped His feet with her hair.

(4 ) And let's notice in the fourth case the concern of Judas. What he thought about all of this. In Vs 4 through 6. I would like you to notice three things here about his concern.

(1 ) One, his relationship to the plan of God. According to John 12:4 it simply said that Judas was the one intending to betray Him. That is a little note telling you that this is all related to the plan of God.

And as I have already mentioned in Matthew and Mark it clearly shows that this was the occasion that gave Judas the reason to betray Jesus.

(2 ) Secondly, notice the reaction he felt along with the rest of the disciples. Matthew 26 and Mark 14 it uses the word "indignation." Listen, friends, they were down right mad. They were really upset. They felt that this was a violation of taking care of the money.

And Judas really reacted. Vs 5 .."Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii, and given to the poor?"

The other Gospels tells that they had indignation and anger towards that woman. Think of the stupid thing that that woman did. '

(3 ) And third, I want you to notice the reason behind what he did. Vs 6 tells us.."Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief."

That tells me something, about attitudes. The motivation here was that he was a thief. And yet he was now criticizing this woman for wasting this ointment and saying that it should have been sold and the money given to the poor. Yet, he was a thief. You see, he didn't say it because he cared about the poor.

Mark this down..Many people would rather care for those whom Jesus can reach, than for Jesus himself. They would rather meet temporal and physical needs --all in the name of loving Christ. Than they would to love him. There are all kinds of social and humanitarian efforts, all in the name of Christianity. And they have left their first love which is Jesus himself. Not that we shouldn't care for the poor. The Bible tells us to care for the poor. The Bible tells Christians to seek with all means to reach the poor with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But, the poor you will always have.

Some people get excited and say, "Listen, we could eliminate poverty if all the Christians really gave to the poor."

NO WAY! Jesus said in Vs 8 that we will always have the poor. We will never eliminate poverty.

I have a little note in my file concerning John 12:8 that goes all the way back to President Lyndon Johnson. Do you remember his statements on the "GREAT SOCIETY"? He said in his address to the Nation that during his term it was possible to eliminate all ~~poverty~~ poverty.

I just put that in there with John 12:8. Jesus said "the poor you always have with you." You know, he would have saved a lot of time if he had just read the Bible. (Ha)

Now, don't misunderstand me. I am not saying that as Christians we should help the poor. We should. The Bible tells us to.

I am just saying that there is a confusion of priorities. You see, some folks get their eyes on what we want to do for Christ, instead of just loving him. Do you understand? Everybody wants to do for him. As if there is some thing we can do for him..Right?

Jesus wants us to love him. And then out of that love to go forth and serve. This is so important in this text.

(5 ) And then in the case, notice the cause behind Mary's commitment according to Christ in verses 7 and 8. Two things I want you to see here that our Lord clearly taught.

(1 ) One, her ~~very~~ understanding of Christ's ministry was correct. She really understood. The Bible teaches that she was doing this for the day of his burial. She understood that Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost. And he had to die on the cross to do it. She understood that. She understood that the saviour was going to die. And she brought that ointment just to let him know.."I believe everything you said."

Jesus indicated that this is true. In Matthew 26 that wherever this story is told it would be a memorial of her testimony to the Gospel. In other words, this woman believed the very heart of the Gospel that Jesus would die for the sins of the whole world. And that little simple act of bringing an ointment for burial and pouring over the head of Jesus and over his feet was letting him know ..I BELIEVE THAT WHAT YOU HAVE SAID IS GOING TO HAPPEN."

You talk about understanding..WHW!!! I wish that we who have all the evidence that Mary did not have would believe the same.

(2 ) And secondly, her priorities were straight. And this was according to Vs 8 where Jesus said, "the poor you always have with you; but you do not always have me."

Jesus is first...not second to anyone. To serve Christ and to focus in on spiritual priorities is far more important and more valuable than any temporal priority ---no matter how valuable it seems.

It is valuable to minister to people in need. There is no question about that. But that temporal priority (for it is temporal-) is not worthy to be compared with the spiritual priority of Jesus being first in your life. Of loving him more than anything. That he is really first.

( ) And finally in verse 9 to 11 there were many that were saved because of this miracle. We are told this. Vs 9 ... "The great multitude therefore of the Jews learned that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus."

And then Vs 10 tells us that the chief priests took counsel that they might put Lazarus to death also because on account of him many of the Jews were going away, and were believing in Jesus."

Many believed...One woman...expressing her love for Christ. And teaching us what Jesus really wants.

Jesus wants you to love Him.

But, do you know the thing that excites me about this story? Whether you love him or not, do you know that he loves you? He does....He loves you so much. And you know he is going to get you, don't you?

Sure he loves you. You know, it is something how we fight ~~ang~~ against the love of Jesus. He doesn't ask us to clean up our lives. He just loves us. And his love is seen at the cross where he paid ~~for~~ for all your sins. Every last sin that you have ever committed or could commit. And it is finished. He offers you ~~complete~~ complete forgiveness of all sins. He offers to give you eternal life, if you would only believe that he is just who he claims to be.

And while, this morrow, you may not be able to do what Mary did, you can in your heart show the same kind of love. Just turn to a saviour who loves you, and say.."I love you for who you are and for what you have done for me. And I now believe that you are my saviour and my lord."

Hay! that kind of confession can change your life.

LET'S BOW IN A CLOING WORD OF PRAYER