

**SERIES: GETTING TO KNOW JESUS**

**SUBJECT: EXTRAVAGANT LOVE**

**SCRIPTURE: MARK 14:1-9**

**SERMON NO. 30**

### **Introduction**

The world's philosophy is one of selfishness and getting, while the Christian's philosophy is one of selflessness and giving. God-centered people in a man-centered world are difficult to understand.

**When people in the world see Christians in the midst of horrible circumstances**, refusing to be devastated by them, but rather, turning to God in faith, they don't understand. What kind of people are these Christians? What motivates them? What is it about them that causes them to live this way?

A simple answer to those questions is that **our love for Jesus causes us to live that way**. We have come into a relationship with the living God. He loved us, reached out to us and forgave us, and now He walks with us through even the hardest times of life. **He has given meaning and purpose to life.** All we have we owe to Him. And nothing we could ever do would be enough to repay Him for all He has done for us. **He lives in us, and empowers us by His Spirit to face life and to face it successfully.** So our love for Him causes us to live for Him. Love for Jesus is the motivating force. The longer we know Him the more we love Him, and the more we want to love Him.

**Our love for Him becomes an extravagant love.** There is nothing too great to do for Him; nothing too much to give.

Our passage of Scripture tells the story of an extravagant love. Although Mark does not mention her name, from John's gospel, we know that it is the story of Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. The scene unfolds days before the Passover, which would be Jesus' last.

**I. LOVE'S EXTRAVAGANCE. (3). And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.**

**1. Mary loved the Lord, He had been a real friend to her.** He had been there during some of the most difficult times of her life. One was when her brother Lazarus died and he miraculously raised him from the dead. **Mary had experienced the wonderful love of Jesus.** He was not like any other man she had ever known. He was a powerful man who could speak causing storms to cease, demons to flee, and the dead to be raised. **He was powerful, yet gentle.** Little children would run up to him and hug him. He was not like any man she had ever known, but he had reached out to her. *How could she ever thank Him enough?*

**2. She thought this may be her last chance to do something special for her Lord.** So she seized the opportunity and took an alabaster vial of very costly perfume, broke it, and Vs 3 **poured it on his head.** We learn from the text that this perfume was worth over three hundred denarii, each denari equaled one day's wage in that day. This perfume was worth over a year's wage. **This was true extravagance.** *Why would she do such a thing?*

**3. Mary had an attitude of devotion to Jesus.** We find her, in another place, sitting at His feet while her sister worked in the kitchen to prepare a meal. To her, Jesus was the most important person in the world. Mary's devotion is a lesson to us. The mark of a true believer is that he or *she is genuinely in love with Jesus.*

**4. Nothing was too precious for her to give Jesus.** She held nothing sacred, held nothing as too precious to give to Him. And what she gave was worth more than one year's wages.

**There is no indication that she was wealthy.** What she gave cost her, just like if you gave a year's wages it would cost you. But that is a mark of extravagant love.

**5. Mary rejoiced in the fact that she had been given the privilege to give it.** It wasn't a burdensome gift. It was a gift of love. *It was a gift which was an example of love's extravagance.*

## **II. LOGIC'S EXASPERATION. (4). And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?**

**1. Immediately, the nit-pickers and complainers began to talk.** From John's gospel we see that Judas, the treasurer, made the loudest complaint. He just couldn't stomach what was happening. All he saw was that a costly ointment worth over a year's wages had been poured out and ruined. **He complained that what Mary had done was a waste.** In verse 5 **He said that the perfume ought to have been sold and the money given to the poor.** Now, that sounds not only like a **logical argument**, but a very benevolent and worthwhile one. But while it may look so on the outside, **Jesus didn't buy it at all.** He saw this as an expression of Mary's love to him.

**2. Jesus reminded them that the poor would always be with us (6-7). Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me. 7 For ye have have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good; but me ye Hve not always.** Mary had chosen to do the best thing she could by seizing an opportunity to offer what she could to Jesus.

**Judas didn't understand because he was not saved**, nor devoted to Christ. His relationship was one based only on intellectual reasons. His commitment was an intellectual one, and intellectual commitment is never enough. **Intellectual commitment lasts only as long as things go the way you think they ought to go.** (Jim Blair, called and resigned) That was certainly true in Judas' case. When things started to go in a different direction than the one Judas wanted, Judas betrayed the Lord. Intellectual commitment is not enough.

**III. THE LORD'S EXHORTATION. (8-9). She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. 9 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.**

**1. Motives are what really count in our devotion to the Lord.** Why did Mary do this good work? She did it because she loved Him. She offered that costly perfume out of a heart motivated by love. Her motives were right, and **Jesus saw that**. He looks not on merely the outward work, but He looks on the motives of the heart. And if our motives are right, that's what really counts. Even **imperfect service rendered because we love Jesus** and want to truly do His will, will always be accepted.

Notice verse 8 Jesus says, ***"She hath done what she could."*** **It is not what you can't do, but what you can do that matters.** When we look at all the good that could be done and see our limited ability, we sometimes get discouraged from doing what we can do. You might not be able to do every-thing, but you are able to do something. And what you can do, you ought to do. **Don't be sidetracked from doing what you can do because of what you cannot do.**

In Mary's case, **the good thing** was selling the ointment and giving the money to the poor, **but the best thing** was to truly worship Jesus by anointing Him. She did what she could. She did the best thing.

**2. The question is not what we could do, but what God is calling us to do.** When Mary expressed her love for Jesus in that extravagant way, John tells us that the entire house was filled with the sweet-smelling fragrance of that perfume. What Mary did was a beautiful thing. **It was true worship. It was an example of love's extravagance.** It doesn't make a lot of sense to the world. To those of us who love Jesus, it makes great sense. For we know that when we truly give of ourselves in worship to Him, our lives are filled with the sweet-smelling fragrance of His glorious love.

**3. The challenge for the Christian is not to be willing to die for Jesus, but to be willing to live for Him.** It takes a greater commitment to be willing to live for Him than to be willing to die for Him. But that is where the commitment really counts for the sake of the Kingdom of God. *It is in living for Jesus that we accomplish Kingdom work.*

**4. God has given everyone different abilities.** What do you have. What can you do well. All of us can do something. None of us are without some talent. Our gifts might not be great, but they are ours. And we can and must offer them to Jesus.

### **Conclusion**

Respond to Him today by offering yourself first as a sweet smelling sacrifice to God. Then offer those gifts of what you can do in the service of His Kingdom. As you do you will find that **He will not only accept them, He will rejoice over them.** And into your life will come the joy that belongs to those who are in His service and in His will.

Mary knew how to truly worship the Lord. May we learn how to worship Him too.