

EXTRAVAGANT WORSHIP

March 4, 2018 | Pastor Keith Jenkins

Extravagant Worship is the first sermon in a new series leading up to Easter.

Over the next few weeks this series will present some of the moments, scenes, or snapshots of Jesus's last days. Culminating in the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into the city of Jerusalem and then Randy's Easter Sunday message.

In John's Gospel account, his passion narrative starts with an account of extravagant worship.

John 12:1-11, "Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. 3 Then Mary took about a pint[a] of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

4 But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, 5 "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages.[b]" 6 He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

7 "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. 8 You will always have the poor among you,[c] but you will not always have me."

9 Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. 10 So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, 11 for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him."

Take a moment to read John 12:1-11 (the passage displayed above) and answer the following questions:

- Who was present in the story? (verses 1-3)
- What was the the original reason for Jesus and all of these people to come together? (verses 1-2)
- What transpired that changed this event from a dinner party to a worship gathering? (verse 3)
- Martha is recorded as serving, Lazarus as reclining, and Mary as worshipping. Why do you think John includes these details?
- What did Jesus say in response to Mary's act of worship? (verses 4-7, cf. Matthew 26:13)

As we read, reflect, and discuss this passage and these Scriptures we should begin to see that what Mary had to offer Jesus was more than her work and her rest (those are both important too!), it was also and most importantly her worship.

THE MEMORIAL, COST, & POSTURE OF WORSHIP: In John 12:1-11 we are presented with three distinct but interconnected ideas about worship.

THE MEMORIAL OF WORSHIP

In **Matthew 26:13**, Jesus says that this story will be told **"wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."**

This story had significant importance to Jesus, and so it should to us as well. This is one of few stories that is actually captured in every single Gospel account. It is clear that Jesus wants to remind us of the paramount importance the worship of God is to our lives.

Watch a sporting event as evidence that we all already know how to worship. The question isn't whether or not we worship, it is rather what or who do we worship? Jesus is the only one worthy of our worship, but many other things vie for our affections.

THE COST OF WORSHIP

The cost of the perfume Mary poured out on Jesus' feet was significant. Mary's act of worship cost her valuable resources.

Mary was also ridiculed by Judas for using this expensive perfume in worship to Jesus rather than selling it and giving the proceeds to the poor (but the text also makes it clear Judas just wanted some of the money for himself).

Worship is a daring, costly act. Mary won the invisible battle against the "fear of man". The text invites us to follow her example, and care more about the opinions of Jesus than the opinions of everyone else.

THE POSTURE OF WORSHIP

Mary bows, pours the oil, lets down her hair, and proceeds to clean the feet of Jesus. Mary breaks social and cultural constraints to express her affection to Jesus in worship.

Worship is not about drawing attention to ourselves, it should be all about Jesus.

Ultimately, how we express our worship to Jesus can look very differently depending on where we are and what we are doing. But humility is always the posture that we should take when we worship.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What part of this message was most impactful to you?
2. What part of this message was most challenging to you?
3. What was something new that you learned?
4. What will you do in response to this message?