

6.24.18 ~ John 12:1-11,  
"Mary Foreshadows Christ's Death."

**Read John 12:1-3...** As you will recall from our last time together, Jesus and the Twelve were staying at Ephraim, a village about 12 miles from Jerusalem. They have now come back to Bethany, near Jerusalem, where Lazarus (whom Jesus had raised from the dead) lived; the timing, according to John, is six days before Passover, making it Saturday, as Passover would be on Thursday.

John tells us that "they" made Jesus (and the Twelve, no doubt) an evening meal [supper] and that Martha was serving it, while Lazarus was one of the people reclining at the table with Jesus.

We are also told that Mary pours a pound (about 12 ounces, Roman) of some very expensive perfume upon Jesus' feet, then she wiped His feet with her hair.

You would assume that they were at the home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary; but the Synoptic accounts (see **Matthew 26:6-7**; **Mark 14:3**) tell us different.

Jesus and the 12 are at Simon the leper's house, who we assume is healed, for no one would come to the house of a leper, as people feared, and rightly so, contagion of the disease through contact; but also a person would be considered ceremonially defiled by socialization with a leper, as extensive instructions in Leviticus 13-14 dictate, for example:

**Leviticus 13:45-46**, "Anyone with such a defiling disease must wear torn clothes, let their hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of their face and cry out, 'Unclean! Unclean!' As long as they have the disease they remain unclean. They must live alone; they must live outside the camp."

The NT records Jesus healing one leper (Matthew 8:2-4; Mark 1:40-45; **Luke 5:12-16**), also ten lepers (Luke 17:12-19), but no names are cited.

Clearly Simon's leprosy had been healed sometime in the past three years, perhaps recently, maybe this is a celebration dinner to thank the Lord for healing him.

We also learn from Matthew and Mark that a woman (who John identifies as Mary) brings into the eating area of Simon's house an alabaster [marble] vial [long necked bottle] of very expensive perfume [aromatic oil extracted from the nard plant, grown in India]; this woman, Mary, pours very expensive oil over Jesus' head, and as John records (**John 12:3**), also over Jesus' feet, so that the whole house is filled with an aromatic fragrance.

Note: There is another occurrence (**Luke 7:36-39**) that is very similar to this incident in Bethany, except it takes place in Galilee at the house of a Pharisee, where a sinful woman (who is probably a prostitute) pours expensive perfume from an alabaster vial onto Jesus' feet, as she continually wipes them with her hair and tears.

**Read John 12:4...** One of those in Jesus' inner circle (the Twelve), by the name of Judas Iscariot, was going to betray the Lord; as we were informed in Chapter 6.

**See John 6:70-71...** Jesus sovereignly chose the Twelve, knowing that Judas Iscariot, would betray Him. Jesus is God the Son, and therefore He knew that the enemy of God, Satan himself, would use one of those who was close to Jesus, being taught by Him, even witnessing the same miracles and listening to the same sovereign wisdom that the other eleven experienced; and yet, this Judas, who would, along with the other eleven disciples, live with Christ for three years, was "a devil!"

In **Matthew 26:24** Jesus says about Judas, "The Son of Man is to go, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."

God chose Judas, knowing that he would betray Christ, and that he would serve in bringing about Christ's capture and subsequent death, by which we would receive eternal forgiveness for our sins.

Jesus had twelve core disciples, Judas was one of them; although Judas posed as a believer and follower of Jesus, he never really embraced Christ as Lord, let alone as Savior. Judas was a skilled imposter who fooled everyone except Jesus, who of course knew the true condition of his heart.

Let me exhort all you here today to think about this: whenever God's work is being done (Sunday School, Morning Worship, Bible Studies, Fishing Derby, VBA, OCC, Trunk 'R Treat, etc.); whenever God's people gather to serve and honor Him, there will also, most likely, be imposters, hypocrites, like Judas, mixed in among the flock of God, for Satan often disguises his sons and daughters (all those who reject Christ), so that they might (**2Corinthians 11:15**), "masquerade as servants of righteousness.

**Read John 12:5-8...** These are Judas' first recorded words in the NT, and he shows himself to be the false disciple and hypocrite that he is.

Acting like he has deep concern for the poor, he cites the value of this perfume, 300 denarii [the equivalent of one year's wages], saying it should have been sold and the money used to help the poor. Right! John tells us the truth in **verse 6**, that Judas is a thief!

Judas was the treasure for the Twelve, he was in charge of the money purse and he would take from it for his own use, whenever he wanted; he didn't care about the poor, but was upset at the thought of not being able to pilfer some of the 300 denarii that should be in the purse, because the perfume should have been sold, no wasted on Jesus' head and feet.

Jesus (**verse 7**) speaks up for Mary, defending her, saying to Judas (and the other disciples), "Let her alone, [*she didn't sell the perfume, but instead*] she keep it for the day of My burial [*used it to illustrate My burial*]."

Back in **John 11:50**, Caiaphas rebuked the religious leaders, basically saying that either Jesus dies or the whole nation will fall. John tells us (**John 11:51**) that Caiaphas did not say this on his own initiative, but God used the spiteful words of this enemy of God to proclaim the sacrificial nature of Christ's death.

In the same way, here in **John 12:7**, it is clear this perfume speaks of Christ's death and burial. Mary's act of worship illustrated the impending death and burial (as in preparing a body for a grave), for the Jews use spices and aromatic oils to mask the odor of decomposing flesh, this loving act of Mary was a preview and a foretelling of the coming death and burial of Jesus.

Jesus rebukes Judas and alerts the rest of the Twelve (**verse 8**), "you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have Me." This also is a declaration of Christ's coming death, in fact, in less than a week, Jesus will be crucified. The disciples' priority ought to be their time with the Lord, not caring for the poor who will be here long after Jesus is dead and buried!

**Read John 12:9...** It appears that a large crowd of those who had come to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover have learned that Jesus is close by in Bethany, so they have come to find Him, but also because they want to see the proof of His power, i.e., Lazarus, having been raised back to life.

As mentioned throughout this gospel narrative, the Chief Priests, Pharisees and Sadducees kept a close watch on Jesus' movements, for they wanted to capture Him (cf. **John 11:53-54**), "So from that day on they [the Sanhedrin] planned together to kill [Jesus]. Therefore Jesus no longer continued to walk publicly among the Jews, but went away from there to the country near the wilderness." **Verse 57** tells us, "Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where [Jesus] was, he was to report it, so that they might seize Him."

**Read John 12:10-11...** Not only do these wicked religious leaders want to kill Jesus, but also to eradicate any proof of His equality with God, i.e., Lazarus who was dead but is now up walking around is a testimony to the power of God in Jesus Christ; these Jesus haters must destroy not only the miracle worker, but also the attesting proof that He is indeed God's Son; for only God can do the marvelous works that Jesus has been doing, e.g., healing all diseases and ailments, forgiving sin, and even raising the dead back to life.

The reality is, no one remains on the fence or neutral, toward Jesus Christ, after being exposed to the character and nature of God in Him. Everyone has a response to Jesus, as seen in the following three categories:

1. Many will believe in, love and serve Him like Mary and Martha.
2. Most will remain indifferent, seemingly non-responsive to Him like most of those in the crowds who witnessed His' signs and wonders but didn't commit to Him (but indifference is still a response to Jesus, for it says, I don't believe He is God's Son, I don't need Him for salvation, so He isn't really important to me).
3. Many will openly oppose and express hatred toward Jesus, like the Chief Priests, Pharisees and other Religious Leaders, but also disbelief and rejection, like Judas, one of the Twelve, who would betray the Lord.

A person's response to Jesus Christ will determine their eternal destiny (**Acts 4:12**), "for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." [only Jesus Christ the Lord]

**Romans 10:9-10**, "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation." **13**, for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."

**1John 5:11-13**, "And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life."

*Pastor Mike*

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