

Mary's act of Worship

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning, everyone. So lovely to see you all this morning and what a difference a bright day makes. It just gives us all a bit of a lift. And just as Andrew was saying, if you're visiting this morning or if it's your first time with us, just want to warmly welcome you this morning. It's so lovely to be gathered together looking to the Lord together.

Well, with it being our family service, we're taking just a little bit of a break from the book of Acts. And this morning, we're going to look at one of my favorite passages, I think, in all of Scripture. This morning, we're going to look at Mark chapter 14, verses 3 to 9. And it's the account of Mary and her incredible display of worship, thankfulness, love towards Jesus.

In fact, you know, what Mary did here is so significant. What Mary did in these verses is so special that the Lord Jesus says in this passage that wherever the gospel is preached, what she did here will be told in memory of her.

Imagine that. Imagine doing something so special. Imagine doing something so incredible for the Lord Jesus that it would still be spoken about today over 2,000 years later.

[1 : 43] This morning, we're going to look at what Mary did in these verses. And with the Lord's help, it will be an encouragement to us because at the very least, Mary in these verses is an incredible example to us all.

So Andrew's going to come. The other Andrew is going to come and read our passage for us this morning. Mark chapter 14, verses 3 to 9. Thank you, Andrew.

Morning. So we're reading from Mark chapter 14, 3 to 9. While he was in Bethany reclining at the table in the home of Simon the leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made a pure nard.

She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, why this waste of perfume?

It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor. And they rebuked her harshly. Leave her alone, Jesus said.

[2 : 57] Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you. And you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me.

She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. Truly, I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.

Amen. Well, thank you, Andrew. Well, as we dive into these verses and as we dive into this story, we find ourselves around the dinner table at Simon the leper's house.

You know, we're having a church lunch later today. We are coming together for some food and for some fellowship. And we'll be gathered around tables.

Well, in many ways, what we see in our verses this morning is that Jesus, his disciples, and some others in a similar way have gathered around the dinner table at Simon the leper's house.

[4 : 16] So if you like what goes down in our verses this morning, what happens in our verses this morning happens around a dinner table at Simon the leper's house.

Now, although Simon in these verses is called Simon the leper, we can be pretty certain that at this point, he wasn't actually a leper because if he was, he wouldn't have been able to host a dinner like this.

More than likely, Simon was a leper who had been healed by Jesus, but he still carried the name Simon the leper almost as a living and a walking testimony to the great miracle, the great healing that Jesus had done in his life.

So at Simon the leper's house, Jesus and his disciples have gathered around this table.

We're told that they're reclining around the table. And we are told in verse 3 that a woman walks in. [5 : 38] We're told in verse 3 that a woman walks in to where they were reclining. And we know from the other Gospels that this woman is called Mary.

This is Mary of Bethany. Well, as Mary of Bethany walks in to where Jesus and the others were, we are told that she is carrying something.

I've got something here. One second. We are told that in her hands, she was carrying an alabaster jar filled with very expensive perfume.

And this wasn't just any perfume. This was pure nard. A fragrance that was so valuable that we know from our passage that it was worth over a year's wages.

Bringing that to today's terms, what was in this alabaster jar was worth something over 30,000 euro. This perfume was likely a family heirloom.

[7 : 05] Maybe it was something that was handed down from generation to generation. It was very, very valuable. And we're told that she carried it in.

And I think as we look at that, it's almost, you know, we're almost thinking, well, don't drop it, Mary. You know, don't drop it. This was literally liquid gold.

In fact, from what I could find, looking into this pure nard stuff, it had a nickname. It had a local nickname at that time. And its local nickname was Liquid Gold.

This was more valuable than we could imagine. Well, what Mary does next is absolutely remarkable.

I'm going to ask the other Andrew again, Andrew, Drew, to come back up here. Come on up, Andrew. I just need you for a few seconds.

[8 : 11] What Mary does next, I have a seat there for you, just for you. What Mary does next is absolutely remarkable.

You know, what Mary does next is absolutely stunning. This is a wow moment to the highest degree.

We're told that she broke the jar. Most likely she had to crack the head off the jar because these jars were made where only a few drops could come out at a time.

She cracked the head off the alabaster jar and she pours the entire contents. 30,000 euro of this liquid gold over Jesus' head.

This is what she did. There's no narrative there. This is the last time Andrew's going to come up here when I ask him, can I have some help for the sermon?

[9 : 30] But thank you, Andrew. That's all. Thank you. Thank you. I should have got him some shampoo as well.

When we think about it and when we visualize it, it really is quite remarkable what Mary did. how many of us would be willing to take something of so much value, maybe something that we would be, have saved up for years and years, maybe something that has been handed down to us from generation to generation.

how many of us would be willing to take something so valuable and just pour it completely out just like that.

It's almost unimaginable to think when we think about maybe doing something like that today. Well, as we might expect, not everyone understood Mary's actions because here come the critics and there's always plenty of critics around the place.

Verses 4 and 5, some of those who were there, including some of the disciples, they were just so upset with what they saw as a pure waste.

[11 : 03] Why this waste of perfume, they asked. This could have been salt and the money given to the poor. We're told at the end of verse 5 that they rebuked her, they gave out to her harshly.

But Jesus, knowing Mary's heart, knowing her heart behind her actions, he defended her.

He told them to leave her alone. Verse 6, why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me.

To Jesus, this was not a waste at all. He said, she did a beautiful thing to me. This word for beautiful, it points to something that is lovely, it points to something that is precious, it points to something that is good.

Mary did a beautiful thing to Jesus here. Mary did a beautiful thing here, I believe, because in this moment, I think Mary understood something that the others didn't.

[12 : 24] I believe that at this point, Mary, with incredible insight, understood that soon Jesus would give his life for her.

Jesus said this, Jesus said, Mary did what she did, she poured out this perfume to prepare my body for burial. It seems that in this moment, Mary knew that Jesus would soon pour out his life on the cross.

It seems that she knew that he would soon pour out everything for her on the cross. And in response to what he would do for her, she pours out this perfume as a symbol of her pouring out her heart, her life, with thanksgiving and praise in return.

She wasn't worried about what it would cost. She wasn't worried about what people might say. She did what she did. She poured out this perfume to symbolize her pouring out her whole heart her whole life to Jesus in thankfulness and praise for what he would do for her.

And that really is a beautiful thing with what Jesus would do for her in mind, with the reality in mind that he would soon pour out his life for her.

[14 : 08] I believe she poured out this perfume as a symbol of her pouring out her heart, her life in praise and thanksgiving in response.

And what she did here really symbolizes a heart that is totally surrendered, that is totally poured out if you like for Jesus in response to who he is and what he has done for us.

no wonder Jesus said in verse 9 that whenever the gospel is preached what she did here will be told in her memory. What Mary did in these verses it challenges us I think to consider our own hearts our own lives.

Is there part of our own hearts is there part of our own lives that we are somehow still holding back a little bit from our savior?

You know Jesus gave all that he has for us. He totally poured himself out on the cross. He left nothing undone. He left nothing unfinished for us on the cross.

[15 : 34] In response what challenges me from these verses is in response to that in response to what Jesus has done for us are we kind of you know pouring out just a few drops of our hearts and our lives in return or in response to what he has done for us are we saying to the Lord here is my heart here is my life I surrender it to you that doesn't mean I'm going to be perfect but I surrender it to you.

Have we come to that point of saying Lord Lord you know I'm yours help me to surrender my heart more and more to you in response to what he has done for us are we giving him just a few drops of our hearts our lives our resources are we handing it over to him saying we surrender all of this to you.

What a savior we have again he left nothing undone on the cross he left nothing unfinished he didn't hold anything back from us that's how much he loves each and every one of us he gave everything more than we could imagine for us he poured everything out for us in response let us seek to freshly pour out our hearts pour out our lives to him I'm going to pray and then we're going to close our time singing praise to our Lord so Lord I just pray that you would search our hearts and that you would help us to surrender more and more to you Lord we thank you that you paid the price in full you held nothing back and we thank you for Mary's example here we know it's not about pouring perfume down the drain or it's not about that in a sense it's about our hearts

Lord will you help us to pour out our hearts to you in total surrender from a place of thankfulness and praise for all that you have done for us and I pray this in Jesus name amen