

Jesus is the Anointed King

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[0 : 0 0] now can we turn together in our bibles to john chapter 11 at verse 55 and we're going to read through chapter 12 to verse 11 thinking about jesus the anointed king so again let's hear the word of god when it was almost time for the jewish passover many went up from the country to jerusalem for their ceremonial cleansing before the passover they kept looking for jesus and as they stood in the temple courts they asked one another what do you think isn't he coming to the festival at all but the chief priests and the pharisees had given orders that anyone who found out where jesus was should report it so that they might arrest him six days before the passover jesus came to bethany where lazarus lived whom jesus had raised from the dead here a dinner was given in jesus honor martha served while lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him then mary took about half a liter of pure nard and 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 but one of his disciples judas iscariot who was later to betray him objected why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor was worth a year's wages 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 leave her alone jesus replied it was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial you will always have the poor among you but you will not always have me 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 so the chief priest made plans to kill lazarus as well for on account of him many of the jews were going over to jesus and believing in him amen so we're going to use john chapter 12 to prepare ourselves for christmas and to reflect together on jesus as god's king we are i am sure familiar with nativity stories and with the words of the bible that wise men came to visit the infant jesus bringing those gifts fit for a king led by god to honor him gifts to honor someone we understand that some cultures more than other we were watching a program paul hollywood traveling around japan over the last couple of weeks and he discovered that the culture they have there of gift giving and especially giving fruit and if you are particularly wealthy giving really expensive fruit to honor perhaps someone who's inviting you for dinner so he went to a guy who grew strawberries had grown them for decades and one single strawberry would set you back 350 pounds a couple of melons that sold at auction for 35 000 pounds some cultures understand that that gift giving is a way to honor to honor someone and what do we have here in the anointing of mary she gives extravagantly to honor king jesus helps us to ask ourselves the question what do our lives what does our worship reveal about our love and honor for jesus and we'll think about that again we go back to those familiar nativity stories and very much central to that are the groups who are for jesus

there's always mary and joseph there are always the shepherds those first worshipers who receive the good news there are the wise men who come the bible includes but the nativity doesn't figures like king herod you remember king herod in in matthew 2 he he doesn't like the news that a new king has been born and he fears the loss of privilege and status and so what does he do he arranges for the murder of the infants in bethlehem to try and destroy god's king and that theme is here too in john 12 we see it all through john's gospel a division dividing lines drawn some will worship jesus some will believe in jesus but others will plot to arrest and destroy and to kill it seems like there is no middle ground jesus claims are so big his power it is so evident some worship and some will kill and when we take it back to ourselves don't we see that we live in a world that's very much divided over what to make of jesus we make it more personal how does your heart how does my heart respond to jesus as god's king today we're going to look at the anointing of jesus that anointing that helps us to think about jesus as god's king anointing symbolic of kingship we're going to see what do we learn about jesus as god's king in the bible and think about the different responses that we have to jesus the king here in john 12 to help us to think about our own response so let's think together about the anointing of king jesus we're told some important details we're given the setting here for observations in verse one this happened six days before the passover the great worship festival for the people of god when they remembered the god who rescued by sacrifice and from the very beginning of john's gospel john chapter 1 verse 29 we have john the baptist declared of jesus look this is the lamb of god who takes away the sin of the world and in god's perfect timing it was always his plan that jesus would die at passover to remind us that god always rescues by sacrifice ultimately by the sacrifice of his own son so passover is in the background also in the background part of our setting is the raising of lazarus and so notice that jesus came to bethany where lazarus lived whom jesus had raised from the dead the last of the seven great signs recorded in john's gospel that we've just finished looking at and especially that last one where jesus explicitly says this is going to reveal the glory of god where jesus declares i am the resurrection and the life and what do we have here at this dinner party we have walking talking eating proof of that because here is lazarus one of the guests at this meal and it's interesting to think that a little while later when jesus himself is raised from the dead we had the same lines of evidence given jesus meeting with individuals jesus being seen by crowds jesus eating with his disciples to prove he is real what else do we have in terms of background we discovered in verse two that in bethany a dinner was given in jesus honor martha serving and lazarus was among those reclining it's a village meal most likely was quite common at the time for people to gather together if

if an honored guest was coming into town people would gather together pull the resources and have a meal together and so at some level this is an ordinary event but then as mary takes that perfume and anoints jesus it becomes extraordinary and again we can't really miss in terms of the setting for the anointing the division that we read about the division that's clear in john's gospel now notice in the words of the friends and the enemies of jesus nobody is denying the fact that jesus has raised lazarus from the dead he's right there with them he's in the room so nobody is denying that they're all agreed on that but but some choose to to want to know more about jesus and to believe and to worship others say well now we need to get rid of lazarus as well as getting rid of jesus their opposition is so great they feel that threat to their position and to their security and so they want to destroy both jesus and lazarus who becomes a really powerful witness despite the virtue of his life so that's the the setting so we understand what's going on and this is just a week before jesus goes to the cross now for the anointing itself verse three let's read again verse three mary took about half a liter 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 let's just focus for now on the extravagance of this gift judah says this perfume was worth a year's wages put that in our terms we're talking 15 20 25 000 pound bottle of perfume cracked open and gone seconds perhaps this family heirloom that's been passed down through the generations is opened and poured as so as to anoint jesus and as the smell fills the house we can imagine can't we the surprise for some the shock of what's just happened spreads through the house also and notice with me that jesus approves of this jesus doesn't say well that's a big gift i'm not worthy of that jesus approves of it verse seven he says leave her alone it was intended she should save this perfume for the day of my burial then in verse eight you'll always have the poor among you but you'll not always have me jesus says i am worthy of this worship jesus isn't saying that he's against the poor or against ministry to the poor and we see that all through his life he spends so much time with the poor and the marginalized and the weak and the dispossessed but he's saying very clearly to mary and everyone who's ready to listen that this is an appropriate act this is the right time for mary to honor and to love her king her king who is shortly going to die and one of the themes that we've seen as we've been looking through john's gospel is that that jesus is unafraid of saying i am equal with my father i deserve the same honor and glory as god my father and so here as he receives this act of extravagant worship he is saying another time i am worthy of this because i am the son of god but he also at the same time doesn't he reveal something about his kingship he says that this has been done to prepare for my burial jesus as god's king knows that he has come to die and the cross and and his burial are very much on the horizon for him

reminds us that all Jesus did and all that Jesus suffered he did as a substitute as he came under the law becoming one of us in order to completely obey the law that we break he came as a substitute going under the curse facing the penalty for that law that we have broken though he was sinlessly perfect that he was willing to take the punishment that we deserve he did that to save his people and he does it as God's obedient humble servant king all that he is doing all that he will do on the cross he does to to show to show the glory of God to show obedience to his father to satisfy God's justice to demonstrate God's love he is the king that God promised and here he is anointed as king but he's a king who will suffer a king who was born to die to die for his people and this theme of kingship I just wanted to spend some time thinking about it because it's everywhere in God's word and it's so important for us to to understand it we think about the the Christmas story and perhaps we need to keep asking ourselves the question why would the eternal son of God leave the glory of heaven to become the baby born in the manger and when we go to the Christmas story and we'll go there this evening we discover that he does that to save his people from their sin he leaves the glory of heaven in order to be God with us he leaves the glory of heaven and comes to live a life of suffering here on earth because he is God's anointed chosen king the one promised in the Old Testament the one the true and better king David the one who would lead us in worship the one who would rule over us in righteousness and justice forever now we see it in the Old Testament it's why we we sang Sam 2 together to remind ourselves that for the Old Testament believer their hope was in a messiah king who God would send and one thing that Sam 2 says it says that this king will be rebelled against and think about what's happening in the background of John 12 think about what will happen when Jesus is crucified don't we see that rebellion reach a climax but but nevertheless Sam 2 can declare the only option the only way of safety salvation for people is to submit to this son who is the king talks about to kiss the son to submit to him to use New Testament language to repent of our sin to believe in him to trust him as our Lord we can also usefully I think connect like what we learn in the Old Testament with what we see in John's Gospel and so we read together Isaiah 11 and Amos 9 and there we saw imagery it's saying to us that with the coming of God's true king is the beginning of new creation Isaiah pictures um new creation being like a feast on the Lord's mountain there's pictures of the end to sadness the end to threat and fear and to distress the end of death itself and a beginning of life of peace and prosperity and blessing for the people of God and then think about John's Gospel and think about the miracles that John chooses to record for us where does he begin if you remember the first of those seven signs back in John chapter two it's the wedding cana and Galilee Jesus turns water into wine there's the wedding feast Jesus produces joy

and people saw his glory jesus is bringing in the new creation think about all of those healing miracles that he performs what's he doing he's bringing an end into sadness and suffering he's saying this is what my kingdom is like this is what world is going to be like for the people who trust in me and think about the last great sign that we just read uh the context for chapter 12 he raised lazarus and he said i'm the resurrection and the life jesus is god's king bringing in god's kingdom that kingdom that was promised and foretold in the old testament is now anticipated in the life of jesus and it's the world we all want a world of perfect love and peace and joy without sadness and sickness and death and destruction and decay and jesus is the king who's bringing in that kingdom and all through john's gospel we see this as well the beginning of john's gospel we see jesus meet a man called nathanael who becomes one of his disciples and in verse 29 um nathanael announces that jesus is the teacher he is the son of god and he is the king of israel so chapter one jesus is announced as the king of israel then way back chapter 20 we've gone there so many times verse 31 as john explains towards the end of his gospel why he wrote it these things are written that you may believe that jesus is the the messiah god's anointed king the son of god and that by believing you may have life in his name so it's there at the beginning jesus is king it's there at the end jesus is king it becomes a frame to see all of john's gospel to see through this window that john gives us that jesus is god's promised king what do we see we see so often he's rejected misunderstood and resisted even while some will worship and believe from john chapter 12 through to john chapter 19 we find 14 times references to jesus as messiah jesus as king and we discover that he is the humble and suffering king and the king of glory who will wash his disciples feet anticipating and that he will die to wash his people from sin we will see jesus as the rejected king as we hear the crowds cry we have no king but caesar and then as jesus is nailed to the cross there is a sign nailed above his head this is the king of the jew the bible wants us to know it and john wants us to know it that jesus is god's promised king he is the one we are to worship he's the one we are to submit to and this king what does he do he comes to lay down his life for his people he comes to bring peace between us and god by shedding his blood dealing with in his own body the sin that separates us from a holy god he dies so that we might live and now jesus is risen and reigning now jesus is building his kingdom in the hearts and lives of his people and jesus the king will one day return to take us home to be with him forever jesus is worthy and what's crucial crucial for your life and mine is the crucial truth that mary saw is that we need to understand that we need to respond to jesus as god's promised king so that we would respond with faith and with worship we spent a lot of time thinking about who is jesus here's jesus the king jesus the king in the bible because it makes sense of our passage the only thing in a sense that makes sense of our passage

[20 : 22] we will never understand mary's worship we will never understand why she would give everything for jesus unless we have a clear sense of who jesus is unless we understand that he is that promised king unless we understand that he came on a rescue mission to save people like us if we don't understand that then the idea of spending a year's wages on perfume that's gone in a few seconds will seem perhaps shocking confusing just as we might be shocked and confused by the idea that people could spend thousands of pounds on a piece of fruit to give to a friend and likewise we won't appreciate the tragedy of judas because judas is very much in this story unless we understand who is it that judas chooses to reject and betray unless we understand what it is that judas lost when he chose to turn his back on jesus so let's look to learn some lessons from the worship of mary let's think about three qualities of mary's faith and worship for us to value ourselves the first thing that we can recognize about mary's worship is that it is humble she pours this perfume on jesus feet and wiped his feet with her hair here wonderful portraits of mary in the gospels three times we discover jesus and mary at jesus feet in luke chapter 10 while martha's busy serving getting things ready for dinner we find mary sitting at the feet of jesus her master taking the posture of a disciple listening and learning in john chapter 11 we find mary in grief and despair falling at the feet of jesus her lord and savior and only hope for her brother who had died and then here in john chapter 12 again we find mary at the feet of jesus taking the posture of the lowest servant john chooses to focus on on the fact that she's washing his feet to show that humility of mary understanding that compared to the great king she is but a servant and she wants to honor her king so there's humility in her worship there's also a great sense of gratitude that sense that she worships gratefully mary is acting out of a sense of deep love for jesus a deep sense of gratitude because remember what's jesus recently done for her she has her brother back alive and well raised from the tomb and more than that mary understands who jesus is mary understands that jesus is the messiah that jesus has come as the resurrection and the life and there's a source of grateful joyful worship to understand here is god's promised king and he's come to give eternal life he's come to give access to his kingdom and we also see from mary's worship that it's wholehearted we see that in the cost don't we she's not holding back but rather she's giving everything she can to honor her king she doesn't care what others think about the expense if it seems extravagant or over the top and nor does she care about what is proper so there's that little detail there in verse three where where mary's pictured wiping his feet with her hair and in that culture no jewish woman would ever let their hair down in public but but she cares to honor jesus more than she cares for her own reputation or for what's proper she knows this is the right time to honor jesus to show how much she values him as lord and king

i wonder as we come to this time of year sometimes december can be a hard time can't it's dark it's coming towards the end of term we get tired i wonder if we find ourselves today or maybe in this season tired from worship and service jesus times the guest like that doesn't it can be hard work to to give of ourselves for others consistently perhaps it can be a time when we get frustrated perhaps a lack of gratitude shown for things that we try and do for people or perhaps frustration that that we feel like we're serving by ourselves and we'd love for others to be able to help perhaps we come here today and if we're honest we're kind of going through the motions of worship because we're really tired and we're done and we feel flat we can give duty but we don't have a great sense of joy i wonder if we feel that today not much room for god in our lives not much room for god's words in our lives not much room for the people of god in our lives i wonder when we think about mary's worship mary's extravagant honestly does it does it make our worship seem seem small if that's where we are today what what should we do what's the response that we need in order to to return to our first love to have joy and worship we need to look to jesus in the gospel again we need to remember our king again to see in jesus as loving king who came to serve you to give his life for you the one who loves the church consistently sacrificially holding nothing back from us to understand he is worthy of all our service he is worthy of all of our lives we need to recognize that nothing we give of ourselves even if we were to give everything nothing we do even if we spend all our lives serving compares with how jesus loves us and how jesus serves us we need to go back to the gospel for our sense of energy in our worship to return to jesus our king as our first love for our motivation for worship and service and to recognize too that when our love fails and it does we're honest our love for jesus fails at times we need to understand that as christians his love for us never fails while our service so often can feel cold and feel limited that's never the way jesus serves us we need to understand jesus never stops praying for us jesus never stops sending his spirit to help and to comfort and to encourage us jesus never stops holding on to his people in his hands and in his heart so what we need to do is we need to see his mary soul to pray for a heart like mary's that will be humbled and humbled again by god's amazing love and ascending of jesus to be thankful for jesus to be overwhelmed by the sacrifice that he came to make for us so that our hearts it would and would again overflow with worship but you know it's not just mary that we're invited to learn from john john the gospel writer who loves contrasts puts mary and judas side by side here

let's read again in verse 4 and 5 one of his disciples judas iscariot who is later to betray him objected why wasn't this perfume sold in the money given to the poor it was worth a year's wages he didn't say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief there are some warnings for us from judas here i think the first warning is that of apathy what's the the sense we get of judas as we read his reaction jesus is not worth that big sacrificial worship maybe you should avoid the extremes of religious devotion we need to be wary of that apathy that makes god seem small that makes jesus seem common there's also a warning too about hypocrisy because judas sounds really good and he sounds really pious doesn't he oh you should you should have taken that money to should have taken that perfume to the bank and and cashed in and then you should have spent the rest of the year caring for the needs of the poor and serving them sounded good perhaps he found people agreeing with him within the crowd but his true motive he was a thief he's what to steal from their money a dark heart clothed in fine-sounding religious language and i think when we look at judas we have that warning against idolatry and once again there is a real tragedy in judas life and you think of all that he saw he was there with the disciples for three years he saw every one of the miracles that jesus performed he saw time and again the love and mercy of jesus the son of god god's promise king think about all that he heard jesus so many times uh bringing words with authority and power speaking of himself as god and the only way to god he heard all of that and he saw all of that and yet in the end of the day what did he choose he chose to put money over jesus he chose to sell out his friend for some coinage money not jesus had his heart judas didn't think jesus was worthy of a blessing and glory and honor judas and the religious leaders they had the same access to jesus they saw and heard many of the same things but they chose to reject they chose to despise they chose to ignore we need to ask ourselves the question where where are we today when it comes to king jesus how are things with our hearts when it comes to jesus because the question we all need to answer as we think about this passage is is that one that we sang earlier is he worthy i love that reflection revelation 5 let me encourage you to read revelation 5 some point this week it's a it's a glorious vision of jesus god's chosen king who's able to bring about all god's purposes and history receiving all the worship of heaven and the angels are singing he is worthy of all that blessing and honor and glory is that a song we can honestly sing from our hearts do we think he's worthy of the first place in our lives and does it show are we submitting today to his good and loving rule are we ready to be loyal to him to follow his commands because how you and i answer well it matters for today but it matters for all eternity

we have a really stark warning in the bible from the life of judas a warning about about as it were keeping jesus at arm's length arm's length not becoming too attached to him but rather being attached to money about being happy with a religious show with an unchanged heart about placing other people or things or money over king jesus if that's where we find ourselves today pray that god would rescue you from that cold heart towards jesus your king so that rather you would see him and you would want to submit to him but we learn too from mary don't we that wonderful beautiful picture of worship this holding nothing back sacrificial loving gift fit for god's king may god give to each of us eyes like mary that recognize jesus for who he truly is hearts like mary that would truly worship is he worthy to answer that question look to jesus this christmas i consider again the wonderful story of jesus coming leaving the glory of heaven to become one of us think of the message of easter that jesus dies as a a loving sacrifice a loving sacrifice for our unbelief for our lack of love for our sin he takes it and he pays for it think about easter sunday jesus risen so we might live think about jesus the king who came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many may the song of all our hearts be he is worthy let's pray briefly lord god we thank you for your words and we thank you for the wonderful devotion and worship of mary thank you for her humility for her gratitude for her wholehearted loving sacrifice because she knew jesus was her king and her savior and her lord lord may you give us hearts like mary that are ready to love and to serve and to give in response to all that you have done for us in jesus lord please save us from being like judas from being cold-hearted from being half-hearted and apathetic for putting other things or other people ahead of jesus as lord and king lord may we all be able to say from the bottom of our hearts he is worthy of all honor and glory and praise please help us by your spirit to see him more and more clearly so that we might love him more and more deeply i we ask in jesus name amen