

John 12:1-11 - Love For The King

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- [0 : 0 0] by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this? For those who entrust their life to Jesus, death is just a doorway to life.
- The moment we breathe our last breath here, we take our first breath in the presence of Christ. Death is not the end.
- It is but the beginning of life in all its fullness. But how do we begin to say thank you? How do you express your love for someone who gives you new and eternal life?
- Well, let's follow Jesus to the home of Lazarus and we will see how we can begin to say thank you.
- Back to chapter 12, verse 2. Grateful honour. Jesus arrives at the family home along with his disciples.
- [1 : 1 0] Verse 2. Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honour. Martha served while Lazarus, who was alive, obviously, was among those reclining at the table with him.
- What an occasion it must have been. Could you imagine the conversation? I can't believe it. It's Lazarus.
- You're actually here. Lazarus, what was it like when you came out of the grave? Did you feel anything? Here, have something more to eat.
- You must be starving. Each one taking in turn, embracing the once dead man, clutching tight, not wanting to let go.
- And in all the midst of the talk and the celebrations, we see Martha making a dinner. The very best she can do to honour Jesus.
- [2 : 1 9] Thank you. Thank you, Jesus, so much. You see, the celebrations here are not for Lazarus, but for Jesus.
- For Jesus deserves and receives all the honour, all the praise, all the glory, all the thanks, goes to him who does what we can never do.
- You see, this dinner celebration taking place in Lazarus' home is just a taste of a greater feast to come for all those who will honour the Lord today.
- Isaiah the prophet gives us a glimpse of what that will be like. Have a look back with me to Isaiah chapter 25. Isaiah chapter 25.
- And we'll pick it up in verse 6.
- [3 : 3 6] As we think of Jesus and Mary and Martha and Lazarus feasting, celebrating together. Here is what Isaiah points to.
- Verse 6. On this mountain, the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine, the best of meats and the finest of wines.
- On this mountain, he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations.
- And what is it that covers us with fear? Verse 8. He will swallow up death forever. The sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces.

And he will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth. Jesus. The Lord has spoken. The Lord has spoken. Back to chapter 12.

[4 : 47] You see what Jesus did for Lazarus. Jesus did for all who will trust in him and his resurrection. He comes and destroys the enemy of death that plagues us all.

and one day the same risen Jesus is going to come again and he will call us out from the grave and we will rise with brand new bodies never to decay or die again.

And we will feast together in honour of Jesus. all the praise all the glory and all the thanks and all the honour goes to him.

So how do we say thank you? Well, grateful honour. Second, humble service.

The guests are all enjoying the meal. Now when we think of the meal here as we would sit round a table on chairs the custom in those days was that you would lie on the ground facing in towards where all the food was in the middle and you would rest with your head on your elbow and help yourself to food with your smelly feet away from where the food was.

[6 : 13] So there they are all around the food chatting and eating. And then something extraordinary happens. verse 3 Then Mary this is Lazarus' sister took about half a litre of pure nard that is an expensive perfume and she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

Now washing feet was a custom for people as they arrived into the house walking through a hot climate a dusty road someone the servant the lowest of the low would come and wash your feet.

But here's Mary assuming the place of a servant not just washing but pouring a very pure and very expensive perfume on Jesus' feet.

You could imagine the sudden hush around the table the conversation stops. It's almost embarrassing silence as they all glare at what Mary is doing.

And to make matters worse Mary unties her hair and lets it hang down and begins to wipe the perfume into Jesus' feet.

[7 : 52] Well only a woman of a dubious and immoral background would let their hair down in front of a man. Why? Why would she do this?

in humble service of one who is infinitely greater than her. In unspoken words Mary is declaring her loyalty and her commitment to Jesus how can I possibly repay you for what you have done for us?

In humble service Jesus I give myself to you. you see I think one of the things that holds us back in our service is we worry about what people will think.

Yeah we want to be committed but we don't want to look like a religious fanatic in front of our friends. We want to keep a balance don't we?

Well Mary was so consumed for love for what Jesus had done for her family that she didn't care what people thought. She just served humbly.

[9 : 12] You see the gift of life that we have received from Jesus demands nothing less than a life of humble service. A life that will hold nothing back. A life that puts Jesus first.

A life that is embarrassingly humble. in humble service Jesus I give my life to you.

So third extravagant devotion Mary's response to Jesus was right and good but not everybody at this meal was very happy with what Mary did.

Look at verse 4. One of the disciples Judas Iscariot who was later to betray Jesus objected. Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor?

It was worth a year's wages. Well fair point Judas you're spot on the money there. Why waste something so valuable when there are those with such great need.

[10 : 27] It's like burning money to keep warm. It's completely wasteful. Well behind the objection was a different kind of devotion on Judas' part.

Look at verse 6. John gives us the reason really what was going on in Judas' mind. Verse 6. Judas, he did not say this because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief.

As keeper of the money bag, he was the treasurer for the disciples and making sure that it was looked after. He used to help himself to what was put into it.

For Judas, selling the perfume would most certainly increase their bank balance. But rather than helping the poor, he saw it as an opportunity to skim off the top and give himself something nice, perhaps a nice plot of land around the shores of Lake Galilee, a little villa for his retirement.

You see, Judas failed to see that behind the act of pouring the perfume on Jesus was a heart overflowing with extravagant devotion. Yes, the perfume was of great value, nearly a year's wages.

[11 : 48] Yes, it could have been sold. Instead, Mary pours it all out on Jesus, not to make him smell nice, but to declare that Jesus is worth it.

I wonder how we think about the possessions that we have, because how we use our possessions and our money reveals the true devotion of our hearts.

Do you refer to what you have as mine, or a gift that God has given you to give to others? Are we tight-fisted, or open and generous?

You see, when we see what Jesus has done, and what we have in Jesus, it will enable us to give in outrageous, extravagant ways. In use of our time, our possessions, and our money, there will be no holding back.

You see, Mary saw the true value of Jesus. She came to experience the love and life that Jesus came to give, and so she responds in extravagant devotion, not to gain the favour of Jesus, but to declare that knowing Jesus is beyond price.

[13 : 11] He is worth it. You see, the value of Jesus is beyond measure, so there is never no act of devotion that is ever too great.

Jesus' worth are all and are best and are everything. so extravagant devotion.

Fourth, how do we say thank you? Costly commitment. The resurrection of Lazarus had caused quite a stir.

Jump with me to verse 9. Meanwhile, while the meal was going on, 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.

It seems that Lazarus is turning into quite a celebrity. Everybody's coming to see him, but not for long. You see, commitment to Jesus, honouring Jesus, is a costly thing.

[14 : 35] Look how the religious authorities responded to Jesus after he had raised Lazarus from the dead. Look back at chapter 11, verse 53. It's an extraordinary response to one who had just given life to somebody who had died.

Verse 53, so from that day on, they plotted to take his life. They plotted to kill Jesus. Lazarus. Now look at how they want to treat Lazarus.

Chapter 12, verse 10. 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.

You see, maybe if Lazarus had kept his distance from Jesus. Maybe if he didn't go to the meal, then he would have avoided any kind of death threat. But no, Lazarus wanted to honour Jesus.

Was anything too much for Lazarus to do after what Jesus had done for him? No, he was committed to Jesus and that was costly. This was something Jesus would teach his disciples.

[15 : 58] Just jump over to chapter 15 verse 20. Chapter 15 verse 20. Jesus says, Remember what I told you?

A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. You see, to identify with Jesus, to honour Jesus, to be devoted to Jesus means you will become a target.

You won't always be liked or be popular or be invited to social events. You might get overlooked in a position or a promotion at work. To live a life of thanks to Jesus is costly.

It's not going to be easy. But if we have resurrection life in a hundred years, in a thousand years from now, it will be all worth it.

how do we say thank you? Well, it's been a remarkable occasion, hasn't it?

[17 : 24] An extraordinary dinner party. The house, look at the end of verse 3, this is chapter 12, verse 3, is still filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

The love and honour for Jesus is filling the room. But here's the pinch of what we're looking at. I don't know if I can live like this.

I'm not sure I can respond with such extravagant love and humble service, never mind costly commitment. How can we maintain, how can we live such thankful lives?

well, two things that will help us. First, the fragrance of Jesus. Let the fragrance of Jesus fill your life.

You see, throughout this account, throughout this dinner party, the beauty and glory of Jesus is being poured out before us, and the scent is captivating.

[18 : 41] Look how Jesus responded to Judas' objection to Mary for pouring out the perfume. Look at verse 7. Leave her alone, Jesus replied.

It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You see, when somebody died in those days, they were wrapped in grave clothes and spices and perfumes were poured onto the body.

So Jesus interprets the action of Mary as an act of his very burial. In fact, in a week's time from this very event, Jesus would be in a tomb.

He's reminding us that the reason he came was to come to die, that Jesus came to die for you and for me so that we might have resurrection life.

You see, the death of Jesus was an act of great honour, one of humble service, of pure extravagant love, and of costly commitment.

[19 : 50] Jesus held nothing back. He gave his all, he gave his life for our good and for the glory and the honour of his father. Can you smell the fragrance of Jesus?

Do you get the scent of his beauty and all that he has done for you? You see, as we breathe in the fragrance of Jesus, so we are changed and we become, secondly, the aroma of life.

Look at verse 8. Jesus says, you will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me. But Jesus isn't saying the poor don't matter.

In fact, Jesus commands that we should care for the poor and that's how we should live. But what Jesus is saying here is, he's saying, I am more important than the poor.

It's not about what you can do for others, but look at me and look at what I have done for you. what you could ever give to anybody is only temporary, but what I give to you is of eternal value.

[21 : 13] I give my life that you will be forgiven and loved and treasured. Come to me. Let the fragrance of my life fill you and you will be changed and transformed.

I will take away the stench of death that fills your life and I will give to you the aroma of life. You see, it's only when we meditate and think and reflect and let the fragrance of Jesus fill our lives, it's only when the scent of his love captivates us that we begin to live as Jesus.

And in response to all that he has done, we will live a life of grateful honour, humble service, extravagant devotion, and costly commitment.

And so wherever we go and wherever we walk this week, into our homes and into our workplaces, amongst our neighbours, conversations with people, so we go with the aroma of life.

love, and the rooms that we walk into will be filled with the fragrance of Christ as we live different lives loving those we come in contact with.

[22 : 46] How do we ever say thank you but to live our life in grateful devotion for all that he has done.

Let's pray. Thank you.