

# Mary's Worship

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[0:00] If you've got your Bibles, just the first eight verses of John 12. John 12 from 1 through 8.!

John 13.

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Our passage here talks about two kinds of people, Judas and Mary. Judas didn't care for the poor. He was a thief. Mary cared for the Lord, and she showed him her love.

[1:59] We see three things about Mary's worship here. I put to you three things we can find here about Mary's worship. We see sacrifice, selflessness, and sweetness.

Sacrifice, sacrifice. We read here, verse 3 tells us, it was very costly, very costly.

But it was hers to give. It was hers to give. Being a Christian is going to cost something. There's a cost. It means giving up something.

It means giving over who we are and what we have. Will you give? Time, devotion, effort. Mary did. Mary took a risk. It was very costly. She faced criticism and hurtful remarks. Some were against what she did and criticised her.

[3:01] When you do something for God, you'll get criticism. It'll happen. We know that happens, doesn't it? When you do something for the Lord, you get attacked. Mary took a risk and faced that criticism.

In contrast, we see Judas. Judas was a taker and not a giver. Judas was the opposite of Mary. Are you a giver?

Do you give of yourself to God in worship and love? Worship is your lips and your life. Worship. Worship. The Bible records worship in different stories, different accounts, different lives of individuals.

We see even right at the beginning of the book. In Genesis, we see Cain and Abel. They both worshipped. They both worshipped. Cain and Abel both worshipped God.

It's your worship like Cain's. Cain gave some fruit, some produce of the ground. He gave a sacrifice, but it was carnal.

[4:15] It was his works. His heart wasn't right. And his worship wasn't right. Whereas Abel gave that which was rightful worship.

He gave that which was asked of him. He gave a more excellent sacrifice, it says, in Hebrews 11 verse 4. Because Abel did as God directed.

His worship was God directed. His worship was God pleasing. His worship, in Hebrews 11, it says, his worship, his sacrifice was accepted.

Why? Because it was by faith. By faith. Abel. But Cain's sacrifice was not by faith. So it did not please God.

Mary's worship was right. Her heart was right. It was love. It was relationship. It was pouring out her love to her Lord.

[5:15] It wasn't theatrics or some token words. It wasn't some man-generated kind of thing. It was deeply, personally, sacrificially that she worshipped.

It was rightful worship. And the question for all of us is, are you a giver? In terms of that kind of worship that our Lord calls us to. He calls us to the worship.

He calls us to this worship, rightful worship. And the Lord Jesus renewed people with the power of his compassion. It was relationship. There's a story, an ancient legend, about a man who found a precious stone, a precious jewel.

And this man found this precious jewel. It was very valuable. And then a traveller came by and met the man. And the man said he was hungry.

And he asked the man if he would share some of his provisions. And when the man opened his bag, the traveller saw the precious stone. And just impulsively he asked if he could have it.

[6:28] And amazingly, the man who had the stone, this precious stone, gave it to the traveller. And the traveller thought, wow, he's got this precious stone that must be so valuable.

And he was overjoyed with his new... But then a few days later, he came back to the man. And he made this request. He said, please give me something more valuable, more precious than this stone.

Please give me that which enabled you to give me this precious stone. Because he saw the generosity of the man. He saw that that spirit, that character, that nature, that giving...

That giving quality of that man was more valuable than the gift that he had given.

More valuable than the stone, than the precious stone, was the character of the man. Because he was a giving man. He was a generous man. And it's a very great character quality, isn't it?

[7:29] You know, I know people in my life that are very generous and big-hearted. And how it speaks to people, doesn't it? When you meet people like that, it's just something...

I even think back to my granny. She was a very generous person, even though she really had hardly anything to rub together.

But she was always... She even thought of me when we moved over from England. And she would post me little comics from England that we couldn't get over here.

And I thought, well, that was very thoughtful of her. And she probably... It probably was costly for her to post something over to here. Just for her little grandson.

And there's something about that nature of that person that my granny speaks to me still. And it speaks to people, doesn't it? That generosity, that nature of giving, that quality of someone to be like that.

[8:28] And this is what Mary had. Mary had that sacrifice that she was willing to give. That which was very costly. We know that some have quantified the value of this that she gave as many weeks, many, many months of labour, of time.

You know, the value of earning that which this cost was a huge investment. Certainly. Certainly. It could be a year's worth of labour to be able to earn enough to purchase that which she gave.

So it was very costly. It was a sacrifice, number one. A second thought about Mary is that it was selfless. Mary was selfless in what she did.

Mary wasn't proud. This was a humbling act. She went into this time of supper, this time of people gathering here, and she humbled herself.

She bowed down and she wiped his feet with her hair. Now we know a person's feet is something that is a demeaning thing for someone to have to wash someone's feet, to come to someone's feet.

[9:55] She did more than just wash his feet. She poured the ointment and she wiped his feet with her hair. And we know in Proverbs 29 it says that a man's pride shall bring him low, but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.

Do we stop and think to put ourselves out to the extent that we humble ourselves? And there's honour there. It says there's honour to those who are humble in spirit, to those who are humble themselves.

We know that our Lord spoke in the attitudes of humility. That's a precious quality that he recognised. And so we see Mary was humble.

She was selfless here. She wiped his feet with her hair. And so she bowed her knee to Christ. All of us will.

Mary already did. She already has. She's beaten us to it. She's bowed her knee to the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings. And she bowed her knee to Christ.

[11:03] It was a selfless act of devotion. She was humble. In contrast, Judas was a picky critic, finding fault, full of himself and his pride.

Here was the contrast, the contradiction, the opposite of Mary. And he was full of pride. Now we know the word tells us that pride goes before destruction.

What do the proud say? They say, I have the most things. I'm so good. What do the humble say? God has given me so much I want to share.

You know, sometimes you see those that sometimes have the least are sometimes the most generous. They are the ones who are the most giving.

Because they recognise God has given me it all. I just want to share it. I don't want to keep it all to myself in a greedy, grasping way. What do the proud say?

[12:05] I want it my way. I want to be happy. I want to make myself happy. It's all about me, me, me. What do the humble say? I want the best for you.

I want others to be happy. They've got an attitude of blessing others, of considering others, to care for the needs of others above themselves, to look out for the interests of others.

What do the proud say? I am more important than you. They puff themselves up. Sometimes they've got lots of knowledge and wisdom. Well, maybe more knowledge. Knowledge that puffs them up.

Oh, I know more than you. I'm more important than you. Whereas the humble say, you are worth more than all the world. They think of others before themselves.

They put themselves out and take time to bless others. What do the proud say? I didn't get my fair share of fighting and grasping and wanting to get more and more.

[13:05] Whereas others say, I have so much and I just want to share it that I have. It's just the contradictory nature of people. Are we a Judas or a Mary?

Mary was selfless. We see in Isaiah 57 that the Lord says, For thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabits of eternity, whose name is Holy.

I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit. To revive the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

You know, it's been said that the High and Lofty One, he dwells in eternity. His home is heaven, but he dwells in the heart of the humble. He dwells in those who know him, in the hearts of his own people.

So are we full of pride as Judas or will we humble ourselves like Mary? The Lord says in Matthew 18, Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

[14:12] The context was, as he was gathering with little ones around him, he pointed out to one and said, Just as this little child is the greatest.

We know the word tells us to clothe ourselves with humility. It's as if a garment that we clothe ourselves with that. And being humble is a good thing. We know in our world it's a dog-eat-dog world, isn't it?

It's a step on as many people as you can to get above them, to beat the Joneses, to make a life for yourself such that you step on others to get there.

But the word tells us that God resists the proud, but he gives grace to the humble. He gives grace to the humble. It says in Psalm 113, The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.

Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbles himself. He humbles himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth.

[15:22] He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill, that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people. Our God stoops down and reaches out to all, to all of us.

He takes us out of the miry clay. He sets our feet on the rock. This is our God. As we humble ourselves, he will lift us up.

As we come under his mighty hand, he will lift us up. So sometimes when we're low and down, and feeling like we're just at the end of ourselves, he is there for us.

He never leaves us nor forsakes us. He's always there. He's always there. Sometimes when we get to that point of desperation, it's where he wants us to be, isn't it? That we call out and cry out.

That we're not self-sufficient. We need God. Our sufficiency is of God. And sometimes it's where God seems to do the greatest work, is amongst the most humble, isn't it?

[16:41] In some of these nations where the people have nothing but God. Isn't that right? Don't we need to get there? There was a preacher one day, a story told of him.

He went to Asia on this journey to Asia, and accompanying him was a Taiwanese pastor. And they went on a hike into a remote mountain village to visit a group of Chinese Christians.

It was raining and the roads were bad and muddy. And years later, someone asked this man who accompanied the preacher what he remembered about him, because he was quite a well-known preacher.

He started some major ministry that's still very prominent today. And I thought, well, there must be something about this man that you picked up on your time with him.

And a Taiwanese pastor said what he remembered the most about him was, he cleaned my shoes. He cleaned my shoes.

[17:51] And so this traditionally humble man, this Taiwanese pastor, was surprised that this foreign pastor, this Western pastor, he arose up early and he cleaned his muddy shoes.

And that was the mark of this man, the humility of the man, that he would do such a thing as that.

And this man, of whom we speak, he died giving his life to save a friend's son from drowning.

That was the nature of the man. He was such a man. He was willing to follow the Lord Jesus, not in word only, but in deed. Cleaning the man's shoes.

And he stooped down. He was selfless. Selfless. And sometimes we we get too sometimes too self-filled instead of selfless.

don't we? In this world where it's people are inclined to be selfish, aren't they? Let's face it. I know for me, it rubs off on me.

[18:59] It rubs off on all of us, I think. It's where it's all about self. Being selfish. Pleasing ourselves instead of pleasing our Lord. And yet God's grace can change our own hearts and open our eyes.

It's like, I like to think, when we see people in our world, I kind of, I mentioned it numbers of times, but I don't mean to labour it, but sometimes we can categorise people or we can classify people as to who we want to talk to or associate with.

But when we look through Jesus' eyes, if we put his spectacles on, they're all souls, every one of them. Amen? Every one of them are souls, precious souls. And every human being, even the most objectionable, even the ones that grate against us and make us feel uncomfortable, even those who think they're, you would discount them, that even they are worth the grace of God, the love of God, the blood of Jesus can save them as he has for us.

God's grace can change our own hearts, that we can see people differently. The writer of Amazing Grace said this, I am persuaded that love and humility are the highest attainments in the school of Christ.

Love and humility. And they are the brightest evidences that he is indeed our master. Love and humility. It's where the rubber hits the road, isn't it?

[20:35] How we relate to others. How we relate to those that we find it hard to relate to. Love and humility. When we think of the forbearance that we call to, of that putting up with people at times, that God will give you the grace, that humility of life, that humility of heart.

Humility. It's a quality that's so lacking today. It's been defined as, or stated, that humility humility is quick to confess sin and slow to point out sin in others.

It's about examining yourself, isn't it? Instead of pointing out sin in others, we look at ourselves. We do a healthy self-analysis. Pride is slow to confess sin and quick to point the finger.

It's the opposite, isn't it? We can hear as the Pharisee came and prayed, at the same time the publican came, Luke 16, we see the pride in the Pharisee.

He was doing something spiritual. He was doing something religious. He was at the prayer meeting.

He was one of the righteous ones. And he says, along the lines of, I thank you that I'm not like the other man, like that man.

[22:00] As we see the tax collector there, so outwardly, he was praying. He was going through all the right motions, all the right actions, but inwardly, his heart was ravaged by pride and selfishness.

He wasn't teachable. He wasn't humble. He knew no compassion or mercy. He wasn't looking at others like Christ would look at them. Pride says, if you don't look, talk, and act just like I do, you are wrong.

But the tax collector, he said, God, have mercy. God, be merciful, he wouldn't lift his eyes up. He was just, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

Have mercy on me. He was humbling himself and grasping hold of God as he's all in all, as the source of his righteousness, as the one who could save.

And humility asked God to deal with our sin so we can truly get it right. So we see Mary's worship.

[23:11] It was sacrifice, very costly. It was selflessness. She humbled herself and bowed at his feet, wiping his feet with her hair.

And thirdly, we see sweetness, sweetness, the sweetness of Mary's worship, the odour, the fragrance that filled the whole house. It just permeated the atmosphere, the very worship of Mary. It filled the whole house. And for us as believers, when we worship, when we truly worship, when we live the life as living sacrifices, it's not like we clock on and clock off of worship, like we only worship when we come into a certain building, or it's six o'clock so we start worship, it's our lifestyle, it's our life, we're living sacrifices.

And in Mary, as with us, that fragrance should affect the atmosphere around us.

It should affect others. When you're a Christian, you will affect the atmosphere of your house. The people around you will notice. You'll have an effect in your workplace, in your life, the place you're at.

[24:39] And God wants us, each one of us, to be like sweet perfume. He wants you to saturate the world around you so there's a permeating, there's an influence, it's contagious in a good way, isn't it?

That kind of Christianity. wherever you live, wherever you go about, the world around you, he wants that sweet aroma, as it were.

There's something sweet about you, there's something that reaches others, that influence. Maybe you'll show your love for the Lord in your home by your attitude, with your spouse, with your children, with those around about, that the Lord Jesus is evident in the way you treat others, by your sweet spirit.

It's about attitude. When I think of sweetness, I think of attitude. Is your attitude one of serving? Is it one of being teachable, of consideration for others?

An attitude of kindness, of security, of trust in Christ? Sweetness. Instead of disobedience, peace, keep sweet.

[25:53] Instead of conflict, bring peace. Instead of resentment, show forgiveness. There's a sweetness there. There's a story, a poem here, called Keep Sweet.

Keep Sweet. There is a little secret worth its weight in gold, easy to remember, easy told. Changing into blessings, every curse we meet, turning hell into heaven.

This is all Keep Sweet. Make me kind and gentle, harmless as a dove, giving good for evil, meeting hate with love. What tough trials press us, what tough tempests beat, if we just keep sweet.

Sweet when things are bitter, sweet when things are sad, giving songs for singing, making others glad, in the quiet household, on the bustling street, everywhere and always Jesus keeps me sweet.

We can choose to be sweet or we can choose to be bitter. It's sad to see people who are bitter.

Life's dealt them some hard things and they become bitter.

[27:14] We don't have to choose. We can overcome that. Sometimes those that are dealt the hardest trials can still be sweet.

They can still have an overcoming attitude beyond the trial that they're going through.

The Lord can give you that grace. He truly can. sometimes that which is pressed produces a perfume.

And sometimes there's pressure, isn't there? In life, life can be full of pressure. But sometimes that pressure can produce sweetness, not bitterness.

It's about how we respond, isn't it? How is our spirit? Is it sweet? When trouble comes, do we get bitter? Or do we keep our spirits sweet? Sometimes we've got to pray because it's hard.

[28:25] Because it doesn't come naturally, does it? Sometimes the natural thing, and we've got to do what's supernatural, the natural thing is to get bitter. And so we can think for ourselves, how is my attitude?

Is it sweet, peaceful, or is it bitter and hateful, hard? Every day we're sending out a fragrance. What about our words? Are our words sweet or sour? In Proverbs 16, 24 it says, Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and healing to the bones.

Don't you just love having some honeycomb? Just that sweet taste of honeycomb. And the word tells us that pleasant words are like that.

Sweet to the soul, healing to the bones. It says in Proverbs 31, of that wise woman of Proverbs 31, she opened her mouth with wisdom and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

[29:35] That sweetness, that kindness, those words that will bless. Do we think carefully before we speak those words? Because our words, you could say, will fall into one or the other.

They'll be sweet or sour. They'll be bitter, spiteful, or they'll bring healing instead of hurt. And so, friends, we see the sweet fragrance comes from Mary's worship.

And it comes from us too. Wherever we go, there's an influence, there's an atmosphere. And sometimes we're not even conscious of it. But, you know, sometimes you see people when, as a Christian, you enter the room, they suddenly stop what they've been talking about because they know that there's a clash with what you stand for because they know that you stand for God.

And it could be when you see some can be struggling and hurting, they'll go to the Christian, they'll come to you to hear those sweet words, to hear that counsel, to get that encouragement, to get that uplift, because there's a fragrance about you.

That's the kind of effect that we can have without even realising it sometimes, without consciously meaning to. So, friends, we see Mary's worship. There was a sacrifice there, it was very costly.

[31:05] Don't shy away from that generosity of life. Be willing to be a living sacrifice that you'll spend and be spent.

You'll be poured out like a drink offering, that your life is poured out in a meaningful way. Poured out in a purposeful way, in whatever way you can to serve the Lord.

There's a sacrifice there, there's a selflessness there, that you'll bow at his feet, you'll come low before him, who is your master, and you'll bow your knee, and more so your heart, your will, your life, to be his, in his control, under his domain, at his service, the master, selflessly.

And there'll be a sweetness there, that when you worship, it'll affect your whole, the whole circumstance, the whole, the whole dimensions, all the dimensions of your life, that because you're a worshipper of God, because you worship the Lord Jesus, that there'll be a sweetness about how you live, an odour that is a pleasant and blessing, a saturating of the world around you, that your life will be a blessing to others.

So be encouraged tonight, we see the contrast here, Judas or Mary. We see the Pharisee, the tax collector.

[32:46] We see the contrast, bitter, sweet. Let us pray. Our Lord, we thank you that Mary bowed herself at your feet.

She found grace there. She found release there. She found favour. And even now, we speak her name as one who was a worshipper and one who you acknowledged.

And Lord, we want to be in her company. We want to be such a people, Lord. Help us to learn from her example. Lord, help us to not shy away. When we face sacrifice, that our life should be a living sacrifice.

Lord, help us to be purposeful in how we live and give and be. We'll have that generosity of heart for others. We'll be selfless. Lord, we'll find what it is to crucify ourselves and to find life in Christ. That we'll put to death the old man, the old nature of sin and selfishness and we'll have that new nature, that new heart, that new spirit that our lives will be transformed.

[34:03] So we don't live for ourselves but we live unto you, to your glory. And Lord, also that we'll have that sweetness about us that you'll help us, Lord, when life throws the curveball and there's tough times, that it won't make us sour but we'll keep sweet.

Lord, help us to find that grace to keep sweet even when we're attacked, even when we're accused falsely, even when we're beaten and bashed and hurt and rejected.

Lord, help us to be still as you were, sweet, to know that sweetness of life. Lord, we pray for everyone here tonight, some that are going through some heavy trials, some that are burdened down.

Lord, life is hard and it's tough. Many people are going through tough things tonight, Lord, yet we know that you never leave us nor forsake us and we can rejoice in that knowledge that you're always there and we can trust in you and we can worship you no matter what.

Our worship isn't about how we feel, it's about what we purpose to do and we purpose to be that people, Lord. We purpose to be worshippers, worship in spirit and in truth, to worship you day in, day out, day, night, until we see your face and then we'll worship you face to face.

[35:44] Lord, help us to be such a people. We pray if there's any here tonight that have yet to trust you for the very first time, that have yet to know that saving grace that saves a soul and secures a home in heaven, Lord, that I'll know that grace tonight, that Jesus, you've paid the price.

At the cross, you've taken it all our pain, our penalty and paid it in full. Lord, we thank you for that and Lord, we receive your gift of eternal life and Lord, help us to walk in that life, to walk strong, to be overcomers.

No matter what, what happens, even if we suffer deeply, we will not stop worshipping because we purpose to do that.

In Jesus' name, Amen.