

John: The Word Became Flesh - John 12:1-11

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[0 : 0 0] It was good to be here this morning. My wife and I last week had opportunity to go visit her family in southern Idaho and it was good to see them and it's very good to be back. Grateful for Pastor Jay preaching last Sunday and I'm grateful for a preaching team who teaches faithfully the Word of God. I want to share just briefly an announcement then pray and then we'll get into the message. Many of you know that we're about two months away from planting a church with two of our pastors, two of our elders and deacons and many within our congregation will be going and planting a church and being sent to plant a church on the South Hill and Pastor Eric today is preaching at Indian Trail Church up in the Indian Trail Indian and there are many churches that are cooperating in this effort to plant this church and yes it is primarily

Fourth Memorial Church planting this church but a lot of other churches are cooperating in this effort and Indian Trail Church is one of such churches and many other churches are also putting monies aside that over the course of many years, five years will be contributing a total of a hundred thousand dollars toward this church planting effort and I'm so I'm grateful for Indian Trail for their partnership in this and that's where Pastor Eric is today and that he is preaching the Word of God there this morning but also in the service there's going to be a Q&A; time because Indian Trail is also looking to plant a church as well and so I just am grateful for the partnership of many churches in Spokane of whom we get to be one of just one and and so I want to just a pause and pray for Pastor Eric and thanking the Lord for Indian Trail Church if you would do that with me. Father thank you so much for the privilege to know that you are at work all around this world and we thank you that we are just one outpost of a church that gets to proclaim the good news of your majesty and the good news of that in you forgiveness of sin has been made possible and I thank you that we're just one church and I thank you for many faithful churches around this world of whom one is Indian Trail and for their partnership and ministry and so we we pray blessings on them and we thank you for Pastor Eric bringing God's Word to the that congregation in this city. Thank you Lord for being able to partner in your work that you are doing here in the inland Northwest but also around the world with other faithful churches and it's in your mighty name Jesus we pray amen. I'm grateful for Pastor Jay's message last week. Last week it was this it was the passage concerning Lazarus who is a friend and he is a brother of Mary and Martha and Lazarus Mary Martha this nice little family living in Bethany just on the outsides of Jerusalem.

Lazarus fell ill he died Mary and Martha are distraught Jesus comes raises Lazarus from the dead and he is worshiped. Verses chapter 11 in John verses 45 through 57 is a response to the religious leaders we have Caiaphas the high priest is also it's a response from all these people and it is not good that they do not appreciate that Jesus rose Lazarus from the dead and it is their response that is recorded in that section. Today we're going to focus on the very next section of in the in the Gospel of John chapter 12 1 through 11 will be our text today and we're going to talk about a little bit about waste.

Waste is giving more than is necessary is one way we can think of it. Among other things if a dollar is what it takes to purchase a pack of gum then to spend five dollars would be a waste. If an ounce of water will do to use a gallon to do accomplish whatever would be a waste. If a project will take three days to finish the task but we invest ten days to accomplish it that would be considered a waste. Waste in part means that you give something too little or I'm sorry give something too much for something that is too little and today we're going to look at a passage where the disciples looked at an extravagant form of worship as waste and the one who demonstrated this waste was a woman whose name is Mary its Lazarus's sister Martha's sister and Jesus will defend Mary and her extravagant worship that others perceived as waste is no waste to Jesus. So

I'm going to encourage us today the point of the message is to waste your life on Jesus for it is no waste at all and so with that in mind let's look at our text today John chapter 12 verses 1 through 11. Six days before the Passover Jesus therefore came to Bethany where Lazarus was whom Jesus had raised from the dead so they they gave a dinner for him there Martha served and Lazarus was one who was reclining with them at the table. Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair and the house was filled with fragrance of the perfume.

[6:17] But Judas Iscariot one of the disciples he was about to betray him said why was this ointment not sold for 300 denarii and given to the poor and he said this not because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief and having charge of the money bag he used to help himself to what was put into it and Jesus said leave her alone so she may keep it for the day of my burial for the poor you will always have with you but you will not always have me. And when a large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there and they came not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus whom he had raised from the dead so the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

Years ago I read a book by Watchman Kneese and the last chapter of that book is called The Normal Christian Life. It is entitled The Goal of the Gospel and Watchman Kneese writes about this account of Mary anointing Jesus' feet with this pure nard washing his feet with this fragrant perfume this very expensive extravagant perfume and we'll get into that but Jesus defends Mary's action and in Matthew chapter 26 verses 12 through 13 the verses may be on your screen in a moment but it says this in Matthew's account of the same event Matthew says this in pouring this ointment on my body she has done it to prepare me for burial truly I say to you wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world what she has done with will also be told in my memory of her will be told in memory of her notice two concepts that are in defense of Mary's action what Jesus says number one the gospel is being proclaimed that's one concept that is that is that wherever this gospel is proclaimed Jesus says and then the second concept I want us to see is that this is an expression of Mary's life and it reflects the true estimate of his worth of Christ's worth for the advancement of the gospel one should waste his your life on him Jesus is worthy for us to devote all of who we are in Christ I love Mary's response and in contrast to Mary's action Judas is also found in here so we have Mary's selfless pouring out lavish gift with no concern of others opinion of her action to wash someone with your hair feet with your hair and then we were contrasted with that with Judas who is self-centered he he has charge of the money bag and he often takes a portion of what is found in the money bag and puts it in his own pocket and so he's selfishly concerned about this lavish gift that has been just so the big idea and the message is this a life spent in selfless devotion to Jesus is not wasted but a life spent on selfish ambition is a total waste mark in his account writes this or mark in in chapter 8 verses 35 36 says this whoever wishes to save his life will lose it but ever loses his life for my sake and for the gospel's sake we'll find it and for what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul so we we come to this account here in John chapter 12 and I want to talk about three things that selfish devotion causes self or what it is selfless devotion firstly is costly what do we see here in Mary's example that self selfless devotion is costly

Mary is anointing Jesus with this costly perfume and when you selfless devotion is costly it will cost you financially that's the first one it will cost us financially and it begs to answer the question do I treasure Christ more than my stuff do I treasure Christ more than my stuff pure Nard is a spice that is found in the Himalayas in India in northern India it had to be imported to Israel at great cost we don't know how Mary came about this 12 ounce jar of this pure Nard but it could have been a family heirloom we do not know how she came about this the Bible doesn't tell us but but Judas estimates the value of this if we look in verse 5 he his concern he's like why was this ointment not sold for 300 denarii and given to the poor meaning he estimates the value of this pure Nard to be 300 denarii a denarii is one day's value for a worker is worth so can you imagine 300 days of giving a day's wage for 300 days I calculated the minimum wage today for 300 days at an eight hour day and this would be an equivalent if you will in our day and age if you're working for minimum wage \$39,000 she poured out \$39,000 of pure Nard to anoint Jesus's head which we find in Matthew and Mark their account and the feet here in this account and washing Jesus's feet with this fragrant perfume worth a minimum of 300,000 probably to \$50,000 in today's account and what stops us from doing this why why would we not do this we'll get into that a little bit later but what I love Judas is asking why are we doing this and his question is is this sensible is this pragmatic free and Jesus rebukes

Judas's assessment free says for you always have the poor with you but but you will not always have me and we know that in less than a week from this event Jesus will have died the point is that devotion to Christ will cost us financially if he bought you with his blood you don't own anything nothing I own in my name is truly mine I am just a steward on this earth of stuff the Lord owns it all and and it is our opportunity to give to him and this is what selfless devotion to Christ is it ultimately costs us something it is all his and he can direct you to give some or all of it for kingdom purposes probably most of us have not sold perfume but we have given to the Lord something and it will cost us and Mary gave it because Jesus was worth it and she had been gripped by Jesus one of the things when I worked with young adults for many years is I would I would share with young adults those in their 18 to 20 something's I would say be disciplined

now and so if you're a youth and you you have a job and you are have the potential to earn a little bit of money I would begin now by by giving to the Lord beginning that habit of constantly giving to the Lord of your increase begin now and there's a young adult you think well I have Scott I have tuition do you know what university I tend you know what their tuition is I have real expenses give now why because oftentimes I will find folks in their 40s and 50s and their prime earning income years and they will say I don't have enough to give and yet you have these large salaries and their 40s and 50s and 60s and and and why so why do I encourage young adults to begin not because and a youth or a young adult is going to influence the church's budget by much that's not the reason it's because I want the habit to be in a person so that as they grow older they have the discipline to always be giving faithfully to the Lord because one a person when a person after graduating from college what often will happen is you'll you'll buy one or two things get married possibly then you buy a house and then you buy reliable transportation and all of a sudden the budget gets squeezed and then you think I can't afford to give no no no no no you give to the Lord and then you decide I can't live like that I'm going to have to settle for less and I'm not going to have as reliable of a car that's and I'm generous to the Lord that's the right thinking not I can't afford to give to the Lord because my lifestyle won't allow for it youth young adults give to the Lord begin that habit and it won't be any big deal to continually give generously to the Lord through your life why because being selflessly devoted to the Lord will cost you financially second thing we learn in this text is selfless devotion to the Lord will cost you socially and it's a response to the question do I treasure Jesus more than my pride what Mary did here in this text is very socially unbecoming for a woman in the first century to let down her hair Leon Morris accounts in his commentary he says it would be likened to a woman who has loose morals so for her to let down her hair in the midst of an audience especially of men all of the disciples Jesus her brother and Martha is fixing the meal there are 14 people in the room and for her to let down her hair and not care socially what others are concerned about and to wash Jesus's feet with her hair socially that cost her but Mary was so caught up in her devotion to Christ that she didn't stop to consider what others might think about her like David dancing before the Lord only wearing an e-fod Mary let down her hair and wiped Jesus's feet David's wife was embarrassed by his action as he worshiped the Lord and so Mary's action possibly made the apostles uncomfortable but Jesus sided with her because we read in verse 7 he says leave

her alone leave her alone so ask yourself this question do I treasure Jesus more than my pride or am I concerned more about what others think about me people may think I'm zealous or religious fanatic but what matters most is what Jesus thinks about your selfless devotion to him are you so caught up in yourself to your devotion to Christ that you don't consider how others think about you how long has it been since not just those without Christ but even those who follow Christ have been made uncomfortable by your devotion to Christ do I treasure Christ more than my pride some of the ways I have seen this play out in life how I have watched people kind of do something socially risky is I appreciate people who have come come to faith in Christ perhaps at a younger age but then as an adult say I want to be baptized because that act of obedience if you will may should have occurred soon after faith in Christ but there's been a gap in obedience and they as now an adult though they don't care there they're selflessly devoted to Christ and they say I want to testify to you what Lord has done in my life I have believed in his life death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sin and let me demonstrate that before you let me testify to what he has done I don't care what you think I love that I know others who have started prayer meetings at their workplace Bible studies before work begins they invite their co-workers to say hey I'm gonna I want to pray I want to pray for you I want to pray for this company I want to pray for our families and if you want to join me I'm gonna be here in this office and of course check this out with your work before you do this little

caveat but but most employers would allow this to happen but it's socially risky people now think you're Jesus fanatic or something I also appreciate and again sometimes it's not so much the outside world but even fellow believers that can be the harshest in this regard makes us a little uncomfortable when we see these kinds of things but I appreciate married couples for whatever reason where a season of separation occurs in order to be reconciled to their spouse and they choose not they they want to honor their vow to their spouse and for whatever and so they don't make themselves available to others and they don't listen to the word oh just get a divorce but they're like no I'm devoted to my I'm gonna honor my vow that I made to my spouse and even though this is a difficult time I'm gonna remain faithful to him everything socially would say just cut bait get a divorce everyone that people are spending billions of dollars for you to believe that lie and I so appreciate folks socially who are at risk who say no no no I'm gonna honor the Lord in this way I don't want to hear that next selfless devotion not only costs this financially not only costs us socially but it also costs us some criticism so it's a response to this question do I treasure Jesus more than my reputation look with me in

[23 : 02] verse 45 4 45 4 and 5 chapter 12 4 and 5 but Judas Iscariot one of the disciples who is about to betray him said why was this anointment not sold for 300 denari and given to the poor do I treasure Jesus more than my reputation if we read Matthew chapter 26 verse 8 after Judas's attack and the disciples by the way even though the disciples are not in this passage Judas is kind of the main point of tension to marry the disciples all of them we read in the other accounts in Matthew especially all of the disciples are displeased with what Mary just did everyone is in disagreement with this everyone is thinking this is pure waste look listen to what Matthew chapter 26 verse 8 says but the disciples were indignant all of the disciples were indignant and when they saw this Mary's lavish anointment of Jesus head in that in that passage and said why this waste this is why I'm saying waste your life on Jesus I'm

I'm queuing off of this verse why this waste the enemy of selfless devotion is the unwillingness to have the criticism of others and in the criticism of others it's often rooted in pragmatism you know what you could have done with that money Mary do you know what else you could have done that would have been far more measurable than this waste money could have benefited the poor families but instead you wasted it all on Jesus count on it if you give yourself without reserve to the Lord Jesus you will be criticized the loudest by perhaps those even in the church who will say this is not common sense this is not pragmatic how else could we have used those resources Jim Elliot who had been captured and gripped by what the Lord had done for him decided to go to the tribe in Ecuador and his Christian parents asked him to reconsider and consider how well Jim Elliot's life could have been spent discipling the youth of America instead of wasting his life on this unreached tribe in Ecuador and we know the story that he and four others were murdered in their attempt to share the gospel with this tribe did they waste their life John Patton who is a pastor in Scotland in the 1800s mid 1800s he let it be known that he was he the

Lord had moved him so that he was going to board a ship and take his wife and they were going to go to the South Pacific to the islands where there are unreached peoples to proclaim the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who had never heard and one man in his congregation stood up and said but you and your wife will be eaten by cannibals to which he responded this where he was he was tired of all of this pragmatic speech and he knew what the Lord had called him to and he knew the cost if he had not gone he was captured by the love of Christ and so he says this my dear sir you're getting up in years and soon you will be laid in the grave and eaten by worms if I can but live and die honoring the Lord Jesus it doesn't matter to me whether I'm eaten by cannibals or by worms because on the resurrection day my body will arise just as fair as yours but sometimes we care far too more about our reputation and pragmatism is one of the enemies by which we we are unwilling to allow our reputation to be known as just a Jesus follower another enemy though pragmatism is one of them another one is just raw selfishness because the pragmatic excuse that Judas used you can give these 300 denarii to the to the poor we also know what was in his heart because verse 6 says not that he cared about the poor but because he was a thief and having charged with the money bag he used to help himself to what was put in it so not only pragmatism is something that we won't risk our reputation is an enemy of something that we guard a reputation for but it's also selfishness selfishness so then what is selflessness stem from I want to talk about three things that selflessness stems from it's a personal love of Jesus and a gratitude for what he has done while it's not mentioned in this text specifically obviously Mary had

been gripped by the love of Christ it's interesting when you watch Mary's life you've always find her at Jesus's feet the first time we see Mary as she is seated at the feet of Jesus listening to Jesus words she is captured and she can't get enough and and Martha is just going back and forth and complaining that Mary just doesn't get up and help serve the second time we find Jesus was in yesterday or last week's message from Pastor Jay we see in fact in chapter 11 she says it fell at his feet saying to him Lord if you'd only been here my brother would not have died the second time we see

Mary he she is at his feet fallen before him because he's the only one who can do anything about this pleading with him and the third time we see Mary is this occasion today and she again is found at Jesus's feet this time anointing him and washing his feet with her hair why do I make mention of this obviously Mary selfless devotion stems from a personal love for the Lord Jesus Christ and an absolute gratitude for what he has done we also know that in verse 7 that it flows selfless devotion flows from knowing Jesus personally leave her alone for she may keep it for the day of my burial there's something that she understands Jesus has been speaking about his death and and she she has this knowledge of Christ of him personally

Mary knew more about the infinite worth of Jesus than the Apostles did perhaps even at this point her personal knowledge of Jesus likely gained by sitting at his feet she just loved him so I want to conclude today with what is selfless devotion these are the motivations of selfless devotion these are the costs of selfless devotion so then how then what can we take away today with regard to actions selfless devotion results in some actions and I want to talk about three actions today and we'll look at three people that are in our our texts today first we're gonna look at Mary Martha and then Lazarus we're gonna look at these siblings and learn what action should we take with regard to being selflessly devoted to Christ look with me in verse 3 the last line after she had anointed Jesus and washed his feet it says with her hair and the house is filled with the fragrance of perfume if you had walked by the door stood outside the house there inevitably you could not but smell this pure fragrant perfume that had been lavished on Jesus so what what what can the people smell like what is the fragrance of Christ smell like that should be honest that people could not help note that we have been with Jesus in some way well I would argue that it would would in part be the it would smell like the fruit of the Spirit that it would smell like love and joy and peace and patience kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness and self control that that these are the things that the fragrance of Christ would smell like and so does your home smell like this do others sense from the fragrance of your life that you spend time with Jesus worshipping him in selfless devotion do your relationships at church smell like the fragrance of Christ there is no room for self-seeking no room for selfishness no room for self-protecting no room for self-promotion no room for self-aggrandizement or pride those attributes are putrid they wreak they don't look good on any of us they don't smell good what would your spouse say what would your children say what would your parents say what would others in the body of Christ say and most importantly what would Jesus say about the fragrance that emanates from your life is it emanating because you're devoted to Christ or are you selfish second action we learn from Martha what's interesting about the account of Martha when we find her earlier she is serving two others and herself she is busy fixing the meal and we read that Mary is there and Jesus is there Mary is sitting at Jesus's feet and she's upset that Mary won't help her and there are three this time I don't want us to miss this look with me in verse 2 so they gave a dinner for him there Martha served and Lazarus was one was reclining at the table did you see that Martha is still serving but this time there's no complaint there's no

[34 : 51] complaining and there's 14 people in the house now she's cooking for there's far more reason to be complaining now but there is no complaint so actions require actions require surrounding the fragrance of Christ but also actions require service for Christ and Martha here is serving Christ out of selfless devotion there is someone in this body whose name is Wayne Lucas he is 90 years old and the fragrance of Christ surrounds him through his selfless service on any account in day when we may have a fellowship here whether it be a senior adult fellowship with young at heart or a church meeting of some kind Wayne where can you find Wayne Lucas at 90 years old at 90 years old Wayne Lucas is in what I call the dish pit or the area in the kitchen where dishes are done and Wayne selflessly serves so that you may have a meal and all your dishes are done and so that you and I may linger longer afterward to socialize and fellowship with one another who gives us that privilege Wayne Lucas because he's selflessly serving doing dishes doing our dishes that's on one end of the spectrum I also appreciate a young man whose name is Brent Conrad who is a medical doctor in his residency who goes home who works all through the night on

Saturday goes home early Sunday morning picks his wife up wife drives him back to the church he takes a little catnap and when he gets here what does he do he teaches children he teaches after working all through the night will long shift he's here in the morning and he's teaching our children that they may learn the supremacy of Christ that he is worth living for why can't I do dishes why can't you do dishes why can't you teach children Martha learned that selfless devotion looks like service unto Christ thirdly there's a lesson we learned from Lazarus look with me in 9 through 11 real quick and real close here and when a large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there in this home with Lazarus they came not only on account of him but also to see

Lazarus whom they he had raised from the dead so the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well being dead once wasn't good enough for them because on account of him that is Lazarus many of the Jews were going away and believing in him in Jesus look at Lazarus Lazarus was raised from the grave raised from the dead and notice why the chief priests in verse 10 were wanting to put Lazarus to death verse 11 says because on account of Lazarus many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus what was Lazarus doing he was raised from the dead he's been a friend of Jesus for many years now Jesus stopped by his been in his home he knows who Jesus is he's had the result he goes he's the Messiah he's worth living for he's he's worth you selflessly devoting your life to he's it's him and on account of Lazarus many of the Jews were leaving Jerusalem and going out to Bethany to see Lazarus then it says many of the Jews were going out to see him and Lazarus was like you don't want to meet me again you're not the one that's the big deal here it's him and many were believing in Jesus on account of Lazarus selfless devotion results in a witness for Christ it's what we do we can't help speak of him the greatest enemy to being sold out for

Jesus wasting your life for Jesus being selflessly devoted to Christ perhaps it's a desire to be liked or to be thought well of our culture spends billions of dollars a year with that aim in mind why does social media exist for you to have attention and to be liked about what food you ate or what photo you took in the bathroom or whatever it's funny how bathrooms are now the new photo spots but the culture is spending billions for you to buy the lie that being liked is more important and wasting your life on yourself is more important than wasting your life on Jesus Lazarus in contrast to this I'm sorry Judas Iscariot Judas is in sharp contrast in this text of someone who is not selflessly devoted to Christ but selfishly devoted to himself and again billions of dollars are being spent for you to an eye to be selfless selfishly devoted to ourselves I'm no poet nor the son of a poet but I wrote this to conclude wasting your life on Jesus is not a waste at all wasting your life on yourself is the worst weight waste of all and so let us pray father thank you for a day to consider your word I pray that we would be a people who be so selflessly devoted to you that we would recognize you you own our very lives you have been bought with a price thank you for giving us reason to not waste our lives on ourselves or you are worthy you are the king of kings and Lord of Lords you are the Alpha you are the Omega you are the beginning in the end you are eternal infinite your value is immeasurable the total weight of your worth of your glory is worth living for how good it is to be someone who has received forgiveness of sin and now has this wonderful opportunity to live for you and you alone it's no waste at all thank you for this day and it's in your beautiful name Jesus we pray amen