

Mary Anointing the Feet of Christ

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[0 : 00] I'm with you now to John chapter 12, verses 1 to 11. And we'll look for a few minutes this morning at what Mary did there at the banquet in Bethany.

Because here we have what she did to Jesus there. We have a picture of total commitment, unconditional surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Unconditional loving surrender, total adoration in what she did to Jesus. The banquet is held in Bethany in honor of the Lord Jesus Christ, who had raised Lazarus from the dead.

And Martha, as usual, was in charge, serving, and Lazarus, we read, was sitting at the table. And we read that Mary came, and there's what was absolutely amazing.

Absolutely shocking, really, but beautiful. She came with a jar of perfumed ointment. And we understand it was very costly. And she broke open the jar, and she pulled it all on Jesus' feet.

[1 : 07] And she wipes his feet with her hair. And two things happened straight away. There was a tremendous outcry. John names Judas, but we're able to read in others, that kind of other Gospels, that everybody reacted to what she did.

We read that they all shouted at her. In fact, the original language goes further than it says that they bawled at her and bellowed at her. So we really look at what she did.

She poured all of the jar of precious ointment, an alabaster jar of very precious ointment on Jesus. Now this was close to a year's wages in value.

It would probably be an heirloom passed down through the family. Because it would be the most precious thing the family would have.

It would be, as they used to have there, an insurance against a bad time coming. Food in a time of drought. Or, just as we would say, against a rainy day.

[2 : 27] It was really a hedge against disaster, this jar of precious ointment. It was very costly. Now it wasn't unusual for perfume to be used at feasts like this, because we must remember that there'd be crowds gathering and it'd be hot weather, and there'd be food being cooked, and the atmosphere would be quite heavy with various smells.

So that, in order to make the atmosphere fragrant, there would be perfume. And as there were no sprays in those days, usually the hostess would dab perfume on the foreheads of all the guests. And it was right and proper to take the most costly perfume and dab a drop on the Lord Jesus Christ. But we read about Mary that she broke the jar and she poured all of it on to the Lord Jesus' feet.

She's showing that cost is no object, that nothing is too costly for the Lord Jesus Christ. And we read that she poured it on his feet.

Now this was a sort of scandalous thing to do in those days, in that culture, because the culture and the rabbinical laws, rules, stated that there was to be no dealing whatsoever with a person's feet.

[3 : 58] It was demeaning, it was too humiliating to deal with a person's feet. And even the Jewish slaves who were taken into slavery because of their debt, they still had rights.

They didn't lose all their rights. And one of the rights was that they weren't to be asked to do anything regarding a person's feet. They weren't allowed to be asked to do anything about the feet. And so that unlatching the shoes was a very demeaning thing to be asked to do. So slaves and servants had rights to refuse this.

But we read about Mary that she pulls the ointment on Jesus' feet and wipes his feet with her hair. What's she saying when she does that?

Well, she's saying she's giving up all her rights. Even slaves are rights, but she is giving them all up. And then we read about her that she wipes his feet with her hair.

[5 : 03] Now that means that she must have let her hair down. She unties it and lets it hang down. And again, the local culture and the rabbinical laws said that a woman must not let her hair down in public.

And that woman letting her hair down in public, that was grounds for divorce. And it should be done only in the privacy of the home.

With close family or with a husband or with a lover. And Mary's action was really in public absolutely scandalous.

And they bawled at her. They bellowed at her. But Jesus says, leave her alone. Against the day of my burying has she kept this.

What does this mean? Well, what's Mary's motivation in doing this, what was termed a scandalous thing? What makes her do all this?

[6 : 05] Well, we have to look at what kind of person Mary is and what we know about her to understand this. We know that she's not an emotional, religious fanatic at all.

Everything we see about Mary tells us that she's a quiet woman who thinks a lot. And every time we see her, and it's recorded for us, she's listening to Jesus.

In Luke 10, she sat at Jesus' seat and heard his words. And in John 11, at the death of Lazarus, we read that Martha runs to Jesus and says, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

And Jesus rebukes her and instructs her about the resurrection. But when Mary comes and says exactly the same thing to Jesus, Jesus doesn't rebuke her at all.

She comes and says the same thing and falls at his feet, but there's no rebuke. There's no instruction about the resurrection. And Jesus just joins with her in the morning.

[7 : 20] Because Jesus knows that Mary understands far more than Martha did. Mary understands about Jesus. Mary has been listening to Jesus and taking in what he has been saying.

And she understands what Jesus has to do. So when she breaks open the jar and pours the ointment onto Jesus, she is really saying, when she wipes his feet and wipes his feet with her hair, she's saying, I know.

I know what you're, who you are. And I know why you came. And I know what you're going to do. That is how you are able to raise my brother from the dead.

In order to overcome death, you yourself have to die. To give us life, you have to give up yours. I see your sacrifice.

That's what Mary is really saying. She has listened, she has understood about Jesus, and now she knows exactly about Jesus. That's why Jesus said, against the day of my burial, has she done this?

[8 : 35] Jesus knows that Mary understands the purpose of his coming, and that she has taken to heart his teaching. Mary is staring at the beauty of what Jesus was doing.

She sees him, and she appreciates all about him. And she appreciates what he would do. And that's why she loved him, with total adoration.

And the more we understand what Jesus has done for us, the more we love him. The more we understand and read about him, and know how clear, and how absolutely, you could say, unfair his death was, and yet, the love that shone through all the time, the more we adore him.

The more we get, in fact, we come in here, and I'm sure everybody sitting at the table is a wee bit worried, because they don't love him enough. But may this example, sort of, get us going, to see, what he has actually done, and one day we will realize it.

Where the whole world of nature, mine, that would be a present far too small. Love so amazing, being so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

[9 : 54] Lord Jesus, everything I have, I give you. Everything I am, I give you. I'm giving you full control over me.

You're my king, you're my brother, you're my beloved savior. That's what Mary's saying. And that's how that is, that we come to the Lord's table, that we love him.

And she breaks the alabaster jar of perfume, and pours it all, and jeezes his feet, and wipes his feet with her hair.

And immediately there's an indignant outcry. That's absolutely ridiculous. All that perfume wasted. It could have been sold for a lot of money, and the money used for the poor.

They all shouted, and some of the disciples were included. And they felt insured round, because they had a good motive. It was for the poor. Righteous indignation.

[10:54] Oozing out of all of them. But Jesus steps in, and he stands by her, leave her alone, he says. She knows why she's doing this. You will always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me.

Jesus was not making the poor unimportant, known or far from it. What he's saying is, there's a certain order required in our lives, and he is claiming the former's position, for he's unique. He is the Savior. He is our only hope. He is the one who loves you, who loves me, for no reason, except his own love.

He reaches out to us, and gives his life for us. He is unique. He's not one of many. He and he alone, is the way, the truth, and the life.

Our business with Christ, must take precedence, over everything else, in the whole wide world. Mary wanted Jesus to know, that she cared, that she really cared.

[12:13] And she understood, that time was running out. And she came, with total commitment, total adoration. And notice, Jesus was pleased, to accept, and receive her worship, as he's pleased, to accept your worship, and mine today.

Unworthy as we are, he's pleased with it. Because Jesus knows, as he knew there, that Mary was saying, thank you.

Thank you. For worship, is the thank you, that cannot be silenced. Every time, you come to hear, the word of God. Every time, you come to a prayer meeting. Every time, you get on your knees, to worship the Lord.

That's saying, thank you. Because it's open, your prayers are heard, by God. Your worship, is accepted, by God. It's a thank you, to him. And Jesus, gives her, an earthly monument, for whatever, the gospel is preached.

Her name, and what she did. What she did here, will be remembered, as is remembered here today, and spoken of. But of course, her real reward, is in heaven, where her crown, of glory awaits her.

[13:32] For we know, that whatever, we freely give, to the Lord Jesus Christ, or do for him, in this world, these things, are safely invested, in the eternal dividend. And we know, that that is, a crown of glory.

She broke open, the jar of perfume, on pen. Take my silver, and my gold, none of them, will I withhold. She pours it, on his feet.

Take my will, and make it thine, it shall be, no longer mine. She lets down, her hair, and wipes his feet. Take my love, O Lord, I pour, at thy feet, its treasure store.

Take myself, and I will be, ever, only, all for thee. As we come, to the Lord's table today, we shall be encouraged, by Mary's example, and look at flesh, at what we have, in Christ.

And as we join, together, at the Lord's table, that we would take, the guilty sinner's place, and recognize, that in Christ, we have a treasure, and that as we, come today, that our adoration, for the Son of God, who died for us, that it will, increase in us.

[15:02] Mary was able to say, my beloved is mine, and we join with her, in saying, my beloved is mine, because he has given himself, to me, and for me.

Whatever we may have, or have not, in this world, think for a moment, what we do have, in Christ. When you are a believer, we have, the blessed, Son of God, the brightness, of his Father's glory, is ours.

I may be rich, I may be poor, but my beloved is mine. I may have neither health, nor strength, but my beloved is mine. I may be lacking in grace, and lacking in talents, but my beloved is mine.

Mine when I know it in my heart, and mine when I don't. Mine by day, mine by night. Mine when I'm walking, the paths of obedience, and mine even, when I'm in rebellion, to his will.

For we're told, in God's word, that even then, we have an advocate, with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. Mine in the sunshine, of life.

[16:17] Mine in the darkness, of death's dark veil. Mine by the grave, of loved ones. Mine when I'm buried. Mine when I rise again. Mine when I stand, at the judgment seat.

Mine in glory, forever mine. My beloved is mine. That's what we have in Christ. When I surveyed the wondrous cross, on which the Prince of Glory died, my riches gain, I count but loss, and poor contempt, on all my pride.

O Lord God of heaven and earth, soften our hearts, we pray, and make our worship, be sincere, and accept it, we pray.

Puny as it may be, but we come, Lord, because, we see, what you have done, for us. we see, Calvary.

We see you, left there, on the cross. We see, even your father, abandoning you there. Not listening, to your cry, of my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

[17 : 32] We see, and understand, because you, were abandoned there, that we will never, be abandoned. Lord Jesus, we hear you cry, that you thirst, on the cross.

We know, that you didn't complain, about any of the pain, and whatever happened, to you, up to then. So what are you saying, when you say, I thirst? We know, that that, is the pain of hell, because we know, that in the parable, gee, you yourself told us, that the rich man, in hell, the first thing he asked for, was water, a drop of cold water.

We know, that the pains of hell, are on the inside. And Lord, we ask, that you'd help, each one of us, to see, and understand, that as you cry, there I thirst, you are going, into the heart, of hell, for me, and for other believers.

Help us to know, that Lord, we pray. And we give you thanks, not only for all that, but oh, we give you thanks, for the empty tomb, when you rose, and returned to glory.

and we wait upon you, with joyful anticipation, to return, for your own. So bless us, for the moments, that we are here, as we gather, around the gospel table, and as we remember, your death, until you come.

[19 : 07] For Jesus' sake, Amen. that is, that is, that is, that is,