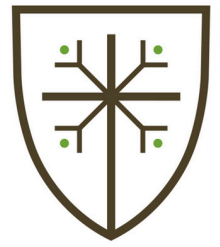


SERMON NOTES



May 18, 2025

SERMON INFO

TITLE

"Lucky is the Man"

PREACHER

Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt

TEXTS

Acts 9:36-42

2 Corinthians 2:14-17

John 12:1-8

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what areas of life do you find yourself reacting like the disciples in our Gospel story - thinking that what you are asked to break open is too costly?
2. Do you have people in your life who, like Mary, unquestioningly enter into your sorrow in the ways that they can? How might you be called to be that person for someone else?

SERMON IN SUMMARY

Tim began this week's sermon with a quote from Walker Percy's *The Last Gentleman*: "Lucky is the man who does not secretly believe that every possibility is open to him." Endless openness, a life lived without commitment to anything or anyone, is paralyzing. Our gospel reading shows us the opposite of an uncommitted life and answers the question, "what does real commitment look like and what does it cost?"

Mary's Gift

The story in John 12 takes place at Lazarus' home after Jesus had raised him from the dead. All the best food and wine are being served. It is a feast that brings to mind Jesus' first miracle at the wedding at Cana turning water into wine. Both these stories, though the recounting of great celebrations, have an undercurrent of sadness. In both cases Jesus alone knows what is coming for him. But in John 12, Mary too somehow also sees what is about to happen. She preemptively prepares Jesus for burial. She does not want him to be alone in his sorrow. Mary takes what she uniquely has at this particular moment and does what she alone can do because she sees what is coming. With great courage and devotion, she pours out her ointment on his feet that he might go forth and do what he was sent to do. Mary is a gift of God to his Son to encourage him in the path that lies before him.

The Disciples' Response

The disciples are horrified at the sight of what Mary does. They don't see what is coming. All they see is something extremely valuable, worth about one year's salary, being emptied in just a few seconds. This was undoubtedly Mary's most precious possession. Yet she does not even hesitate to pour it all out upon Jesus.

Mary's second act is to wipe Jesus' feet with her hair, pushing the boundaries of propriety but also revealing to us the depth of intimacy of which our God is capable. God wants to share this close of a relationship with every one of his people. But all too often we react like the disciples. We are embarrassed and ashamed. We think it too costly, that he asks too much.

Jesus' Interpretation

What Mary has done with her oil is what God the Father does with Jesus. He is the Father's most precious and valuable possession and was brought to earth and broken open for us. God anointed us with the very Spirit of God in order that we might be given a new way of being, a new life with commitment, direction, and intimacy with God.

Mary's commitment is the commitment we are each called to in the Christian life – the willingness to give whatever is required. Christ has been poured out for us and we are sent out as the fragrance of a Christ-filled life in the world.