

The Gospel of John - #43 - 11/21/2021 - "Lavish Love for the Lord!" John 12: 1 - 11

Introduction: IL- Gloria Gaither wrote this beautifully worded song that is based on today's text:

One day a plain village woman, driven by love for her Lord,
recklessly poured out a valuable essence, disregarding the scorn.
And once it was broken and spilled, out a fragrance filled all the room,
like a prisoner released from his shackles- like a spirit set free from the tomb!

Broken and spilled out just for love of You, Jesus!
My most precious treasure lavished on Thee.
Broken and spilled out and poured at Your feet-
in sweet abandon let me be spilled out and used up for Thee!

*Loving Jesus with all our hearts is what today's message is all about.

If I am a true believer, I need to ask and answer this important question:

"How can I demonstrate, not just say, that I love the Lord?"

We can prove our love for the Lord in four special ways illustrated in **12: 1-11...**

By becoming known as a real worshipper! "Six days before the Passover..." This wonderful account of Mary's love for the Lord is given to us also in Matthew 26 and Mark 14. From John and those two Gospel records we learn: that while Jesus arrived in Bethany six days before the Passover, this dinner party was two days before Passover. And we learn that it was held in the home of Simon, the "former" leper. Martha, Mary and the "formerly" dead Lazarus were there along with other disciples of Jesus. They all were awaiting the Passover, one of seven annual feasts of the Jews. Three were held in the fall and four in the spring each year, including the Passover. Martha was busy preparing the meal they would eat. She was noted for such meticulous work as an act of love for family and friends. Lazarus, now alive and well, is fellowshiping with Jesus, the One who raised him from the dead not too long before. Just so you know, this is NOT the account in Luke 7 of the sinful woman who anointed Jesus's feet with ointment and wiped them with her hair. This Mary was a virtuous woman who truly loved her Lord. And this Mary was once again at the feet of Jesus worshiping Him. I mention "once again" because every time we see Mary in the same place where Jesus is we see her worshiping at His feet- giving Him the honor and respect as her Master. In Luke 10, during an earlier visit to Bethany and to the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus, we see Martha doing what she does well- preparing and serving a meal; and we see Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus taking in His powerful and instructional teaching. Then in John 11, when Jesus comes to Bethany to raise Lazarus from the dead, after Martha talks with the Lord she tells Mary He is there and she comes and falls at His feet and expresses her sorrow over her brother's death and she saw her Savior "deeply moved" as He sees her tears flow. I believe she knew that Jesus was going to do something miraculous on behalf of her deceased brother! I also believe that all of her personal knowledge of Jesus, His Person and Work, she gained while worshipping at His feet! Her joy

down deep inside and her awareness of who Jesus is and what He was about to do on Good Friday came to her because she spend time at His feet. The best place to be to demonstrate our love for the Lord is in prayer and praise with focus on HIM and follow-through to put into practice what He has taught us in the Word! Outside of our home where we can have our own worship service each day, we can look for opportunnities to honor and adore Him before family and friends. To worship Jesus means to give Him "worth-ship" by honoring His majesy and greatness. As you meet privately with the Lord, be glad and thank Him for the fact that He knows your heart, just like Jesus knew Mary's heart and what she was going to do with Him in just moments!

By being generous with all that I have been given! The main thrust of verse 3 in our text is to demonstrate her worship in action through giving up her most prized possession- an alabaster flask of spikenard worth, in today's figures, more than \$30,000. Mary and Martha may have been among the women spoken of in Luke 8 who travelled around with Jesus and His disciples and contributed financially to His ministry needs. But either way, she is highlighted here for pouring this bottle of vey expensive 'nard' on Jesus- both on his head and his feet. Kings were commonly anointed on their heads with pecious ointment and here we see the connection with Jesus as King of kings! To anoint the feet was typically the act of a slave but Jesus connects it in verse 7 with Mary preparing His body for burial just a week away! Her loving sacrifice of a material gift was spontaneous, sacrificial and, what I think, was lavish or radical! Isaiah 52: 7- "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of Him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'" I believe that Mary knew that Jesus was soon to die- the disciples did not, but then she spent much time at Jesus' feet listening to Him tell of His plans and purposes. The bottom line here is that Mary had more than good intentions as a follower of Christ. She followed through with action- she poured the ointment on His head, then on His feet, and she even let her hair down and used it as a towel to wipe His feet. Simply put- actions produce results and giving from the heart is a powerful testimony of loving devotion to Jesus and the cause of Christ today. **IL-** Jim Elliott- "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose!" Give of yourself- your time, talent and treasure and you won't have to say anything to prove your love for Jesus! Be generous- work to have to give! Don't do it to get attention- do it so that Jesus is honored by your practical worship on display!

By being a realist- knowing that others may not understand! Here is something that all of us need to recognize- there will be times when some people will react badly to our loving displays of total commitment to Christ. Verses 4 to 6 show that Judas and Mary were clearly in contrast to each other. He, and at least some of the other disciples, made a big to-do about this "apparent" waste of money. Judas may have waited for a few of the other guests to make that point and then he jumped in with his harsh words of disgust. Remember- he didn't know Jesus as His personal Lord and Master- he wasn't one of Christ's sheep. He was the group treasurer and used that position to pilfer some of the funds in the offering bag- the one HE carried around for the group! He had to have thought, "If Jesus is going to die it means that my hopes for a kingdom that would outdo the Roman government and make me a key player in the new regime is now done for!" Jesus does care for the poor, more than any of us could possibly care, but His

point is that He will only be on earth for a short while longer, while the poor can be helped anytime. These are the first words recorded that Judas spoke. His last words are when he is giving up once for all and killing himself- Matthew 27: 4- "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And verse 5 abruptly says, "he went and hanged himself!" His \$3,000 or so of silver coins couldn't compare with Mary's \$30,000 priceless treasure- neither in value or purpose! Mary was not concerned about what Judas or anyone else thought, except for her Savior. She was not telling herself- "Maybe you had better not do this- what will others think?" Judas had a self-centered focus, Mary had a *Jesus* focus. The Jewish leaders in verses 9 to 11 had a "protect our religion" focus, and they felt they needed to kill not only Jesus the Messiah, but Lazarus- the formerly dead one! Mary's lesson to us is this: if Jesus endorses our loving and giving, it doesn't matter what anyone else thinks! So, an appropriate question at this point is: what are YOU known for most? Viewing football or vibrant faith? Being a hoarder or a giver? It is best if you are known as a steward of all that God has blessed you with- godly people who feel the same way will totally understand and encourage you, as you encourage them about giving. 1 Corinthians 4: 2- "Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man (or woman) be found faithful!" Notice- not rich, not successful, not looking for a plaque with your name on the wall- just faithful- then others will recognize you as someone who really loves the Lord Jesus!

By being convinced that Jesus is worthy of all my love! One more way we can demonstrate how much we love our Savior, Jesus Christ, is by being convinced of His worth to you and me! Mark 8 : 35-36- "For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the Gospel's will save it." When I read that text in Mark I thought not only of Mary but of her now living brother- Lazarus. Our text in verse 11 says- "On account of him (Lazarus) , many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus!" Then the Spirit prompted me to think- what if that verse said, "On account of BILL many were going away and believing in Jesus!"? The best way I can demonstrate that I love my Lord is to tell others that they can know Him and come to love Him just as much as I do if they will only receive Him as their Savior from sin like I did as a young boy! People came to Bethany to see Jesus but also to see the living Lazarus. Let's pray that they will come around us to see the "living" "loving" children of God in Garden City. In doing so, we will produce a fragrance, like the one that filled that home that day. 2 Corinthians 2: 15-17- "But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of Him everywhere!" Ephesians 5: 2- "And walk in love, as Christ loved us, and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." To put it plainly this morning- if I have been born again, others should see changes in me over time that point them to the greatest Giver of all. We should serve Him in such a way that we are that fragrance that encapsulates our message, verbal or otherwise. We need to remember that we are blessed to be a blessing, and God is NOT cheap when it comes to His outpouring of Heaven's blessings! In fact, He is lavish- radical- and we should be too! And finally- remember: lavish love is **never** wasted- certainly NOT His, and thankfully not ours!

Conclusion: IL- Gaither song- verse 2 and chorus-

Lord, You were God's precious treasure- His loved and His own perfect Son,
sent here to show us the love of the Father. Just for love it was done!
And though You were perfect and holy, You gave up Yourself willingly!
You spared no expense for my pardon! You were used up and wasted for me!

Broken and spilled out just for love of me, Jesus! God's most precious treasure
lavished on me! Broken and spilled out and poured at my feet!
In sweet abandon let me be spilled and used up for Thee!

Closing Song: "No Higher Calling