

Matthew 26:6-13 “Giving Our Best to Jesus: Worship”

6.10.18

As you are finding your place, let me ask you a question. Why are you here this morning? Is it mainly out of habit or routine? Is it because someone made you come (like a parent)? Is it because someone invited you and it's your first time with us (welcome)? Why are you here?

Are you here to learn? I hope so. That's one of the purposes for being here. The Bible teaches in Acts 2 that we are to come together and study the Scriptures. Are you here to fellowship with other believers? I hope so. Acts 2 teaches that as well. Those are good things and we are commanded to do so. We are told in Hebrews 10:25 we are to forsake not assembling together with one another on the Lord's Day. After all, it's His day.

But, might there be another reason to be here that you can think of? How about worship? You see, by the time we get done with our journey...our March to Victory (the title of this new series) and we arrive to Matthew 28 and the end of the book...we'll see that the disciples **worshipped** Jesus right before He ascended into heaven.

Is worship one of the reasons you are here? It should be! So, HAVE YOU WORSHIPPED TODAY? You've had the opportunity to do so with the leadership of the Praise Team and the choir. Did you sing? Maybe you don't sing well... You see, if we don't praise Him, the Bible says that the **rocks will cry out**. MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE if you can't sing! But, never let it be said that we come in here and sulk. May we come and be grateful that we've got the health to be here. Do you understand how many people would love to be here today and can't be here? We're so blessed!

Worship...Today we are going to look at the contrast between a lady who gave her best to the Lord in worship and a man who was willing to steal from the Lord. **Following along with me in verse 6.**

Matthew 26:6-13

⁶ Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, ⁷ a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at the table. ⁸ And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste? ⁹ For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.” ¹⁰ But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. ¹¹ For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. ¹² In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. ¹³ Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.”

What we just read was an act of worship. 100% total worship! Nothing being held back! Just worship and we want to dissect this event and see what this means and why worship is absolutely essential if we're going to enjoy our lives as Christians.

Now think with me last week... What did we see? Remember how Caiaphas and Judas made a pact together to take down Jesus. Two men who were supposedly at the height of what you could be as a follower of God...Caiaphas the HIGH PRIEST and Judas, a man who was hand-selected by Jesus as an Apostle, and yet, they sought NOT to worship Jesus, but kill Him. The contrast is stark and startling.

Now as we break this passage down to learn from it, let's set the scene. When did this happen? Well, it actually happened on the Saturday before Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Yet, as you read Matthew's Gospel in chapter 26, it looks like it happened on Wednesday, two days before His crucifixion. But, Matthew's Gospel is not always chronological. And this morning I'll show you this by looking at the companion passage of this account from John's Gospel, and his accounting of this same event, which actually tells us the exact day.

Turn there with me to John chapter 12. Remember, the Gospel accounts give us different angles of the same events and we see details from one writer's that we might now see from another's.

John 12:1-3

¹ Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ² So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. ³ 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. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

So this is six days before the Passover. We know the Passover started the Friday evening of Jesus' death on Friday. Jesus died at 3 pm on Friday and Passover started at 6:00 pm (since the Jews started their days at 6 pm each evening). Thus, according to John's Gospel, we find that it is Saturday and we also find that the woman that Matthew didn't tell us by name is actually named by John, and we find it's Mary, the sister of Lazarus who anointed Jesus. So, let's put this together. Jesus is in Bethany, on Saturday, six days before His death at the home of a man named Simon, who was formerly a leper (who had to be healed by Jesus, because there was no cure for leprosy...Jesus was the only cure), and a supper is being held in honor of Jesus.

This man Simon was showing loving gratitude to Jesus and held this meal...this for supper for Him and Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were there along with the twelve Apostles. There could have even been other disciples of Jesus...so, this was a wealthy man and this was a wonderful meal, and be reminded, Church family, get this scene correctly in your mind: they didn't sit at tables like we do...



The tables were only about 12" off the ground and they either sat up at the table, or reclined on pillows with their head at the table and their feet pointing outward from the table.

Now, I want to say this... There is another account of another anointing that's similar to this one in Luke chapter 7, but it's a completely different incident, because it was at least a year before the crucifixion and it happened in Galilee, not Judea. Yes, the man listed in Luke 7 is also named Simon, but this was Simon the Pharisee, not Simon the leper. Simon was as common a name back

then as John or Andrew are today. In fact, there are ten different Simons listed in the New Testament. The woman in Luke 7 was a former prostitute.

So, let's return to Matthew 26...

Matthew 26:6

⁶ Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper,

So, this lady is Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha. Mary is mentioned three times in the Gospels and all three times she's at the feet of Jesus. Let me tell you something else about Mary...there is no doubt in my mind that Mary had been with Jesus and the other disciples and apostles as He taught in Jerusalem on many occasions throughout Jesus' ministry. Without question, she had heard Him say that He was going to eventually die and so she comes to anoint His body. You say, "Where do you get that?" **Verse 12.**

Matthew 26:12

¹² In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial.

You see, this was an act of preparation for Jesus' burial. Remember, in Luke 10, she was the one who sat at his feet worshiping Jesus (doing the better thing) than her sister Martha who was working herself to death trying to prepare a meal and serve Jesus. Lesson: Yes, there are times to serve Jesus...but, there are times we need to stop working and just worship Him! I need to be reminded of that as much as anyone. The Bible says, "To be still and know that I'm God." **So, Mary was a worshiper and she came to Simon's house to worship...**

Matthew 26:7

⁷ a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at the table.

So, Mary comes in at this supper and she has an alabaster flask. Alabaster was actually a type of stone, resembling marble...perhaps something like this...



...in essence, it was simply a perfume vase that kept the perfume pure. The flask had a narrow neck, and it would be corked or plugged at the top. And inside of it was very expensive and precious perfume. How expensive? According to Mark's Gospel, worth a year's wages (for a common laborer)...300 denarii, he says. Mark's Gospel (chapter 14) also tells us that she broke the flask and poured it over his head. Matthew tells us she anointed his feet. This tells us she covered him from head to toe.

How did the Apostles react...

Matthew 26:8-9

⁸ And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste?" ⁹ For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor."

Now I noticed something in verse 8...Matthew records, "When the disciples saw it," but this seems to be after the fact... What fact? That someone was the leader in this complaint. John tells us and I bet you can guess which disciple complained about "this waste?" **We return to John 12:**

John 12:4-6

⁴ But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, ⁵ "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" ⁶ He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it.

Oh what a contrast! Mary versus Judas! One, who gave it all...Mary held back nothing for herself, versus Judas, who looked real religious, but was a fake. Mary's devotion led to a sacrifice of a year's wages...remember what this in America? I told you during the message on the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25. According to the **Bureau of Labor Statistics 2017 #'s** it's \$44,564. If you had the chance would you have poured out \$44,564 on Jesus?

You know, we learned last week that Judas' betrayed Jesus for 4 month's wages, slave pay, or about \$15,000 in today's money. What a contrast!

Listen, I believe this did it for Judas! Why? Because of what Mark's Gospel records... **Turn to it please. Mark 14.** Again, Mark's Gospel is actually from the Apostle Peter's perspective. Mark just wrote down what Peter saw.

Mark 14:9-10

⁹ And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her." ¹⁰ Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them.

You see, He was all about the money...Listen... **when you're all about the money**...you'll grow corrupt. Judas got nothing out of this waste of Mary's perfume...and so, he said to himself, "I'm done!" He was so disillusioned...he just wanted out! Jesus was not the Messiah he was looking for. What a contrast! Mary and Judas. We're still reading about Mary today aren't we? What a testimony of worship...but, what about Judas? Where does he end up? **Don't say "Betraying Jesus in Gethsemane."** No, that's not the last time we see Judas...No!

The last time we see Judas is hanging at the end of a rope, according to Acts 1:18. Judas hung himself and the Bible says that eventually his body fell and it burst open on the ground and his bowels poured out. What a contrast! Mary and Judas. One was selfish and refused to worship Jesus and the other was selfless and poured out everything!

Take a look at the artist's depiction of the anointing...



She's rubbing Jesus' feet with her hair. You know women didn't let down their hair in public in that day. But, for whatever reason...whether there was no towel available, or because everyone was in shock at what she was doing...she used her hair to wipe and anoint His feet.

You might say, "Well...it seems to me that she got a bit carried away!" No she didn't. Not according to Jesus... No, what she was doing was worshipping her Lord with no restraint... Lavish, extravagant, worship.

Have you ever worshiped the Lord like that? Lavish, extravagance... No I'm not talking about running the aisles shouting and screaming... I'm not even talking about saying anything. I'm talking about your heart and your soul.

Mary's unrestrained devotion to Jesus led to her crushing the narrow neck of that alabaster bottle and she poured out her praise and adoration profusely! She poured out her love and her heart of compassion for her Savior who was going to die! She was honoring the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! She apparently understood more of Jesus' teaching than the apostles, who were complaining about waste...apparently this dim-witted men couldn't seem to wrap their heads around the fact that Jesus was going to die. No! Mary wasn't waiting for a kingdom to come...she had the KING OF THE kingdom right in front of her, so she worshipped!

What is worship? We ask that question a lot. What is worship? Do we really understand it?

Merriam-Webster Definition of WORSHIP

1: to honor or reverence as a divine being or supernatural power

2: to regard with great or extravagant respect, honor, or devotion

Do you see any part of those 2 definitions that talk about **feelings**? Nope! It says to honor, reverence and respect. Nothing about feelings. I say it all the time...



Paul and Silas were in a Philippian jail after having been beaten with rods, with their feet in stocks and they were worshipping and praising God SINGING!

Listen to me Church family, worship is not about feelings...worship is about ascribing worth to something. Mary saw Jesus was worth her adoration. And understand this...worship is not just something we do in here for 20 minutes before the message. Worship is that...YES...but, it's also an act of worship when we take up the offering and this...the preaching...how you choose to receive it...whether you are just a spectator or you are participating, as the Holy Spirit speaks to your heart...it's all an act of worship. **But, it's even more than even all this.** Worship...if it's true devotion and dedication to Jesus means that it must happen out there...in your homes, in your businesses, in the schools, on the ball fields and dance studios.

Yes, worship is an act...but, it's also a lifestyle. True worship of Jesus is showing our extravagant love and devotion to Him wherever we go and wherever we are! It's LIVING FOR HIM! Worship is love and Jesus said, "If you love me, you'll keep my commandments." Worship is a lifestyle that honors Jesus!

Listen, understand this fact though (about worship)...just like Mary, when you and I give our total devotion to Jesus...it's going to look strange to the world and even to those who might be nominal Christians. The Apostles chimed right in with Judas and said, "What a waste!"

You see, when we give our total devotion to Jesus we can expect to be misunderstood and maligned. I think of Jack the cake baker from Colorado, who vindicated this week by the Supreme Court. He simply wanted to honor his conviction to Jesus and His Word. But those convictions offended the Colorado Civil Rights commission...so, they attacked him. The Supreme Court said that's wrong, mean-spirited... So, yes, when you and I worship Jesus, we may be maligned for it...yes, there will be those who don't understand our devotion to Jesus and His Word and they seek to bully...just like Mary was bullied.

Can I ask you something? What is your worship of Jesus costing you? I mean, let's just ask it in terms of dollars. Are you like Mary and are willing to bust open a bottle of perfume that cost \$45k or would you rather get from Jesus...like Judas' 30 pieces of silver? Think about your giving. It's human nature that tends to respond to needs. And so often, many Christians only give if there is a need. We say, "Oh, there's a need, I'll give." But, that's not what Mary did.

She gave extravagantly, simply for the sake of worship of her Savior. That's how we should give. I try to give like that. I don't look at the back of the bulletin and say, "Well, the church is \$50,000 in the black, I'm pulling back!" I say, "Hallelujah! We'll be able to do more for the kingdom!" I give the same amount no matter what the bulletin says... **That's worship...that's trust!** I'm nothing...but, I learned a long time ago...**you can't out-give God.**

Listen, we all worship...believe me...you worship where you spend the majority of your time and money. Where is that? I mean...let's just be honest today... It's easy to worship Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. We like the "likes." It's easy to worship our bodies, our jobs, our bank accounts. It's easy to worship our favorite teams, our kid's teams. Hey...it's easy to worship our kids.

Yes, we worship. We worship popularity. We worship cars, hobbies and coffee. We worship "me time," "free time" and "game time." We worship people who talk about Jesus, yes...but a Jesus

that's packaged in a way that makes Jesus nonchalant about sin. We worship people who tell us it's okay to stay in our mess. We like their message.

Yes, we worship! We worship our beds and sleep. We worship our phones at the altar of Netflix. We worship rock stars, movie stars and sports stars. We worship politicians and people we don't even know, we worship how they look or what they say or the money they have...as if money and material possessions are going to make us happy. Oh yes, we worship...we indeed worship... What does all of this mean...it means this...Listen...I'll tell you what we really worship...it's ourselves! OURSELVES. Jesus just gets the crumbs...not the perfume of extravagance, we do!

Oh, could it be today, that we're so immersed into ourselves and the universe we've created where everything revolves around us that Jesus is only an orbiting planet that we see skip across the horizon of our lives from time to time in our journey...on Sundays...quick prayers before bed?

Perhaps it's time to reverse the situation... Don't you think we should be revolving around Him? Oh...isn't it time that we stop seeking things and people to satisfy us...trying to fulfill our lives with the stuff of this earth...the next new thing...new relationship...new career...hoping it'll make us happy? They never will. But, worshipping Jesus will. Because He is the LIFE! The way, the truth and the life. And if we will come to Him, He'll set us free indeed!

Listen...as we close: Are you worshipping Jesus with your life??? **How can you tell** if you're worshipping Jesus with your life? It's pretty simple...you're content and at peace and you're not complaining. You see, when we're complaining, whining, moping around, grumbling...that's not worship. A complaining spirit is not a worshipping spirit. Remember, worship has nothing to do with feelings... Would you set your heart and your mind to worship today...tomorrow...next week...Jesus pour out your praise to Jesus...like Mary...



Extravagant worship... If we will do this...it will change our lives!
