Gratitude That Leads to Worship

Bible Study & Discussion Guide

Main Scripture: John 12:1–8

Central Truth: Gratitude is never wasteful when it leads us to worship Jesus.

Getting Started

Read John 12:1–8.

Just days before Jesus would go to the cross, He shared a meal in Bethany with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.

During the meal, Mary took an expensive perfume, poured it on Jesus' feet, and wiped His feet with her hair. Her act of gratitude filled the entire house with its fragrance.

But not everyone responded the same way. While Mary expressed her gratitude through worship, Judas questioned the value of what she had done.

Their responses reveal two very different attitudes of the heart: **gratitude and grumbling.**

Opening Discussion: When you think about expressing gratitude to God, what usually comes to mind? How is gratitude different from simply saying thank you?

1. Mary's Posture of Gratitude

Read John 12:1–3.

Mary had much to be thankful for. She believed Jesus was the Son of God, had experienced His love, and had witnessed Him bring her brother Lazarus back from the grave.

Her gratitude was more than words. It became an act of worship.

Mary's expression of gratitude was both **expensive and extravagant.**

It was expensive because the perfume was worth approximately a year's wages. Pouring it out on Jesus cost her something significant.

It was extravagant because she went beyond what seemed reasonable or necessary. By kneeling at Jesus' feet and wiping them with her hair, Mary humbled herself in an extraordinary display of love, service, and worship.

Her gratitude wasn't measured by what she could afford to give, but by how much she valued Jesus.

In the same way, we're called to pour out our lives in gratitude to Christ, surrendering our time, resources, abilities, and opportunities to serve Him.

Read 2 Corinthians 2:14–15.

Just as the fragrance of Mary's perfume filled the house, our lives should spread the aroma of Christ to those around us.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does Mary's willingness to give something so valuable reveal about her relationship with Jesus?
2. Why do we sometimes hesitate to express our gratitude to God when doing so requires sacrifice?
3. How can our time, possessions, relationships, and abilities become expressions of worship?
4. According to 2 Corinthians 2:14–15, how should our relationship with Christ influence the people around us?

2. Judas' Posture of Grumbling

Read John 12:4–8.

While Mary was worshiping Jesus, Judas was complaining about the cost.

He questioned why the perfume wasn't sold and the money given to the poor. But John reveals that Judas wasn't motivated by compassion. His concern was rooted in selfishness and his love of money.

Judas had spent years following Jesus, witnessing His miracles and hearing His teaching. Yet Jesus wasn't the priority of his heart or the object of his worship.

Grumbling often reveals something deeper taking place within us.

Discontentment, jealousy, pride, envy, and selfishness can all influence how we respond to our circumstances and the actions of others.

When we constantly complain, we can lose sight of God's goodness and become more focused on what we lack than on what He has already provided.

Read Romans 2:4.

Even when Judas questioned Mary's worship, Jesus responded with patience and kindness. God's kindness is intended to lead us to repentance.

Rather than allowing discontentment to control our attitudes, we're called to examine our hearts, turn from sin, and practice gratitude.

The cure for grumbling is to practice and express gratitude.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does Judas' response reveal about the difference between outward appearances and the true motives of our hearts?
2. Why does grumbling often reveal deeper issues such as pride, jealousy, or discontentment?
3. How can complaining affect our relationship with God and the people around us?
4. What does Romans 2:4 teach us about God's kindness and our need for repentance?
5. How can intentionally practicing gratitude help us overcome a complaining spirit?

Living It Out: Let Gratitude Become Worship

Read John 12:3 and 2 Corinthians 2:14–15 again.

Mary's gratitude wasn't something she kept to herself. Her worship was visible, costly, and filled the room with fragrance.

Our gratitude to Jesus should also be evident in how we live.

We can express that gratitude by recognizing God's blessings, sharing what He's entrusted to us, serving others, giving generously, and telling people what Christ has done in our lives.

These acts of worship may require sacrifice, but **gratitude is never wasteful when it leads us to worship Jesus.**

Final Discussion Questions:

1. Does my life more consistently reflect Mary's gratitude or Judas' grumbling?
2. What has God given me that I could use more intentionally to honor Him?
3. Is there an area of my life where I need to surrender something valuable or comfortable to serve Christ?
4. What is one specific way I can demonstrate gratitude to Jesus this week?

This Week's Challenge

Take time each day to recognize something God has done or provided in your life. Thank Him specifically for it, and look for an opportunity to turn that gratitude into an action that honors Him.

Closing Thought

Gratitude isn't simply recognizing what Jesus has done for us. It's responding to His goodness by offering our lives to Him in worship.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for Your goodness, Your kindness, and the salvation we have through Jesus Christ. Help us recognize the many ways You have blessed us and respond with sincere gratitude. Reveal any selfishness, pride, or discontentment in our hearts, and lead us to repentance. Teach us to worship You not only with our words but through how we live, serve, and give. May our lives reflect the love of Christ and draw others to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.