

What is Jesus Worth?

John 12:1-8 — Mary Anoints Jesus at Bethany

(John 11:55-57)

⁵⁵ Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. ⁵⁶ They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, “What do you think? That he will not come to the feast at all?” ⁵⁷ Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.

- Passover is approaching
- Many of the Jews are coming to Jerusalem to get ready for Passover
- All the people were watching to see if Jesus would come
- The religious leaders are looking to arrest Jesus (because of Lazarus)
- They ordered the people to turn him in if they were to see him

(John 12:1-2)

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.

- This is a celebration dinner — (a feast - with a former dead man)
- One week before Passover
- Bethany is close to Jerusalem (out of site)
- The next day is His “Triumphal Entry” into Jerusalem

◆ **What’s on everyone’s mind?**

(People — Martha & Mary — Lazarus)

(Verse 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.

Mark's version of this:

(Mark 14:3) — ...as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head.

About the Perfume

- Very expensive
- Perfumes were often used as an investment
- Mary's perfume was valued at three hundred denarii — a year's wages (\$40,000)
- Perhaps this was a family heirloom that had been passed down to her
- It is quite possible that this jar of perfume represented her entire life savings.

*** This was an extravagant act**

A Shocking Display

Everything that Mary did in this moment was shocking.

- The fact that she broke the flask **was shocking!**
- That she started pouring out the perfume **was shocking!**
- Pouring it on Jesus **was shocking!**
- The cost of the perfume **was shocking!**
- Putting her hair down and wiping his feet with it **was shocking!**

Everybody in the house was shocked!

If we wondered what everyone was thinking at the beginning of this story, we know what everyone is thinking now. (What's this crazy woman doing?)

Why did she do this?

- This is an act of love & gratitude
- She wanted to say *thank you*
- This perfume as an offering
- She is humbling herself (letting down her hair, and using it to wipe his feet)
- This is a picture of absolute surrender
- Mary is giving a living illustration of what God has called us to be as followers of Jesus — wholehearted worshipers!
- Her eyes were fixed on Jesus (and she was not distracted by anything else)



This scene is a perfect illustration of what we are about on Sunday mornings...
(celebration — thanksgiving)

Psalm 100 — *(A Psalm for giving thanks.)*

1 Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!

2 Serve the Lord with gladness!

Come into his presence with singing!

3 Know that the Lord, he is God!

It is he who made us, and we are his;

we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise!

Give thanks to him; bless his name!

5 For the Lord is good;

his steadfast love endures forever,

and his faithfulness to all generations.

One of My Favorite Sentences in the Bible

(Vs 3) - *“The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.”*

I love that John adds this point!

No doubt, this statement is speaking to a much greater significance than its practical implication. This perfume was most likely very strong, so strong, that when she broke the flask and started pouring it out, it got everyone’s attention, and it not only blessed Jesus, but blessed all who were in the house. Maybe the aroma stuck with them for a while even after they left.



Illustration: Breaking my cologne in the bathroom

The aroma not only filled the house in that moment, but it had to have lasted in the house for a long time. Imagine a week later after Jesus is crucified, and they walk in the house to the lingering aroma — the thoughts and emotions it would have ignited.

Aroma and fragrance have important spiritual significance

- The aroma of worshipful sacrifice is pleasing to God
- In the book of Leviticus (where we find the rules for offerings & sacrifices, and overall worship for God’s people and the priests), sixteen different times “aroma” is mentioned as something pleasing to the Lord. Specifically, the aroma of a sacrifice.
- Examples elsewhere in scripture:

Believers (living sacrifice)

(2 Corinthians 2:15) — *For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing*

Jesus’ Sacrifice — (Ephesians 5:2) — *And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a*

An Open Rebuke

As Mary is at Jesus' feet, her jar is broken, the perfume is poured out, her hair is down and wet from wiping Jesus' feet, the fragrance is filling the house — then comes the enemy:

(Verses 4–6)

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?” ⁶He 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.

Judas was not alone

- (Matthew 26:8–9) — *And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste? ⁹For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.”*
- (Mark 14:4–5) — *There were some who said to themselves indignantly, “Why was the ointment wasted like that? ⁵For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.” And they scolded her.*

◆ **Note: It is a definite possibility that walking in surrender and obedience to Jesus will put you at odds with everybody else in the room. . . . You won't be able to please God and people.**

The enemy comes against wholehearted worship.

(Matthew 16:21–23)

From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²²And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” ²³But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

(Verses 7-8)

Jesus said, “Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial.
⁸For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.”

(Mark & Matthew) — “She has done a beautiful thing to me.”

Jesus' Approval is all that Matters

Two times we see an extraordinary thing happen in the life of Mary. We see her openly rebuked in front of people. And both times we see Jesus come to her defense and give her his approval for all to see.

Note: It doesn't matter what anybody else thinks if Jesus approves.



Illustration: The clap in the back of the room

In the ministry of Jesus, the most vocal disapprovers of him and his ministry were the religious people. The people who should have understood him the most and known him the best were the ones who gave him great trouble and ultimately called for his crucifixion.

How does Jesus think about money?

- He put Judas in charge of the money
- When the disciples needed money, Jesus provided through the mouth of a fish. (Matt. 17:24-27)
- He let the rich young man walk away — (if he had followed, Jesus told him to get rid of his wealth)
- The early church gave all they had for the good of the church (the Gospel). (Acts 4:32-37)
- He told us to take no thought for our lives...
- He said you can't serve God and money — “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. (Matthew 6:24-34)

God is not worried about money — At any moment He could lead someone to pour out their life savings at His feet.



Wholehearted Worship

Wholehearted Worship is a response *(to Experiencing God's Love & Deliverance)*

- Mary had experienced an incredible work of God in her life.
- Surely, she now thought to herself, “There is nothing I wouldn’t do for Jesus. There is nowhere I wouldn’t go. There is no sacrifice too great.”

Wholehearted Worship is Costly

Jesus leaves no room for half-hearted commitment. It’s all or nothing.

- Worship that cost me nothing — (1 Chronicles 21:24)
David asked to buy the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite in order to make a sacrifice to the Lord. Ornan wanted to give it to David, but David responded with this — “*No...I will not take for the LORD what is yours, nor offer burnt offerings that cost me nothing.*”
- A call to die — (John 12:23–26)
And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

Wholehearted Worship is Fully Surrendered

- It requires you to break the jar.
- The Widow — Jesus praised the offering of the Widow because she gave ALL
- **Note: Whatever is not in the offering should be on the altar.**

Wholehearted Worship is Confrontational

- It makes others uncomfortable
- It can put you at odds with everyone else
- You will have to be willing to stand alone (but you're never truly alone)

Wholehearted Worship is Pleasing to God

- Your desire must be to please God rather than man

Wholehearted Worship is a Blessing to Others

- Her worship bore lasting fruit
- Jesus made this promise regarding Mary's act of worship:
(Matthew 26:13) — "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."
- Because of her sincere act of wholehearted worship, her story will echo into eternity.

Closing

Giving away my guitar.

— **John Piper** —

“I think the point of this story is this:
it is a beautiful thing when the worth of Jesus and the love of his followers match — when the value of his perfections and the intensity of our affections correspond. And it is not beautiful, but suicidal, when they don’t.”

Have you truly encountered Jesus like this?

Do you desire to love Jesus like this?

Does this story remind you of how you once were?

“I used to love Jesus like that. Lord, help me love like this once again.”

Are you fully surrendered to Jesus today?

What are you clinging on to today that is holding you back from full surrender?

Is there something that you need to lay at Jesus' feet right now?

What is Jesus worth to you today?

The love and grace that he has given, the glory and majesty that he is, demands your all.