

MBC - 8/26/2018 - Pastor Doug Thompson  
"Mary and Judas"  
Matthew 26:1-16, John 12:1-8

We've covered 25 chapters of Matthew's Gospel since we began in 2010. And everything up to this point - has been introduction. It's all led up to these last three chapters that proclaim Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection because that is the center of human history, and it is the Gospel of our salvation—

- 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 <sup>1</sup>Now I would remind you, brothers, of *the gospel* I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, <sup>2</sup>and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. <sup>3</sup>For I delivered to you as of *first importance* what I also received: that *Christ died* for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup>that he was buried, that *he was raised* on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

The promise of forgiveness of sins and eternal life all rest in the historical death and resurrection of Jesus. So turn with me this morning to Matthew chapter 26.

- Matthew 26:1-16 <sup>1</sup>When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, <sup>2</sup>"You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified." <sup>3</sup>Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, <sup>4</sup>and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. <sup>5</sup>But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."

Stop here - What Matthew writes about *next* actually happened earlier, at the beginning of Jesus' last week—

- <sup>6</sup>Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, <sup>7</sup>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 table. <sup>8</sup>And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste? <sup>9</sup>For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor." <sup>10</sup>But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. <sup>11</sup>For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. <sup>12</sup>In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. <sup>13</sup>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." <sup>14</sup>Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests <sup>15</sup>and said, "What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?" And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. <sup>16</sup>And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him.

And now I'd like you to turn to John's account of this same story because John adds some important details—

- John 12:1-8 <sup>1</sup>Six days before the Passover, (is when this dinner took place) Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup>So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, <sup>5</sup>"Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" <sup>6</sup>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. <sup>7</sup>Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup>For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."

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First I want to clear up some confusion about this story: Some Bible scholars say there are 3 different stories about a woman anointing Jesus with perfume. Actually, there are only two: There's a similar story about a woman at the house of man named Simon, washing Jesus' feet, in Luke 7, but that's a different story: It happened at the home of Simon the *Pharisee* - this is at the home of Simon the *leper*. The woman in that story was an immoral woman whom Jesus had forgiven. The woman in this story is Mary of Bethany - different woman. Matthew, Mark, and John are all telling the same story. So let's go back to Matthew and look at—

### I. The hand-over that leads to the pass-over.

- <sup>2</sup>"You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."

Jesus is predicting His own death - *again*. That's amazing: if this *doesn't* come to pass, in just two days, Jesus is a fraud - no Christianity. But it did, and it's supernatural - only God knows the future. So you see Jesus' deity and His sovereignty here. He's no victim, He is the Victor. He's in complete control of every detail of what is about to happen. This is what He came to do. In John's Gospel, He cries out: <sup>27</sup>"*Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour*" John 12:27.

- Underline the word *Pass-over*. Jesus is about to fulfill that OT picture and *Pass-over* is a one word definition of the Gospel: God's judgment will *pass-over* anyone who trusts in Jesus' shed blood for their sins. They will *pass-out* of judgment into life.

The other word to underline (one word in the Gk. is "*delivered up*." Matthew uses this word 14 times in chs.26,27. It means to be given up, handed over. In these two chapters Jesus is constantly handed over to someone else. But behind all of this is *God the Father* who is handing His Son over, delivering Him up to be crucified for the sins of His people. What did Isaiah write?

- Isa.53:10 . . . it was the will of the LORD to crush Him; *He* has put Him to grief. . .

And Matthew contrasts God's sovereign plan with the plan of wicked men—

- Matthew 26:3-5 <sup>3</sup>Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, <sup>4</sup>and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. <sup>5</sup>But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."

Cowards and hypocrites! They really thought they were hatching this scheme to kill Jesus, but they were only fulfilling Jesus' own prophecies and carrying out God's perfect will. Peter threw it right back in their faces just a few weeks later—

- Acts 2:23 <sup>23</sup>this Jesus, *delivered up* according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. (And this is a perfect illustration of what Joseph said to his brothers in)—

- Gen.50:20: “You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good!”

\*My brothers and sisters, no matter what trials or suffering, or horrible things you go through, because Jesus willingly went to the cross in the sovereign will of God, you can know that God your Father will also sovereignly cause *all things* to work together for good for you!

Now let’s look at this story in John’s Gospel and see the contrast between the way two people responded to Jesus - one sought to *give* the most she could give to Jesus, the other sought to *get* as much as he could from Jesus. One was a believer, one was an unbeliever. If you think about it: one was a sheep and one was a goat, right?

## II. The Worship of Mary.

The first thing that stands out in this story is Jesus’ humanity. Here He is, just a week away from the cross and wants to be with His friends in Bethany. Jesus had friends, you know. John 11:5 says that Jesus *loved* Martha and her sister, Mary, and their brother, Lazarus. He wanted to spend time with the people He loved before the horror of the cross.

- Matthew tells us that this dinner was held at the home of Simon the leper. We should call him “Simon the former leper,” because he wasn’t a leper any longer--Jesus had healed him, or he wouldn’t be throwing a dinner party at his house! It would have been unlawful for him to be around people if he was still unclean. And besides, would you accept an invitation that said, “*You are cordially invited to dinner next Saturday evening at the home of Simon the leper. p.s. - I’m very contagious.*”

Simon was probably unmarried because of his leprosy, and asked Mary and Martha to help him throw this dinner party out of gratitude to Jesus for healing him of this horrible disease and bringing him back into human society.

- But for Mary and Martha it was also a “thank you” dinner to honor Jesus for raising their brother from the dead. Imagine the love those two sisters felt toward Jesus for what He had done! In ch.11, they are broken, even Jesus is weeping at Lazarus’ grave, but Jesus has brought him back from the dead. They were overflowing with love and gratitude - and worship: Martha had already confessed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. Those sisters *got it*: If Jesus could raise Lazarus from the dead, He is God. The Resurrection and Life.

We need to realize what a spectacle it was to see a man who had been dead for 4 days, literally decomposing in the tomb -now walking around town *alive*, and now he’s a guest at this dinner party! This was *explosive* news - *everyone* was talking about this. Even Jesus’ enemies.

And it was a very bold thing to throw this dinner right under the noses of the Jewish religious leaders. Look at the last verse of ch.11—

- John 11:57 <sup>57</sup>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.

And—

- John 12:9-11 <sup>9</sup>When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. <sup>10</sup>So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, <sup>11</sup>because

on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

But these friends of Jesus held this dinner for Him anyway - with the whole town peeking in the windows! It was worth the risk to show their love and worship of Jesus. To follow Jesus means choosing between Jesus and the world - sometimes it means choosing between life and death.

- And we can't forget that for Jesus to go to Bethany was to walk *toward* danger, not away from it. It was His time, and He was ready to die.

So here's the scene: The men are lying down around a low table with their elbows on the table and their feet facing out. They didn't sit on chairs like the painting of the Last Supper. And we know where to find Martha - in the kitchen, getting dinner ready. But this time, she isn't grumbling about it like she did back in Luke 10 - remember? Then, she complained when she had to serve for four people. Now she is serving at least 17 people and it's no problem. If Jesus is the resurrection and the life, it's all good, right?

And just like the other Mary and Martha story - we know where to find Mary: worshipping at Jesus' feet. That was Mary—

- John 12:3 <sup>3</sup>Mary *therefore*—i.e., *because* Jesus had brought back her brother - 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.

This “expensive ointment” wasn't one of those “fabulous fakes” that you buy at Rite-Aid. This was an extremely valuable perfume from a plant called *spikenard* that came all the way from India. It was worth 300 denarii = an entire year's salary! Today it would be worth tens of thousands of dollars.

- Why did they even have this perfume? Maybe it was a precious family heirloom, but whatever the reason, it was being saved for something very special - but for Mary *there couldn't be any better reason to bring out this treasure, than to worship Jesus.*

It was in an alabaster jar (which would have been valuable itself) with half a liter of this liquid gold. Mark's Gospel says that she *broke* the jar and poured it all out on Jesus - *broken and poured out on Jesus*. John says that she poured it on His feet, Matthew and Mark say that she poured in on His head, and Jesus says here that she poured it on His *body*. So Jesus was covered with this perfume, and the house was *filled* with the fragrance - Gk., *pleroma* - the same word used in Eph.5:18 for being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Imagine what it was like in that room. You couldn't ignore what was going on--the smell of that perfume was almost choking, and every eye was on Jesus and Mary.

- And Mary did something else that raised eyebrows in the room: she let down her long hair to wipe the perfume from Jesus' feet. Now that just wasn't done in polite society. A Jewish husband could divorce his wife if she appeared in public with her hair undone. It's what some of the women in Corinth were doing during the worship services. Paul said it was inappropriate.

But at that moment Mary wasn't thinking about what was socially appropriate or politically correct. To Mary, Jesus was the only One in the room. An audience of One. She was lost in love and adoration, totally preoccupied with worshiping Him. *The intensity of her affections corresponded to the excellence of His perfections.* And because Jesus was infinitely precious

to her, Mary's worship was extravagant.

How often are you that *consumed* with offering up worship to God?

But notice the jarring contrast between Mary and Judas—

### III. The worldiness of Judas.

- John 12:4-6 <sup>4</sup>But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, <sup>5</sup>“Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” [and John says:] <sup>6</sup>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.

Matthew has *all* of the disciples saying these things: "What is she doing? What a waste. People are going hungry and she dumps thousands of dollars worth of perfume on Jesus?" At this moment, all 12 disciples were worldly-minded. Earth-bound. What Mary was doing wasn't practical. It wasn't getting anything done. There are needs to be met and Mary is wasting resources.

- And think about this: *all eleven of them had more in common with Judas at this moment, than they did with Mary!*

Look at v.5: *Isn't it interesting that Judas knew exactly what that perfume was worth?* That's because he thought about everything in terms of dollars and cents. But He couldn't comprehend the worth of Jesus at all. Judas was a person who knew the price of everything and the value of nothing. These are the first recorded words of Judas, and they show exactly what kind of person he was: critical, materialistic, a liar and a thief. And on his way to hell.

### IV. Jesus' rebuke of Judas.

- John 12:7-8 <sup>7</sup>Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup>For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."

Jesus called out Judas in front of everyone in that room: "Leave her alone Judas! Don't corrupt her with your greed and materialism. You are the one whose priorities are backwards. *True worship is never a waste.* If you really want to help the poor, you [and the "you" is plural - all of the disciples] will have plenty of opportunities, but you won't always have Me here to worship."

These words sound shocking coming from Jesus! He is setting worship of Himself above meeting the needs of the poor? It is shocking, unless He really is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

***\*Jesus is more important than people.***

\*Let me stop here and make a really important point: Jesus is more important than people because God is more important than people; rich, poor, sick, healthy, suffering, doesn't matter. Humanism, which is the religion of every unbeliever, makes man out to be the center of the universe. 'Man is the measure of all things. Nothing is more important than people and their needs. If God even exists, He surely only exists to meet the needs of people and make them happy.'

No. God is #1, and the glory of His name is the greatest, highest thing in the universe. What is

the greatest commandment of all? “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your mind, and all your strength.*” The *second* commandment is to “love your neighbor as yourself” - second, not first, because God comes first!

- And this separates the sheep from the goats - believers from unbelievers: Goats say, “Oh, religion has its place, which is to serve mankind, but it should never get in the way of serving people.” Paul described their religion in Romans 1:25: “*they worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.*”

Jesus’ sheep say: “Hallowed be Your Name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done . . . For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever, Amen!”

Yes, because we love God, we love and serve people. We do meet the needs of the poor and the needy. Jesus told us too. But when He says, “I’m only here to be worshiped for another week, you can always help poor people,” *He is putting the worship of God on the highest possible level!*

Back up for a minute, with me, and remember what Jesus just said about the sheep and the goats at the end of ch.25: On the day of Judgment, the evidence, the proof that a person was truly born again, i.e., truly knew Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, will be that they met the needs of suffering, needy, lonely Christians. Not all people - Christians. That is the fruit, that proves that they had the root of faith in Christ.

But we miss the whole point if we say, “Oh, so the highest good really is meeting the needs of people!” No! The ultimate issue isn’t that they served Christ’s people, it’s that through doing that, they served Him! Jesus will say, “You did it to Me!” Jesus Christ is the ultimate issue in the universe. There is nothing higher than worshiping and serving Him.

Mark what I’m about to say: Only true worshipers go to heaven. Only those who worship God in spirit and truth, and Jesus as God, will go to heaven.

Now anything that calls itself Christianity but doesn’t meet the needs of the poor, and seek justice for the oppressed and abused is not Christianity. But let me tell you: anything that *substitutes* helping and serving people for the worship of God is not Christianity either. (That is the social gospel, but I don’t have time to go into that here.)

The disciples were right - from an earthly point of view: That ointment could have met many practical needs, it could have fed many poor people. There is a time and place for that, but nothing was more important than what Mary did for Jesus on that evening, because nothing is more important than Jesus.

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And when we see the order in Matthew’s account; *this was the moment when Judas snapped*. This is what pushed him over the edge. He had followed Jesus for three and a half years because he thought that maybe Jesus might actually bring in the kingdom. He could be a rich, powerful ruler in this new kingdom. He could have more wealth than he had ever dreamed of, and he could tolerate all of the spiritual stuff as long as he got his piece of the pie.

But now he watches Mary pouring out thousands of dollars worth of perfume on Jesus, and Jesus *commends* her and *rebukes* him--he can see the writing on the wall. Jesus is a loser and He’s going to get Himself killed. He’s just a heavenly-minded fool. So Judas figures he’d better cut his losses and make at least something off of Jesus. He sells Him out to the Jewish leaders for 30 pieces of silver. Do you get this? Mary believes that Jesus is worth tens of thousands of

dollars just to worship Him - Judas will take a few bucks to have Him killed.

#### V. Jesus' commendation of Mary.

Jesus praised Mary for being so lavish in her affection and worship - and for having the spiritual perception to recognize that His death was near. The disciples still didn't get it, but this young, godly woman did. She believed Jesus, and she gave the best she had for Jesus - the *most* that she could give. Her extravagant worship matched His infinite worth. And in Matthew's Gospel Jesus says this—

- Matthew 26:13 <sup>13</sup>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."

Jesus' words are being fulfilled this morning aren't they? And until He returns, all over the world, His followers will all know this story of Mary's extravagant worship, that pleased Jesus.

#### The question:

So each of us needs to put himself or herself into this story: Which one are you more like - Mary, or Judas? Think about it like this:

- Would you be more likely to give the most valuable thing you owned just to worship Christ--or to criticize someone else who did that? Think about that: How would you feel if you found out that someone in this church had spent thousands of dollars to buy a gold and crystal communion service and a fancy cloth for the communion table that we would use once a month to celebrate the Lord's Table? Would you think, "What a waste!! We could use that money for missions, or for the orphans in Uganda."

Or would you think, "Our God is worthy of such lavish worship!"?

From what we read here, one is like Judas and the other is like Mary.

Jesus told two parables about the heart of a person who knows who He really is:

- Matthew 13:44-46 <sup>44</sup>"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells *all that he has* and buys that field. <sup>45</sup>"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, <sup>46</sup>who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold *all that he had* and bought it.

That is a person who knows Christ! All the pricetags in your life have been switched: Peace with God is so precious; heaven is so glorious; and Jesus is so lovely, that you would gladly give all you own to have Him. Can you say that?

Listen to these words of Paul and ask yourself if they mirror your own heart:

- Phil.3:7,8: "But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ."

Mary had this heart for Jesus. Judas didn't. Mary wanted to give as much as she could to Jesus. Judas wanted to get as much as he could from Jesus. Mary desired to worship Jesus. Ju-

das just wanted to use Jesus.

### ***A. How do you get to be like Judas?***

Think of God in terms of what He can do for you. Pretty soon you are thinking of God in terms of what He owes you. The meaning of life is your own personal happiness, and God exists to help you get that happiness. That's what God is there for! So He had better come through. A lot of people who think they are Christians think like this.

The biggest section in most Christian bookstores these days is the "Christian self-help" section. (That's an oxymoron if there ever was one!) Here you find the books on how to make God work for you--how to get God to give you what He owes you: a happy life, a healthy body, a good job, a fulfilling marriage, well-behaved kids, etc.

But this feeds a Judas heart. And a Judas heart show itself when God doesn't come through with the happy life, healthy body, great marriage or model kids. A bitter, resentful attitude toward God is the next step. Then these people hold their commitment or their money hostage because of the way God has treated them. Haven't you seen that happen?

Be very careful when you find a critical, grumbling, complaining spirit in yourself. Discontentment is a direct shot at God. It's a slap in His face. And it's a clear signal that you feel that God isn't giving you what He owes you. He has cheated you, and it's a short step from there to shaking your fist at God. Judas *betrayed* Jesus.

### ***B. How do you get to be like Mary?***

#### ***1. Treasure Jesus.***

Mary *treasured* Jesus. She had found her pearl of great price. "*Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And besides Thee, I desire nothing on earth*" (Ps.73:25). And Mary *cultivated* that love for Jesus. What we know of Mary in the New Testament comes from three different events. In each one, she's at Jesus' feet. Once she is listening and learning (Lk.10), once she is crying and pleading (Jn.11), and here she is at His feet worshipping. *Time at Jesus' feet transformed her*. How much time do you spend at Jesus' feet doing those three things?

#### ***2. Worship Christ extravagantly.***

Mary had extravagant love and devotion to Jesus because she *gave* to Him. Lavishly. Without thought of return. Jesus said, "*where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*" Mary literally gave Jesus her greatest treasure - and her heart followed.

#### **\*Extravagant worship—**

Judas was a man of this world, and to the world, worship is a colossal waste of time. It doesn't accomplish anything. It doesn't feed the poor, or help the needy - "and isn't that what you Christians are supposed to be doing?"

But the truth is, we really aren't worshipping God *unless* our worship is a waste of time according to the world. Now listen: Our worship should never have any goal other than expressing lavish love and adoration toward the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If we are trying to accomplish anything else, like attract more people to our church, or get a spiritual high for ourselves - then we are using God for our own purposes.

Worship is not a means to anything else. Worship is an end in itself. The entire reason for our



worship is that God deserves it. He is worthy of all that we are responding to all that He is.

I'll never forget the mega-church I visited in Houston, Texas many years ago for a pastor's conference. I walked in and saw a 3 story waterfall in the lobby; along with 3 different restaurants; an indoor track, a Jacuzzi half the size of this room, a complete health club - and a 3 lane bowling alley! I was bummed that I hadn't brought along any work out clothes, but that was no problem because the church also had a sporting goods store - inside the church!

I was with a group of pastors getting a guided tour of this massive complex when one of the men asked our tour guide if all of this wasn't a bit much - and this little Texan gal spun around on her high heels and said, "Sir, we believe that our God deserves the best!" Shut *him* up.

I know that in our flesh we can excuse self-indulgence by calling it worship, but don't you think it's much more true that our hearts, our voices, our attention to the Word, and our giving - don't begin to correspond with how much we *say* we love God? In general, we are far too stingy. We should be lavish, extravagant, body and soul - maybe to the point that others think we are going too far, like they did with Mary.

- Like they did with David, remember him leaping and dancing before the Lord when they brought the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem? His wife Michal was disgusted with him, said he was making a fool out of himself - he was *undignified!* And David said, "I'm dancing before the Lord - not you - and I'll be even more undignified than this in your eyes to honor my God!" And Michal was barren from that day on, so apparently God approved of David's extravagant worship!

Let unbelievers and even other Christians accuse us of being weird or overboard in our worship, but never *lukewarm*. I really can't think of any place in Scripture where the Lord tells His people, "Now calm down, you're getting a little too excited in your worship and devotion!"

- In Matthew 2:11, when the Magi saw the baby Jesus, ". . . they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh." Lavish, expensive worship!

Why? Because He deserves it! All our heart, soul, mind, and strength! All that we are, responding to all that He is. So let me read what I put in your bulletins this morning—

- Our worship should correspond to His worth.
- The intensity of our affections should correspond to the excellence of His perfections.
- So if Jesus is infinitely precious and worthy of the utmost honor and adoration, then our worship should be *extravagant*.

Mary loved Jesus and gave Him her treasure. And that is where Mary's heart was--with Jesus. You say, "I want to love Jesus so much that I would give to Him like that." *Then give to Him like that, and you will love Him that much!*