



John 12:1-16, Lesson #35

Gerald Cumby, Teacher/Organized Lesson for Presentation

John 12:1-6, “Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, who would betray Him, said, “Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.”

Some areas we need to know and get the full meaning of this Scripture:

- 1.** John gave a time marker, telling us that this was the last week before the death and burial of Jesus.
- 2.** Nearly half of John’s Gospel is given to this last week. Matthew- 33% of his Gospel to cover that week, Mark nearly 40% and Luke over 25% —
- 3.** The Gospels let us understand how important the last *seven days* of Jesus’ life are for our salvation (suffering, the excruciating pain for our benefit, the blood atonement, the love of the Father). All phases of “how glorious, how marvelous is His love for us.”
- 4.** Jesus was willing to attend a social gathering of His followers (close associates and friends) knowing it was just a few days and He was going to suffer and die for their sins and ours.
- 5.** The men ate and the women served (a common custom of the day and times). This was only a custom, not the law.
- 6.** John does not state, as do Mark and Matthew, that the host at Bethany was Simon the leper.
- 7.** Mary gave a remarkable gift to Jesus. It wasn’t unusual to wash the feet of a guest, but it was unusual to do it during the meal itself, to use **very costly oil of**

spikenard to do it, and to **wipe the feet with her hair**, using the hair as a kind of towel.

- Mary's gift was remarkably *humble*. "To attend to the feet was the task of the most lowly slave; yet...Mary did not care what other people thought. She was grateful and Thus Mary's action denoted great humility as well as great devotion." (Morris)
- Mary's gift was remarkably *extreme*. She used a lot (**a pound**) of a **very costly oil of spikenard** (worth a year's wages for a workingman).
- Mary's gift was remarkably *unselfconscious*. She **wiped His feet with her hair**. This means that she let down her hair in public, something a Jewish woman would rarely do.

Trying to understand Mary is a study of true and unfettered devotion to Jesus.

- Mary sat at Jesus' feet and *learned*, [Luke 10:39](#).
- Mary fell at Jesus' feet and *surrendered*, [John 11:32](#).
- Mary anointed Jesus' feet and *honored* Jesus, [John 12:3](#).

8. In a short time Judas (Simon's son) would betray Jesus.

- Judas objected to Mary's gift because he was shamed by her simple and powerful display of love.
- This is the only place in the New Testament where Judas is mentioned as doing something evil *other* than his betrayal of Jesus, and even this was done in secret.
- Many people have a religious facade that hides secret sins.
- Judas successfully hid his dark heart from everyone except Jesus. (The love of money is the root of all evil).
- It was probably through greed and discontent the devil gained a foothold in Judas' life. The Bible teacher, Trapp, made this statement...

"Take heed of discontent. It was the devil's sin that threw him out of heaven. Ever since which this restless spirit loves to fish in troubled waters." (Trapp)

John 12:7-11, "But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always. Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus."

1. Jesus knew the hearts (the attitudes) of Mary and Judas. It is much better to be like Mary (extreme in our love for Jesus) than to be like Judas (criticizing others who show such great love for Jesus).

2. In the same way that it would be out-of-character (rude and crude) to loudly object to funeral expenses at the service for the deceased, so it was inappropriate for Judas or anyone else to put a price on Mary's love and devotion to Jesus while He was still alive.
3. The **chief priests** were mostly Sadducees (the Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection). Lazarus was a living example of life after death, and having him around was an embarrassment to their theological system.
4. For the chief priests, there was only one solution to this embarrassing problem — **to put Lazarus to death also**.

"When men hate Christ, they also hate those whom he has blessed and will go to any lengths in seeking to silence their testimony." (Spurgeon)

Note the Scripture: "On account of him (Lazarus), many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus":

- This made the problem of the chief priests worse.
 - The miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead drew **many** people to Jesus.
- Therefore, in the opinion of these religious leaders, Lazarus also had to be stopped.

John 12:12-16, "The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: 'Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' The King of Israel!' Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: 'Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt.'" His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him.

- This was the large crowd that came for the greatest holidays of Judaism...Passover.
- Palm branches were a symbol of Jewish nationalism since the time of the Maccabees; so, this was like a patriotic parade.
- The crowd looked to Jesus as a political and national savior, but not so much as a spiritual savior.
- **Hosanna! "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!"** This large, enthusiastic crowd greeted Jesus with words from the Messianic [Psalm 118:25-26](#).
- **Jesus** came in on a young donkey (colt) to fulfill prophecy (Zechariah 9:9) and to show that His kingdom was one of peace, not war.

"Jesus rode on a donkey, not the steed of royalty, but that of a commoner on a business trip." (Tenney)

Jesus, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, appealed and appeals to those with repentant hearts who are ready for a Savior!