

I. THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF HUMANITY

- A. Humanity was intentionally created by God with the design, capacity, and calling to worship Him. Our true purpose, identity, and destiny are centered in worshipping our creator and a life fully oriented around His presence. We have been wired for worship, and when our hearts are directed toward lesser things, it leaves us empty and unfulfilled.
- B. The human heart carries a built-in longing for God that only worship and His presence can satisfy, and this longing is central to both our identity and eternal calling.
 - 1. **“The essence of worship is a heart satisfied in God and a life that reflects His worth.”**
 - 2. **“God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.”**

II. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND OF OUR READING

- A. This story takes place six days before Passover, shortly after one of His most profound miracles, raising Lazarus from the dead, which intensified opposition from the religious leaders who were plotting to kill Him.
- B. This significant moment in Jesus’ earthly ministry is set in the final days leading to His crucifixion, and this moment of extravagant worship unfolds in a context of escalating tensions of the religious leaders conspiring to kill Him, and Judas Iscariot preparing to betray Him.
- C. Surrounded by the unfolding plot to kill Jesus and Judas’ betrayal, Mary’s act stands at the center as a powerful contrast—an expression of extravagant, prophetic devotion in the midst of darkness.
- D. I believe in this holy moment the Father prepared a table for His Son in the Presence of His enemies as Psalm 23 declares.
 - 1. ***You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.-Ps 23:5***
- E. *In our reading we are invited into a moment that redefines worship through the life of Mary of Bethany.*

III. JOHN 12:1-8

- 1. ***Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, who had been dead, whom He had raised from the***

dead. 2 There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. 3 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. 4 But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, 5 "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" 6 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. 7 But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. 8 For the poor you always have with you always, but Me you do not always."

IV. MARY IS ALWAYS FOUND AT THE FEET OF JESUS

- A. This is the third time Mary of Bethany is seen at Jesus' feet. The scripture reveals three distinct times she is found at the feet of Jesus, each revealing a different dimension of true devotion.
1. First time in Luke 10 she sits at His feet as a learner choosing His Presence and Word over distraction.
 - a) ***And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at ^{the} Jesus' feet and heard His word. -Lk 10:39***
 2. Second time is in John 11 where she falls at Jesus' feet in grief after her brother Lazaours dies expressing her dependence on Him to heal her broken heart and grief.
 - a) ***Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. -Jn 11:32***
 3. Third time in our passage today. Mary breaks the status quo of worship by offering Jesus humble, costly devotion in light of His coming death.
 - a) Mary of Bethany reveals what it means to live a life truly centered on Jesus. She demonstrates that in every season—whether in times of blessing or difficulty—the safest and most sustaining place is at His feet.

V. MARY AND JUDAS CONTRAST

A. Mary's extravagant worship and Judas' criticism is a sharp contrast and a picture of two directions a heart can go when God's Presence is in the room. It will move towards sacrificial love, and devotion, or toward self-interest, and self worship.

1. ***Mary offered lavish worship to the true God while Judas missed the moment because his eyes were on a false God called money.***

B. Today, worship in the church either flows from deep affection and revelation of Jesus' worth, or from routine and religious duty. It may be costly or merely convenient, freely expressed or restrained by fear of man, misunderstood and criticized or comfortably accepted, but only one truly honors Him.

VI. WHAT WE LEARN ABOUT TRUE WORSHIP AND DEVOTION FROM MARY

1. IT WILL ONLY GO AS FAR AS OUR REVELATION OF HIM

a) Mary saw the worth of Jesus supreme over any earthly possessions. Her worship was costly and extravagant because she saw Him perfect in holiness, unmatched in beauty, and infinite in worth.

2. IT IS COSTLY

a) Mary's worship surrendered personal dignity, and financial security.

b) True worship and devotion will cost us our time, criticism of man, surrender of comfort, control, comfort from money, pride, and reputation before man.

3. IT REQUIRES HUMILITY

a) To anoint His feet, Mary had to get on the ground lower than Jesus. A posture of humility and reverence submission is the proper attitude in true worship.

4. IT IS OUT OF THE BOX CULTURALLY

a) Mary as a woman took center stage in a male setting

- b) As a Jewish woman letting her hair down was socially unacceptable
- c) Touching a man who was not her husband was frowned upon.

5. IT IS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD BY OTHERS

- a) Judas and the other disciples saw her costly worship as wasteful, lacking stewardship.
- b) Mary held nothing back. Her worship was not calculated, it was wholehearted.

(1) Real devotion always looks excessive to the spiritually cold.

(2) What seems wasteful to man may be precious to God

6. IT SHOULD ALWAYS TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER SERVICE

- a) The first time Mary is found at Jesus' feet was in John 10:39 hearing His word while her sister Martha was distracted with serving and missed a moment to do better. True service is an overflow of prioritizing worship.

7. IT CAN BE A PROPHETIC ACT

- a) Mary didn't just pour the oil out of the jar, but Mark's account says she first broke it.

(1) a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head.-Mk 14:3

- b) I believe this was a prophetic act pointing to Jesus' body soon to be broken—releasing the fragrance of God's love, forgiveness, mercy, redemption, and power into the earth and throughout history.

8. IT WILL CHANGE THE ATMOSPHERE OF A PLACE

(1) And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil

- b) Mary's costly worship changed the entire house. One person at the feet of Jesus can change the atmosphere of our homes, churches, cities, and nations.

VII. MARY'S DEVOTION TRAVELS WITH THE GOSPEL

- A. In Matthews and Mark's account of this story Jesus makes a profound declaration.
 - 1. ***Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.-Mt 26:13***
- B. Jesus guarantees her act will be remembered globally and perpetually into eternity, speaking of how God never overlooks or forgets these acts of true devotion.
- C. Why? The gospel is a means to an end. The end is extravagant worshippers. It's an invitation to the world to come sit at the feet of Jesus.
 - 1. Missions exist where worship doesn't-John Piper

VIII. ITS TIME TO FILL KINGS HOUSE WITH THE FRAGRANCE OF WORSHIP

- A. Lets commit to fill King's House with the true worship like Mary modeled for us. We are not wasting money by investing in the heart of David project to create an atmosphere of extravagant worship and prayer in this prayer room.