

102421 Growth Group Study

Extravagant Devotion

John 12:1-11



Background:

In John 12, Jesus goes back to the place of hostility, to Bethany near Jerusalem, where he has an intimate meal with his friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. In the middle of dinner, Mary anoints Jesus' feet with very expensive perfume, worth an entire year's wages. Out of extravagant love, joy and thanksgiving for Jesus, Mary acts with abandon in her worship of him, and she fills the entire house with the aroma of life. Authentic worship of Jesus, our Savior and King, is never merely private. It always spills over onto others. Join us this Sunday to explore this amazing scene.

Sermon Text (ESV):

John 12:1-11

12 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. 3 Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

4 But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, 5 “Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year’s wages.” 6 He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

7 “Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. “It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. 8 You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.”

9 Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. 10 So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, 11 for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him.

Discussion Questions:

- Preparation
 - As you reflect on the sermon, what stands out to you most?
 - What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?
- Sermon Questions
 - In what settings or circumstances do you find yourself or choose to not be self-conscious, lack restraint, and behave (e.g., worship, cheer) with abandon?
 - What would it look like for you to follow Mary’s lead in total abandon for Jesus? Specifically, what would you do differently?
 - On a spectrum from one side to the other, where could you use the most help to follow in Mary’s (vs. Judas’s) footsteps?
 - Generous \leftrightarrow Greedy
 - Humbly submissive \leftrightarrow Arrogantly cold/calculated
 - Selfless \leftrightarrow Selfish
 - Kneel in utter devotion \leftrightarrow Stands in self-righteous judgment
 - Shawn discussed how this passage raises a tension between personal devotion and social responsibility. However, he concluded that this is not about the poor not being important (they are!) but rather that Jesus is of utmost importance.

- What are your thoughts on this aspect of the passage? How can you/are you making care for the needy part of your devotion to Jesus?
- Extravagant devotion (and love) are:
 - Costly, Generous
 - With Abandon, No restraint
 - Humble, Selfless, and
 - Pervasive
 - If someone seeking/new to their relationship with Jesus were to ask you if Jesus is worth it... worth extravagant love & devotion, how would you answer them?