

“A BEAUTIFUL ACT OF LOVE”

John 12:1-8

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INTRODUCTION

Since Jesus’ “time” had not yet come, he had been staying with his disciples in the region about Ephraim—south of the Sea of Galilee. However, the appointed time of His sacrifice was getting closer, for it was at the Passover feast that Jesus would present Himself as the sacrificial lamb for the sin of the world. Therefore, while the Passover pilgrims stood about in Jerusalem and in the temple precincts and inquired about the plans and intentions of Jesus, Jesus made His way with his disciples to Bethany—just two miles away from Jerusalem. There at Bethany was Lazarus—whom Jesus had raised from the dead; *he was quite alive and well*, and able to eat like a normal person. It was **six days** before the Passover

It was there at Bethany that one of the most beautiful acts of love ever manifested toward our Savior took place. While Jesus, his disciples, and his friends reclined around the table at the special meal prepared for Jesus to celebrate His miraculous raising of Lazarus and possibly his healing of Simon the leper, Mary came to Jesus and made a lavish display of her love and gratitude toward Him. As Jesus promised, this act of love would be rehearsed throughout the world—wherever the Gospel would be preached (Mk. 14:9).

What was it about this act of Mary that made it so special? What can we learn from her action, and how can we manifest such love toward our Savior?

You and I need to learn to make Lavish Acts of love toward our Savior like Mary did!

I. Mary Was More Concerned About Pleasing The Lord Than About Entertaining Herself (V.3).

The others were eating or serving the meal. She was totally focused on her Master!
We are way too often concerned about our comfort, our enjoyment, our pleasure.

Life is much more important than food, drink, and entertainment!

We miss out on God’s best because we are too focused on THIS LIFE.

II. Mary Was More Concerned About Love For Christ Than about Material Wealth.

She was willing to sacrifice in order to demonstrate her love for her Lord!

Are we more concerned about keeping it and storing it up, or breaking it and pouring it out upon our Lord?

III. Mary Was More Concerned About Humbling Herself Than She Was About Worldly Success, Achievement, and Accomplishment.

To care for someone’s feet was the act of a menial servant.

What are your goals in life? What do you hope to accomplish?

When you die, what do you hope to leave behind as a legacy? Are you concerned about your name or reputation, or are you content that He might increase while you decrease?

IV. Mary Was More Concerned About her Lord than She Was About Her Personal Appearance and Reputation.

Mary did not care what others might think of her; she was too focused upon her Lord and upon how to honor and serve Him!

Moreover, she wasn't overly concerned about her personal appearance.

Far too often we look to Hollywood or Paris to determine how we should dress, what kind of make-up we should wear, the most popular fashions, etc. **But do we concern ourselves with our Lord and what He wishes for us? What will best serve Him?**

V. Mary Was More Concerned About “the Sweet Savor” of “a Living Sacrifice” Than About the Attractions and Splash of This World.

Such acts of sacrifice will make a difference in this world, and more importantly will be a sweet savor ascending up to our Savior in heaven.

Oh that there would be more beautiful offerings to our Lord from loving hearts!

VI. Mary Was More Concerned About Pleasing Her Lord Than About Pleasing Her Critics (4-6).

Deep devotion to the Lord is often misunderstood—by family, by friends, by neighbors, by co-workers, and yes even sometimes by fellow “Christians”.

A. Judas was Critical

B. Critics quite often *don't know the Lord* like the believer with the loving heart.

Judas was clearly a lost man.

C. Critics generally don't have such a deep love for the Lord.

D. Critics are often hypocrites—Judas was not really interested in “poor people” (v. 6).

E. Critics generally have their own agenda, not the Lord's in view.

Judas had his goals for being a disciple; he had been sorely disappointed.

F. Critics often are dishonest.

John clearly tells us that Judas “was a thief”.

G. Critics often care too much for this world—and when the Master and His ways get in the way, they turn against the Master—and those who deeply love Him.

H. Critics are selfish—may make pretense of being interested in others, but really are interested in themselves.

I. Critics are greedy

J. Critics are more interested in other people than in Jesus—give to “poor people.”

Are we more concerned about the opinions of others? What is popular? What is acceptable? Do we tend to “conform to this world”?

VII. Mary Was More Concerned About His Agenda than in Her Agenda (v. 7).

Jesus vindicated Mary—“Leave her alone!” “She has kept it for the day of my preparation for burial.”

She knew that His death was imminent and important to Him, and she wanted to focus on what was important to Him.

VIII. Mary Was More Concerned About Serving Her Lord While He Was Alive.

She served Him and honored Him (anointing was an honorable activity that often carried significant connotations) while she could, before the opportunity disappeared.

She was willing to act while the opportunity was there! Are we?

Far too often we wait too long—especially until we are too old, too poor, or dead!!

I have always felt that we ought to honor the living while they can appreciate it and enjoy it—not after they are dead! How much more so for our Lord?

IX. Mary Was More Concerned About Jesus Than About Other People. (v. 8)

The poor will always be with us—Jesus will not.

It is not that we are to show no interest in the poor; just that Jesus is far more important.

CONCLUSION

Let us review: Mary was more concerned about her Lord and pleasing Him than she was about **entertaining herself, material wealth, worldly success, personal appearance and reputation, the attractions of this world, pleasing her critics, her own agenda, and other people.**

Moreover, she wanted to honor Him while He could humanly receive it.

- *In our case, we are the ones dying; we are the ones about to lose the opportunity to manifest lavish acts of love upon our Lord. Let us lavish upon our Lord lavish acts of love while we can—yes even while we are alive.*

LET US GIVE OUR LORD OUR TIME, TALENTS, and MONEY.

- *And let us also plan to lavish upon our Lord our acts of love once we have departed—by leaving lavish gifts to carry on His work, by leaving behind a godly heritage in our human offspring and in our spiritual offspring, and by leaving behind a solid ministry to carry on His work.*

What are YOU most concerned about? Follow Mary's example!

OH THAT WE MIGHT MANIFEST BEAUTIFUL ACTS OF LOVE TOWARD OUR LORD!