



ALL MY LOVE

John 12:1-8

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Our Gospel Lesson for this morning is really a continuation of John Chapter 11.

Jesus had come to where Mary and Martha lived because their brother Lazarus had gotten sick.

When Jesus arrived, the funeral was already over, Lazarus was dead, and the sisters were absolutely overwhelmed with grief.

After the funeral is over the mourners gather for a meal.

Yet here we read of an unusual meal – because the dead person Lazarus was reclining at the table with Jesus and others. He was very much alive thanks to Jesus' raising him from the dead.

What a wonderful event and so the sisters gratefully welcomed Jesus into their house.

Martha is serving the food, but Mary is not, Instead she takes out essence of nard, a fragrant ointment imported from the mountains of India. Thus it was very expensive and could well have been the family's life savings, and anoints the feet of Jesus with it. Then she wipes His feet with her hair.

In the Voice Bible we read Judas' response: "How could she pour out this vast amount of fine oil? Why didn't she sell it? It is worth nearly a year's wages. The money could have gone to the poor."

Of course this had nothing to do with Judas' desire to help the poor. The truth is he served as the treasurer and he helped himself to the money from the common pot every opportunity.

Still, the pint of expensive perfume could have been used for a better purpose? It was worth a year's wages – how could they give that away – how would they manage for the rest of the year?

Couldn't the money be used to buy food for starving people or to improve Mary and Martha's neighbourhood?

Bethany which is probably of Aramaic or Hebrew Origin means "house of affliction"

So didn't Mary go just a little overboard? Was she not thinking of others, at all? All she does is waste the perfume, or does she?

Now Jesus knew what was in the heart of Judas. He knows what is in each one's heart.

Judas' life had become a lie, and the devil was gaining more and more control over him.

Satan is the father of lies and once you open just a tiny crack to lying Satan pulls the door wide open to continue influencing you toward sin.

Jesus' knowledge of us should make us want to keep our actions consistent with our words. Because we have nothing to fear from Him, we should have nothing to hide.

And then we read what Jesus says next: "Leave her alone. She has observed this custom in anticipation of the day of My burial. The poor are ever present, but I will be leaving.

Jesus had already been anointed by John the Baptist three years earlier—through baptism--for His costly mission.

Now Mary is anointing Jesus for His costly death. Like John, Mary is a witness and a disciple.

It can be argued that Mary was, actually, Jesus' closest disciple—His most loyal follower, the one who loved Him most and understood Him best.

After all, she would stand at the foot of the Cross just a few days later as Jesus bled and died.

And she would be the first one to come to Jesus' tomb on Easter morning.

What does Jesus mean by the words about the poor? Is he suggesting that the poor should be neglected?

Jesus' words are a quotation from **Deuteronomy 15:11**.

“There will always be poor people throughout the country. That’s why I’m giving you this command: give generously to your fellow Israelite to the poor and needy in the land.

This act and Jesus' response to it do not teach us to ignore the poor so we can spend money extravagantly for Christ. This was a unique act for a specific occasion – an anointing that anticipated Jesus' burial and a public declaration of faith in Him as Messiah,

Now Mary is anointing Jesus for His costly death.

And why? Because of her love for Jesus and what He was about to sacrifice for her, her family, friends and any sinner. .

There is another disciple in this story – unfaithful Judas.

Judas says he is outraged that the perfume was not sold and the money not given to the poor, but that wasn't Judas' true motive.

His true motive was not his concern for the poor but the money he had hoped to steal!

Jesus' words should have taught Judas a valuable lesson about the worth of money. Unfortunately, Judas did not take heed. Soon he would sell his Master's life for 30 pieces of silver.

On the other hand Mary's love flowed from her heart.

She had been touched and inwardly transformed by her relationship with Jesus.

Her unprompted generosity springs from her very being—she cannot help but offer Jesus her best, her all!

And the same goes for us.

When our lives are changed, when we experience the love of Jesus Christ, we cannot help but offer Jesus our best, our all!!!

If we then move to John 13 we see another extraordinary act of love. Jesus washing the feet of His disciples – giving them an example of how they are to serve one another in love.

This passage tells us there is a real connection between worshiping Jesus and serving Jesus—between loving God and loving our neighbour as well!!!

Is it possible that we miss that connection sometimes?

Unfortunately, there are some big churches who have missed the point. They have no room left for parking because they have so many parishioners. They have to hold a number of worship services to cater for all. So with so many parishioners, money is not a problem and the bank balance continues to build.

Yet, I know that a couple of these churches in Australia, have no outreach programs for the community. They stare blankly at you when you ask. Because they have lost the connection.

The point of this story in John is not Judas' argument—that Mary went overboard in honouring Jesus.

The point of this story is that we usually go well dishonouring Jesus.

How often do we take Jesus for granted?

He is the Creator of the world. He is our Saviour. He died for us.

When all is said and done, Jesus is really all that matters.

And yet, how much effort do we expend in giving Him thanks? How thankful are we really?

Jesus' statement of "we will always have the poor with us" is not a statement of promise as much as it is a charge against people and systems that get rich at the expense of the poor or do nothing for the poor.

Jesus' words are a criticism of the Judas' in our midst.

"You will always have the poor with you," is a wake-up call to us to love and give thanks to Jesus by serving the poor!!!

Society continues to consist of those that have it all and those that have nothing. Sadly, many of the have it all don't share with those that have nothing.

In all reality "The poor that we always have with us" is Jesus.

And, it is to the poor that all extravagance is to be given.

After-all, does not Jesus say in Matthew Chapter 25: "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did it for me"?

Mary wanted to show Jesus how much she loved Him.

We are told that after Mary poured the perfume on Jesus' feet and wiped His feet with her hair "the house was filled with the fragrance."

This was an act which shocked the Jewish community, because a woman's hair was considered sensual and had to be kept hidden.

But Mary's act was one of the fragrance of love, devotion, of giving one's whole self--of being a disciple of Jesus Christ?

We too, as Christians, are called to fill the entire world with this fragrance.

We too are to show Jesus how much we love Him by giving our whole selves to Him.

The TRUE CHURCH always has the poor in its midst.

And the TRUE CHURCH always loves and serves the poor extravagantly.

And in doing this, we are loving and serving Jesus!