



“At His Feet”

John 12:1-11

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.

John 12:3

Getting on the Same Page

Jesus has just raised Lazarus from the dead, and the religious leaders are plotting to kill Jesus and Lazarus. Jesus is just too much of a threat to their power.

In John 12, Jesus is back at Bethany, where he raised Lazarus, and Lazarus’ family is holding a banquet in Jesus’ honor. Lazarus’ sisters, Martha and Mary are there. The focus of this story is on Mary, however.

We see Mary of Bethany before in the Gospels, usually at Jesus’ feet. She sits by his feet to hear his teaching, and she falls at his feet after her brother Lazarus dies. Here, in this story, Mary takes a very expensive heirloom of perfume, breaks it over Jesus’ feet, and wipes them with her hair.

The disciples are shocked and frustrated. Judas wonders why Mary would do something so ridiculous. Shouldn’t she have saved that perfume for her family? Or used it to help the poor?

But Jesus says to Judas, “Leave her alone.” Mary is overcome with gratitude for Jesus. He has just raised her brother from the dead! In this moment, she is worshipping Jesus, lavishing him with the most expensive, valuable thing she owns.

Not only that, but at some level, Mary understands something even Jesus’ disciples are having a hard time grasping: Jesus is not going to be with them forever. In fact, in only a few short days, Jesus will be on the cross, dying for their sins. Mary knew that the cost of bringing her brother out of the tomb is that Jesus would have to go in the tomb.

John invites us to come and see this Jesus; to sit at his feet; to see him through the eyes of Mary; to be captivated by his incredible beauty and love for us. When we do, John knows we will lavish Jesus with the best we can offer. This is the only appropriate response to encountering Jesus.

Discussion Questions

Getting Started

- Read John 11-12:11. What stands out to you in this passage?
- Discuss something you do for sheer enjoyment...something that has very little discernable return or practical value. Why do you do this?

Study

- Jesus has just raised Mary’s brother from the dead. How in the world is **her** response deemed to be too extreme?
- Respond: Ultimately, there are only two options: We will either sell Jesus or be sold out to Jesus.
- Respond: Many of us tend to say, “If Jesus did _____ for me like he did for Mary, I would surrender to him completely.” Discuss why that might not be the case.
- Respond: If you value anything/anyone more than Jesus, it’s virtually impossible for your heart to be full of wonder, thankfulness and overflowing joy toward him.
- Before there is a resurrection, there must be a death. Discuss how this relates to our lives in this broken world.
- Respond: Mary is able to give up a lesser security because she has discovered a greater one.
- Respond: On the cross, Jesus was poured out for us. When we realize this, we will want to pour out everything for him.

Apply

- Discuss what it would look like to risk/surrender our significance, security and safety for Jesus.