

John 12:1-8

1 Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. 3 Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. 4 But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, 5 "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" 6 He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. 7 Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. 8 For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."

Additional reference scripture:

- Matthew 26:6-13
- Mark 14:3-9
- 2 Corinthians 2:14

Summary

In this passage, the story of Mary anointing Jesus' feet with expensive ointment, and wiping his feet with her hair gives us a picture and model of what service to the Lord should look like. It is from the heart - extravagant, subservient, sacrificial, intimate, but often misunderstood for what it looks like on the surface. This is in contrast with Judas, who seemed on the surface to be pious and having a strong social conscience, but in reality was greedy for personal gain. Ultimately Jesus commends Mary. The commendation is not just based on her devotion though, it is based on who/ what she is devoted to - the Son of God who would be going to the cross in service of His people. The kind of service Mary expresses only makes sense because of who Jesus is, and what He is about to do for Mary and his disciples. Our service also only makes sense because of who Jesus is and what He has already done for us:

- God shows us 'why' we should serve him – it's in response to Jesus serving us in his life, death, and resurrection.
- God shows us 'how' we should serve him – it should be extravagant, devoted, sincere and conscious of the occasion and the need.
- God shows us 'the difference' that our service to him makes – all our service, done in love and faith, will exceed our own expectations and vision and view of what it achieves. God uses what little we offer Him to accomplish His great purposes on earth!

Final Thoughts

We don't serve extravagantly, perhaps because we have not realized how we have already been served extravagantly.

RHC Core Values

Gospel-Centredness – To have the gospel in the centre of our ministry, and for everything we do to find its root in the gospel.

Experimental Faith – To actively seek the modern day work of the Holy Spirit, expecting him to move in our midst in signs and wonders, and to lead us to the will of God.

Theological Depth – To pursue a deep and soul satisfying knowledge and understanding of God through the Bible.

Questions

1. Look at the details of John 12:1-8 together. What is/was your first reaction to hearing the story of Mary anointing Jesus feet?
2. Is Jesus as beautiful and real to you as He was to Mary? Why, or why not?
3. What is God challenging you, as an individual, and as a group, in response to this story? Is he challenging you to serve Him in a new endeavour, or perhaps in an old endeavour with a new attitude? Share, and pray for one another, in this regard.

One major point, or the sermon in one sentence:

We serve, pouring out our lives for others, because Jesus served us, pouring out His life on the cross for us.

Community on Mission – To recognise that we are not here for ourselves, but are on a mission to bring the gospel to the world.

City Renewal – To see the gospel change every aspect of the city we are living in by doing social justice, integrating our faith and work, and seeing the city renewed culturally, socially and spiritually for the glory of God.