



Mary or Judas

Sunday March 21, 2021
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John 12:1-8 (NASB) Therefore, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ² So they made Him a dinner there, and Martha was serving; and Lazarus was one of those reclining *at the table* with Him. ³ Mary then took a pound of very expensive perfume of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴ But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, the one who intended to betray Him, said, ⁵ “Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and *the proceeds* given to poor *people*?” ⁶ Now he said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he kept the money box, he used to steal from what was put into it. ⁷ Therefore Jesus said, “Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial. ⁸ For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have Me.”

Introduction: This story is concerning two main characters, Mary (the sister of Martha and Lazarus) and Judas Iscariot. This account occurs six days before the Passover, which is six days before Jesus is crucified. It is a Saturday Night and Jesus is a wanted man. The religious leaders are looking for the right opportunity to arrest Jesus.

John 11:57 (NASB) “Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where He was, he was to report it, so that they might arrest Him”.

They are in the town of Bethany. Bethany is the town where Lazarus was from. Lazarus was the one that Jesus rose from the dead. Matthew mentions that this is at the house of Simon the

Leper (Matthew 26:6). Now, in that time, once someone was a leper, that was it... they were basically in quarantine the rest of their life and they had no contact with anyone. So, we can make a pretty strong assumption that Simon was healed of his leprosy by Jesus.

Who is Involved: We know that Jesus is there. We know that Martha is there serving the meal, as are her siblings Mary and Lazarus. We also know that Simon, the former leper, is there and most likely his family members, since they are gathering at his house. And we know Judas and the other disciples are there.

From this text I want to focus on two main characters, Mary and Judas. The question we need to ask is, which one of these characters in this story are we. Who do you identify with, Mary or Judas?

POINT ONE – A true realization of the wonderful goodness of Jesus will always result in a public display of lavish worship.

John 12:3a *Mary then took a pound of very expensive perfume of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair*

The value of the perfume – How expensive was this perfume? This perfume was worth 300 days wages (verse 5).

The significance of his feet – Mary takes this 30K perfume and pours it on Jesus's feet. In the time of Jesus, people are walking everywhere, for tens of miles a day, in the dirty streets and Mary is compelled to pour thirty thousand dollars' worth of perfume all over them and rub them down with her hair...

WHY? The lowliest part of Jesus (if there is such a thing) is far more valuable than the best we have to offer. Mary knew how unworthy she was in comparison to Jesus and it resulted in extreme worship.

The realization of God's goodness brings us to the realization of our unworthiness.

Luke 5:5-8 (NASB) 'Master,' replied Simon, 'we were working hard all night and caught nothing at all. But if you say so, I'll let down the nets.'⁶ When they did so, they caught such a huge number of fish that their nets began to break. ⁷ They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. So, they came, and filled both the boats, and they began to sink.⁸ When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees. 'Go away,' he said. 'Leave me, Lord! I'm a sinner!

The smell of the perfume filled the room – John 12:3b *and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.*

When someone is madly in love with the King, you can't hide it and people can't escape it. Their worship permeates...it never stays hidden or private.

What is the fragrance of your worship at your job? What is the fragrance of your worship when someone cuts you off in your car? In your marriage? In your money? On your computer, alone at night? In your drink of choice? In your thinking? What is the fragrance of your worship when you are at church on a Sunday?

Is your reaction to Jesus like Mary's or is it like Judas?

POINT TWO – A "holier than thou" attitude is often used as a covering for brokenness

John 12:4-6 But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, the one who intended to betray Him, said, ⁵ "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the proceeds given to poor people?" ⁶ Now he said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he kept the money box, he used to steal from what was put into it.

This is the first recorded statement of Judas in the bible – Judas asked, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the proceeds given to poor people?".

Judas is questioning the intentions of Mary... he is accusing Mary of misusing what God has given her and squandering her worship. This is exactly the way that the spirit of Satan thinks and operates. The biblical meaning of Satan is "accuser" and this is exactly what Judas is doing to Mary.

"Churchy words" many times are used to mask evil intentions of the heart – in verse 5 we see a tactic that is still used in many church circles. Judas uses seemingly "holy" and "religious" words to mask his true heart and intentions.

Judas' true heart is seen in verse 6, "Now he said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he kept the money box, he used to steal from what was put into it."

Remember what Jesus said in the parable of the tree and the fruit:

Mathew 7:22-23 Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; LEAVE ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.

Jesus was saying in this parable that you will know a true daughter or son of the King by their fruit! What fruit was Jesus talking about here? If it wasn't the miracles and the prophesying and the casting out of demons, what was it? **A life of lavish worship**

POINT THREE – A True Perspective of the Glory and Greatness of God will sustain you through any heartache or hardship that you face

John 12:7-8 Therefore Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial. ⁸ For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have Me."

Jesus response is "LEAVE HER ALONE". Jesus knew the damage that this kind of church fake rhetoric could cause in His church.

Jesus knew that Mary needed to keep this worshipful perspective of God's Glory and Goodness because it would sustain her through some of the hardest times in your life

How does this relate to us?

Jesus would say the same thing to us. Keep your worship and eyes on me. Spent intimate time with Me because it will sustain you through stormy seas.

WHO ARE YOU IN THIS STORY? ARE YOU MARY OR JUDAS