

Six days before the Passover

John 12:1-11

12 Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him. 3 Mary then took a pound of very costly 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, who was intending to betray Him, said, 5 "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to poor people?" 6 Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it. 7 Therefore Jesus said, "Let 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."

9 The large crowd of the Jews then learned that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead. 10 But the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also; 11 because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus.

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Six days before the Passover. The clock is winding down. The Father's clock kept the time for the hour when the Lord Jesus would be glorified. Now that hour was fast approaching.

This morning we are going to see the responses of two people to the impending nightfall.

/One of those people was Mary, the sister of Lazarus. The other was Judas, a member of the twelve disciples, those who were closest to Jesus.\

John does not use the term "apostles" in his gospel. Instead, he uses the term "the twelve", as in John 6 for example:

John 6:67-71

67 So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" 68 Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. 69 "We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God." 70 Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?" 71 Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.

/John hardly ever mentions Judas without adding that he was the one who would betray Jesus.\ He's not alone in this: the other gospel writers do the same thing.

/His betrayal was so hideous (abominable, heinous) that they could never think of him in any other way. \ Jesus said of him that it would have been good for him had he not been born (Matt 26:24). It was so evil that satan entered into him to help him carry it out (John 13:27).

Judas became synonymous with betrayer./ Even today to call someone a Judas means that they betrayed a close friend.\

/And then there was Mary. She loved Jesus so much. She believed Him when He said that He would be killed in Jerusalem.\

Matt 16:21

21 From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.

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Mary knew that His hour was fast approaching.

/This dinner might be her last opportunity to show how much she loved Him. To worship Him with the honor that He deserved.\

John 12:1-3

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/In the Bible, the fragrant aroma is associated with a costly sacrifice.\

Eph 5:1-2

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

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/Mary lived up to the standard set by Christ for loving someone. \

John 15:13

"Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

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/1 John 3:16

*16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. *

/To love is ultimately to give sacrificially, out of your substance, laying down your life for the one you love.\

John 3:16

16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

/Mary held back nothing.\ She knew that the redemption of her soul was costly (Psalm 49:8). Anointing Jesus with perfume was costly for her, in several ways.

/She sacrificed her respectability. \ In her culture, the lowest slave washed the feet of the master and his guests.

And a respectable woman would never let her hair down in public, in the presence of men.

/She sacrificed her wealth. \That perfume was worth a year's wages. Nard was made from plants only grown in the mountains of northern India. Plus it was pure, 100%, which made it all the more precious and valuable.

Nothing was too good for Jesus. /In addition to that perfume, she poured out all her love, and devotion, gratitude, humility, and worship that day.\

John 12:4-6

4 But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said, 5 "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to poor people?" 6 Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it. 7 Therefore Jesus said, "Let 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."

/Judas didn't love Jesus. He didn't love God.\

He didn't follow Jesus for those three plus years because He loved Him, or believed He was the Son of God.

/He followed Jesus for what he thought he could get out of the deal.\ In the short run, that meant pilfering the treasury. But he was aiming higher than that. He expected Jesus to become king. Then Judas would hit the jackpot.

So when it became apparent that this was not going to happen..... when Jesus had infuriated the ruling class to the point where they sought his death..... when Jesus started speaking of persecution and humiliation - well that was unacceptable.

Judas couldn't get anything more out of following Jesus. So he had to come up with another way of "cashing in" on his position.

/Judas served his own interests, period. He loved this present world, and he loved money.\

Matt 6:24

24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

/He was willing the lie, cheat, steal and even murder to get what he wanted.\

He hated the light and loved the darkness.

He was just like his father, the devil.

John 8:42-45

42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. 43 "Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. 44 "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

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John 12:7 Therefore Jesus said, "Let 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."

At that point, Jesus intervened. Judas was not going to have the last word.

/He exposed Judas for the hypocrite that he was.\ He was not interested in the poor. If he had been, he would have many opportunities to help them.

He was a fraud. He refused to honor or worship the Lord Jesus. He squandered the greatest opportunity imaginable. He walked with Jesus – the Son of God - for three years. Judas heard Him speak. He saw the signs but refused to believe.

And Jesus vindicated Mary in another way as well.

/Jesus knew why Mary had anointed His feet. She knew that the time of His departure drew near (Joh 13:1).\

None of the other disciples believed it yet, but she did.

/So she honored Him the best way she could.\

Mark 14:6-11

6 But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you bother her? She has done a good deed to Me. 7 "For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you wish you can do good to them; but you do not always have Me. 8 "She has done what she could; she has anointed My body beforehand for the burial.

9 "Truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her."

10 Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went off to the chief priests in order to betray Him to them. 11 They were glad when they heard this, and promised to give him money. And he began seeking how to betray Him at an opportune time.

Never has the difference between a child of light and a child of darkness been more obvious.

/Jesus didn't come to bring peace, but a sword (Matt 10:34).\
He came in order that many hearts would be laid bare.

Luke 2:34-35

And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed — 35 and a sword will pierce even your own soul — to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

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/The hearts of Mary and Judas were laid bare that day in Bethany.\

John 12:35-36

35 So Jesus said to them, "For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. 36 "While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light."

As it was then, so it is now. As believers, we are sons of Light.

/The Lord implores us to act as those sons of Light.\

Eph 5:6-10

6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not be partakers with them; 8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light 9 (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), 10 trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.