

## “Extravagant Love”

### I. **INTRO:**

- A. A certain **medieval monk** announced he would be preaching next Sunday evening on “*The Love of God.*” As the shadows fell and the light ceased to come in through the cathedral windows, the congregation gathered. In the darkness of the altar, the monk **lighted a candle and carried it to the crucifix.** First of all, he illumined the **crown of thorns**, next, the **two wounded hands**, then the **marks of the spear wound.** In the hush that fell, he **blew out the candle and left the chancel.** There was **nothing else to say.**
1. Oh, the extravagant love Jesus showed us!
  2. Is it possible for **us** to show Him **extravagant love**? **What would it look like?**

### II. **PLOT TO KILL JESUS! (11:45-57)**

- A. **PROBLEM!** (45-48)
- B. They cared more about their *political status & power on earth* than they did about whether **Jesus** really was **sent by God.** [were simply trying to save their *political skins!*]
- C. They feared that Jesus might get such a following that even Rome would feel threatened.
- D. **PROPHECY!** (49-52)
- E. Caiaphas proposes, a *simple lethal solution* - “Why should the **whole nation** be destroyed? Let this **one man** die for the people.” [He didn’t realize how correct he was!]
- F. **Admire the bee:** It sees its hive being threatened, it will use its one defense...its stinger! They will **die** in their defense of their hive. They have **one thought only** - the safety of the others in the hive, & gladly will give their lives *for the good of the many.*
- G. **PLOT!** (53-57)
- H. (53) From now on **Jesus & the Sanhedrin** were on a *collision course!*
1. From this time on Jesus **alters His course:**
    - a) He changes His **public outreach** to a **private in-reach.**
    - b) He **shifts His emphasis** from **signs** to **quiet intimate conversation** w/His disciples.
    - c) He **reduces His travels** & returns to Jerusalem & stays there.
    - d) He’s **not out evangelizing**; He’s **preparing to leave** & **preparing the disciples** for His departure.
  - l. (54) The timing of His laying down of His life is still in **His** hands.
    1. Jesus heads to **Ephraim**, 12-15 miles away from the city, until Passover.

2. As **Passover** nears, the “*Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world*” begins to make his final preparations before He *lays down His life & takes it up again*.

J. (57) Finally, they have an **APB**(*All Points Bulletin*) out on Jesus.

### III. **EXTRAVAGANT LOVE! (12:1-11)**

A. **MARY’S DEVOTION!** (1-3) [Parallel passages: Mt.26:6-12; Mrk 14:1-11]

B. What would your plans be if you knew you only had 6 days to live? You would choose what is **most important** to you. Jesus choose, “I’m going over my friends for dinner & fellowshiping with them!”

1. He chose to spend His final week with **those most dear**, w/His **closest friends**.

2. **Parallel passages include on the guest list: Simon**(a leper Jesus healed; actually this is at his house in Bethany) **Lazarus, Mary, Martha, & the disciples**.

3. **A shelter of intimate friends!**

4. First time **Mary’s** name is mentioned, probably because the whole family might have suffered for their intimate identification w/Jesus, **but now** the beloved trio had been gathered home to God.

C. (1) Jesus’ *Clique* or inner circle. **What is a clique any ways? Are they good or bad? (yes!)**

1. **A Clique:** a small group of people, with shared interests or other features in common, who spend time together **and** do not readily allow others to join them

a) Thus, the 1st part of this is very natural; the 2nd part is the only part that is wrong.

D. What would you make Jesus for dinner if He was coming over?

1. Would you serve fancy meal on your China? **Or** backyard BBQ on paper plates?

E. (3) This served as an important confessional function of anticipating His death.

1. Given the sequence in John’s gospel, **Mary** is portrayed as a follower who **was well acquainted with Jesus’ ultimate destiny**.

F. This expensive perfume was a luxury item for herself. She poured it on the feet of Jesus as an act of **humility**.

1. Attending to **the feet** of another person was the work of a servant.

2. Wiping the oil w/**her hair** was also unusual, for respectable women did not **unbraid** their hair in public.

3. Mt & Mrk add “**She has done a good work**(a beautiful thing to) **for Me**”

4. Mary exhibited **unrestrained love & devotion** to Jesus that went beyond personal cost & concern for the opinion of others.
  - a) King David called it *undignified* worship...I will be even more **undignified** than this, and will be humble in my own sight. But as for the maidservants of whom you have spoken, by them I will be held in honor. 2 Sam.6:22
  - b) F.B.Meyer called it *holy ecstasy*.
  - c) The aroma of **extravagant love**. So pure. So lovely.

G. Are the **places we go** filled with **Christ fragrance** because of us?

H. **JUDAS' DECEIT!** (4-8)

I. This is the **sole passage** in the Gospels that reveal the **wicked character** of Judas before his betrayal of Jesus.

1. Judas was obviously **highly esteemed** by the 12, because he was trusted with caring for the money bag.
2. Individuals are **often** able to easily deceive others about their relationship to God, **but never** is God deceived!

J. **Judas** could have questioned her *breech of etiquette* or the *woman's place* in that culture: Why is Mary sitting at the table w/Jewish men? - Why did she let down her hair? But, Judas doesn't condemn her for those things, **instead** for her extravagance.

1. **John** writing this **60 years later** says knows now that Judas' response was *not so pure*. (6)
2. For the disciples, the ministry was fast becoming a **business** to be budgeted rather than a **Savior** to be served.<sup>1</sup>

K. What Judas was really saying, "Why was this money waisted on **Jesus**, when it could have been spent on **ME!**"

1. That sounds so bad...but we have each done it, often.
2. "So beautiful the flame. So tender the wick. So mercenary the hand that seeks to extinguish it."<sup>2</sup>

L. So, as **Mary** was preparing Jesus' body for burial, **Judas** will prepare His death.

1. What Mary had done, Jesus said will be told as *a memorial to her*.
2. And so it was...**potent enough** behind the ears of each century, for the scent to linger to this day, a fragrant reminder of her **extravagant love**. Ken Gire

<sup>1</sup> Ken Gire; *Intimate Moments w/the Savior*, pg.82

<sup>2</sup> ibid

M. **JESUS' JUDGMENT OF MARY & THE POOR!** (9-11)

N. (9) The dinner party was for Jesus(2) but another guest draws quite a bit of attention too.

1. A great multitude was there to get a peek about *the man back from beyond*.
2. Lazarus the living miracle. By merely living, he's spreading the gospel.
  - a) No wonder they want him dead (10). His very life proves Jesus' claims!

O. (11) And now, we **don't have Jesus** physically with us as He went back to heaven, **but the poor** we **do have** with us!!! Q: So how can we anoint their feet? [tearing me up]

1. Read Mt.25:35-40
  2. Prov.19:17 (NLT) **If you help the poor, you are lending to the Lord.**
  3. Jam 1:27 (NLT) **Pure & genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans & widows in their distress & refusing to let the world corrupt you.**
  4. Jam 2:15-17 **If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also **faith** by itself, if it does not have **works**, is **dead**.**
- a) **I don't want a dead faith. I want a living faith.**  
**I want a perfumed faith; I want a faith that smells good.**  
**I want a faith that helps others; I want a faith that changes my world.**  
**I want a faith that: cares for, feeds, shares resources, helps. An intentional, active, dynamic, calculated, conscious, deliberate, purposeful faith!**
  - b) **How do I keep the warmth of human kindness, when wealth tends to freeze my hands, eyes, lips, & hearts?**
  - c) **I can't get the picture out of my head that I read about: of an African woman who was holding her child at the brink of starvation, too weak to even eat. She would take a bite of a potato she acquired, & would chew it up then spit it into her infant's mouth to try to get nourishment into him.**
  - d) **What do I do now that I know 30,000 children will die of **starvation**, or from a preventable disease...today?**

P. **The Savior** had come to earth to break an *alabaster jar* for humanity.

And **Mary** had come that night to break one for Him.

1. It was a jar He *never regretted* breaking. **Nor did she.**

Q. **Prayer:** That **our hearts** would be a **Bethany** for You.

A **quiet place** of friendship where You are the **honored guest**.

May we respond to You **not with** prudence of the disciples, **but w/the extravagance** of Mary.