

Mary's Gift

Mark 14:3-9 || Pastor John Wood || 27 September 2020

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: What is the most extravagant gift you have ever given or received in the name of love?

Worship: John 12:1-8, Matthew 26:6-13 (*Read aloud 3 times, reflect and listen for God's invitation to you.*)

Sermon Summary for Mark 14:3-9 (*Read the passage.*)

What the gift meant to Mary (14:3). This is a story of deep and costly love. This gift was Mary's deeply valued treasure. Worth more than a year's salary, it was almost certainly her dowry – her promise of future respect as an honored wife and mother in Israel. Her entire future rested on her preserving it. And she poured it out; she trusted Jesus to understand what she'd done and to make the rest of her life worth living. It is an act of irrevocable love and trust.

What the gift meant to the disciples (14:4-5). The disciples are appalled. What a waste! The implication is that some things are too valuable to waste on Jesus. So if we ever decide to follow Jesus radically and sacrificially, we shouldn't be surprised if it's our family or our church friends who see this as a waste. And it's worth remembering that each of us is called to identify the idols of our hearts, to be ready to break them open, and to pour them out at Jesus' feet. We should never forget that following Jesus is always worth it, no matter the cost.

What the gift meant to Jesus (14:6-8). Mary alone seemed to understand Christ's heart and that His kingdom was not of this world – not yet. She alone seemed to realize that to deliver His people, He must die in their place. And so she took her greatest treasure – that which would secure her dreams of family and social position – and poured it out on Jesus. To anoint Him before His burial. What the disciples saw as a waste, was beautiful to Jesus.

What the gift should mean to us (14:9). Jesus left only two things that were meant to be remembered and celebrated wherever the Gospel goes throughout the world. The first is this story of Mary's gift; the other immediately follows in Mark 14, where He institutes the LORD's Supper. What makes these two things so essential to our understanding of the Gospel?

The LORD's Supper shows what Jesus has done in order to make us His – to redeem us at great cost, giving Himself for us that we might have new life. And Mary's gift shows us the kind of response the LORD desires from His people: an act of radical self-giving on our part in response to His radical self-giving – to entrust our lives (present and future) to His safekeeping. Christ's gift is the supreme picture of God's grace that saves us. Mary's gift is the supreme picture of saving faith that receives the gift. Faith, working itself out in love.

Discussion Questions (You will not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like. Some are personal perspective and application questions for life-transforming discussion.)

- Describe the sacrifice Mary made anointing Jesus with costly ointment. Describe her trust in Christ.
 - What can you identify as an area where you need to trust Him like this?

- Mark 14:8 seems to indicate that Mary had some insight into what was about to happen to Jesus. What do you think is needed to gain this kind of spiritual insight?
 - Why did the disciples react the way they did? What kept them from Mary's insight?
 - Do you feel you are (subconsciously or consciously) more like Mary or more like the disciples in your current circumstances? Has this changed during the past 6 months?

- Why do you think Mary will be remembered wherever the Gospel is proclaimed (vs.9)?
 - How does pairing the memory of Mary's sacrifice with the Lord's Supper change the meaning of this story for you?
 - What do you think would happen if we remembered Mary's actions more often?
 - What personal applications can you make from this passage and sermon?

Prayer: Please see this week's Prayer Guide [here](#).

Engage & Experience: Mary is not exercising poor stewardship by honoring Christ (instead of using the perfume to help the needy). Jesus approved of and praised her sacrifice. What do you highly value that you could give to the Lord knowing that He is glad to receive it? Is it your time, talent, resources, something else? How are you loving and trusting Jesus extravagantly like Mary?