

Anointing The Christ

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[0 : 0 0] All right, morning, everybody. Great to be with you today. I'm always excited to come up here and worship with you guys. When I got here, though, Jared, I don't know if you all know him.

He was in a Patrick Mahomes jersey, so it got complicated. You know, this is like, we should just pray that both teams would lose. That would actually be something good for the 60 seconds of prayer today.

So anyways, in all seriousness, I love being up here with you guys. And I am honored to preach out of God's word to you. I think Jesse mentioned last week that we're going to get briefly back into preaching into the gospel of Mark.

We worked through most of it last year, but still have a little bit to get to. And so today we're going to jump back in. I'm not going to do a whole bunch of recap about like Mark's gospel and what it's all about.

Well, I guess I will. It's about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. That is the summary. And one of four accounts that we have in the New Testament of Jesus's life. And so we're in the part of the story where Jesus is in Jerusalem.

[1 : 0 7] He's headed to the cross, and he knows he's headed to the cross. The intensity is building. We have, we're in Mark 14, and we have this really delightful little story.

And I would say if you wanted to pick one story in the whole Bible that best demonstrates what Jesus is looking for in his disciples, I think it's this one.

It's not the only story, but I don't think you'll find a better one if you wanted to know what is Jesus looking for in his disciples. And I'll tell you why I think that this is the best for that kind of thing.

So we're going to read from Mark 14, starting in verse 1. This is what it says. It says, She broke the flask and poured it over his head.

There were some who said to themselves indignantly, Why was the ointment wasted like that? For this ointment could have been sold for more than 300 denarii and given to the poor.

[2 : 3 3] And they scolded her. But Jesus said, Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. For you will always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them.

But you will not always have me. She's done what she could. She's anointed my body beforehand for burial. And truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.

It's a great story. It's surprising. It's moving. It's interesting. And it's very instructive. And when you read in the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, sometimes the same story will be told in different places.

And with this story in particular, it's especially helpful to have in mind what the other accounts tell us because each of them help fill in the gaps a little bit.

And I think you can interpret the story better when you bring the details, all the details together so you kind of get a sense of the whole situation. So we know that this, Mark tells us, this meal is happening in this little town called Bethany.

[3 : 49] And John's gospel in particular confirms that. But in particular, Mary and Martha are there. And so the, and you may remember hearing of Mary and Martha in other stories.

There's other stories in the Bible where they show up together. And so it's Mary, the sister of Martha, according to John, who actually does the anointing. Mary's the one who brings this perfume.

And in Mark's account and in Matthew's account, they highlight that she pours it out on Jesus's head. But John tells us that she poured it on his feet and then washed his feet with her tears and her hair.

And so probably what happened is, so she's poured out the ointment from this flask. It's the whole thing. She's covering Jesus's entire body with this, right?

And so the different gospel writers are highlighting different elements of that. And in all of the stories, the reaction is shock and outrage. So Mark tells us that everyone's upset.

[4 : 52] John tells us that actually the person who kind of first points out the scandal is Judas Iscariot. He's the one who first says this is inappropriate.

And it was done under false pretenses. Judas was the treasurer. John actually tells us that he was a thief. He wanted it to be sold so that he could pocket the money and then skim some off the top.

But everyone else really seems to, what he's saying really seems to resonate with everyone, so everyone's upset. But Jesus, in all three accounts, comes to this woman's defense.

And the very thing that offends everybody else is in his eyes the preeminent illustration of what it means to be a Christ follower.

I don't know if you've ever just paid attention to that line at the end. And Jesus says wherever the gospel is proclaimed, people will talk about this. Whenever people talk about the gospel, this is the story that will show.

[5 : 53] If you want to know what it looks like to follow Jesus, this is it. Pay attention. This is it. If you remember through the gospel of Mark, maybe from your own reading or when we preached through it last year, Jesus is with these disciples through the whole story.

And they pretty much are always getting everything wrong. You know, the gospel stories are not really great accounts of the disciples' performance.

And specifically in Mark, I would say they get the worst showing in Mark of the four. They probably look the worst in Mark. Now, if you go on to read in Acts, you'll see that, you know, they kind of turn things around.

They go on to leave a really great legacy. But you don't really see that until you get to Acts. In Mark, they're kind of a disaster. The best disciple in the gospels is hands down this woman Mary.

Because everywhere she shows up, she's always at the feet of Jesus. And she's worshiping. And that is really her legacy to the church. She demonstrates that following Jesus is about worship.

[7 : 01] And, you know, I'm sure that doesn't sound terribly profound. Maybe you say, like, well, of course it is. But not so fast. I don't know that this is as obvious as maybe we might think it is.

If we ask Christians, if we ask you, if somebody asks you to demonstrate that you're a follower of Jesus, how many of us would point to the way that we worship?

Now, to be fair, there are many things involved when it comes to being a Christ follower. So, it involves obedience. You have to obey the commands of Jesus. It involves what you believe.

So, to be a Christian, you've got to have some new beliefs. It involves subscribing to a different kind of ethic in how you live your life. But the obedience, the beliefs, the ethics, none of those things are the main thing.

They're all in support of the main thing. The main thing is worshiping Jesus, adoring him, being captivated by him, being overwhelmed with him.

[8 : 02] And not just being overwhelmed, but then expressing it. That's worship. I mean, the book of Revelation says that's how, that's what we're going to be doing forever.

Like, everlasting life is going to be worship. And it's going to be more than just singing songs, which are great. But, like, it's way more than just singing. It's more like you're going to spend everlasting life having your hair blown back by how great God is.

That's the future. And it's really well captivated. If you've read the Chronicles of Narnia, I tell you, the end of the last book makes, every time I've read it, it makes me emotional.

This imaginative telling of what it'll be like to step into everlasting life. And if you've read it, you remember, they're all running into the mountains of the new Narnia. And they keep saying, farther up and farther in.

Because the more they run into the mountains, the bigger they get. Which is, which is, can't happen, right? But it does happen. And that's the idea, is that you're going to spend everlasting life with God.

[9 : 03] And instead of familiarity breeding contempt, every day God will not seem less amazing, but more amazing. Just progressive, just more and more and more of a rush and a love and a joy.

And that's the future that's been purchased for you. That's worship. And that's what Mary is doing in these stories is she's expressing that kind of a thing. And now her sister Martha, poor Martha, she does not get a good, she's not very, you know, I'm sure Martha had some great traits.

Unfortunately, we don't know about a lot of them. The stories in scripture are not great. Martha comes across as, well, she's very pragmatic. You know, she's the one who's, and I really connect with Martha, man, because I'm that kind of guy.

I'm like, you know, get things done. Martha's a get things done kind of person. And in Luke 10, you got this famous story of Mary and Martha, and they're hosting this meal. And so they're hostesses.

That means there are expectations that they're supposed to be caring for their guests. And they're supposed to be doing this together. Well, Martha is doing all the work, and Mary is just listening to Jesus. And Martha is, you know, she's a little petty.

[10 : 14] And she goes to Jesus, and she complains. And she's like, don't you see what's happening here? You know, Mary is just sitting on her rear end. And what does Jesus say? He says, she's chosen the better portion, and it won't be taken.

Which means that when you are worshiping Jesus, you are always doing the right thing. Even when there's other things that maybe you should be doing. If you're worshiping Jesus, it's always the right thing.

Always. No one in scripture is ever rebuked for worshiping. It's the best thing that you'll ever do with your life. Which means if you were singing those songs just now, and you're actually singing them from the heart.

When you're singing praise, praise, praise, if you were really praising, that means there's nothing that you'll do today that will be more important than that. Like, you're fulfilling your ultimate purpose. It's what you're meant to do.

You're meant to just be delighted in the Lord all the time. Now, that doesn't mean worship is the only thing you're ever meant to do with your life. But it does mean it's the best thing that you can do with your life.

[11 : 14] And that always sounds good until you're like in Martha's shoes and someone else is worshipping and not doing the thing that you want them to be doing. Was Mary being irresponsible in Luke 10 for letting Martha do the work?

No. And so I'm not glorifying laziness. Because you could twist this and say, God is never glorified in our laziness. Okay? So worship just to get out of work, that's not what we're talking about.

And there's probably some situations where maybe, you know, if Jesus wasn't there and Martha's just sitting on the couch eating bonbons, it'd be like, well, Martha, you have a work ethic issue. That's not what we're talking about.

Even the comment about the poor in this passage drives this home. Some people read this and say, oh, maybe Jesus doesn't care about the poor. No, that's not at all what he's saying. In fact, all of the Gospels highlight how much Jesus does care about the poor.

It's to illustrate the point that even caring for the poor is not more important than worshipping Jesus. And following Jesus can very quickly become about things other than worship.

[12 : 19] Like if you're sitting back there on the media team sitting at the desk with a computer, following Jesus can be about that. Or if you're in the band and you're up here singing, it can be about that. It can become about that.

Or if you're somebody like me and you get to preach and teach, it can become about this. It can become about the things that we get to do and we exercise our gifts. It can become about all kinds of things. It can just be about coming to church, but not in the right way.

Sinclair Ferguson, who's a preacher, I read this on Twitter last week. He says there's a difference between going to church for the worship and going to worship. Like you can come for the show without enjoying the one for whom the show is about.

You can actually like the sermon I'm preaching without worshipping the one the sermon is about. You can like serving the bride more than you love the bridegroom.

Like worship is the main thing. And if it's ever about anything more than that, it's gone sideways.

[13 : 24] But when you do worship, when you're really doing it, man, what an experience. Look what happens in this story. Mary takes this ointment and she puts it on Jesus. Okay? And by the way, it functions like this.

It would have been a normal thing, actually. If you came to a party like this, there's some people who say it may have been the custom, in fact, for the host or the hostess to stand at the door with a little bit of ointment like this or perfume and dab your temples.

And the reason that they would do that is that this is in first century Palestine and no one wore deodorant and they stank. And you get a bunch of people in a room without air conditioning, it's going to smell ripe.

And so it's like, well, let's get some other smells in the air. Well, Mary is not dabbing some ointment on Jesus' temples.

She's pouring it out. She pours it all out. Now, Mark says she covers his head. John says she covers his feet. And both are significant. And both express something of what I think worship is meant to look like.

[14 : 28] Every Jew knew, well, everyone there definitely knew what was going on when she poured it on his head. Like, that's from Jewish lore. When you, who are the ones in the Old Testament who have expensive things like oil poured on their head?

Prophets, priests, and kings. Mary is saying, I know who you are. It's a way of showing honor. In fact, the Christ, she's anointing the Christ is what she's doing.

And the word Christ means anointed one. The Messiah, those words literally mean anointed one. So that's what she's doing. She's saying, I know who you are. But then she anoints his feet. And, man, this is like doubly scandalous.

And a lot of you will know this already. I think it's still impossible for all of us, including me, to feel the sense of outrage that probably most people would have had.

Because the feet were so disgusted by people of that time, Jews in particular. So much so that if you had a servant who was also a Jew, they were not allowed to care for your shoes.

[15 : 33] Because it was beneath the feet and the things associated with the feet was beneath even the dignity of servants. But then Mary doesn't just wash his feet. She lets down her hair. And in every culture, when a woman lets down her hair, it kind of means something.

And in the Middle Eastern culture in particular, even still to this day, the hair is a sign, a symbol of a woman's glory and her honor and her dignity.

So you see what Mary's doing. She's taking the symbol of the best of her and putting it literally at, around, and under the feet of Jesus. So she anoints his head and exalts Jesus.

And she anoints his feet and humbles herself. It's like she's saying, I know who you are and I know who I am. And the combination of those two things, it's the combination that will render the human heart.

And I remember the first time I got to go to the Rocky Mountains to go skiing. I think I was about 20 years old. And I got off the ski lift and then I almost burst into tears. I was so unprepared for the view in front of me.

[16 : 41] Like I know mountains are big. I've seen the pictures. It's different when you're there. Like you really have a sense of how big they are and then how small you are.

And it's those two things together that it's just powerful, isn't it? And I think that's what worship is always supposed to do. It's those two potent experiences. When I first started coming to One Harbor 15 years ago, the church was a few months old.

And I've been a Christian my whole life, but I would get in the car and I would look at my wife, Kimberly, and I would say, I've never heard, I've just never heard the gospel talked about like this.

I never heard grace preached like this. And it would do these two things to me. And I would tell her, I remember saying, like, it's like I would leave each week feeling like, first of all, I had been pierced.

Like my sin is worse than I want to think it is. Like, no, I sin, but I want to minimize it. Or think it's like not as bad as some people's. But I would leave every week overwhelmed with the weight of my sin and the conviction about my pride and selfishness and pettiness and, you know, on and on and on.

[17 : 50] So I would feel that. But then at the same time, I would also have this overwhelming sense that God's love and grace for me is more extravagant than I'd imagined.

And it was these two things in tandem that would leave me like on the verge of tears. It's like because I would leave each week and I would feel like, man, I feel like I saw something of who he really is.

And I see myself for who I really am. And those two things together, when you express whatever it is you're feeling, that's going to be worship. And that's what is happening here with Mary.

Mary, she's doing what I think should happen every time somebody is worshiping Jesus. You know, shortly after this, the disciples are going to have to be taught to worship.

Sorry, they're going to have to be taught to wash each other's feet. Mary didn't have to be taught. You ever think about that? Mary, it just was a gut instinct, a reflex.

[18 : 50] And it was socially awkward. People did not respond well. And I think if we're honest with one another, it says everyone there was scolding her. So unless you're like super saintly, you probably would have done that too.

I know I would have. And we would have read a lot of bad motives into this. You know what I would have been like? You know what I would have been thinking? I would have been thinking things like, man, what a kiss up.

Mary has always got to be the center of attention. You know, like, my gosh, here we go. Mary is doing the thing again. You know, or maybe you would have thought, wow, what a show off.

You know, someone wants to prove how wealthy they are. She's apparently so wealthy she can just dump all this expensive stuff out. And it was done so publicly. Could have done that in private, Mary. Or like, wow, what a terrible hostess.

Aren't you thinking about your guests? You just made this terribly awkward for everybody else in the room. It's so easy to read bad motives into what other people do. Isn't it? But Jesus doesn't say any of those things.

[19 : 55] He says, this is it. This is what I'm looking for. And so I think there's a warning here. We ought to be very slow to criticize how other people worship.

And it's terribly easy to do. And I've done it. And I've heard so many people in our church do it. One of the more common ways I've heard this kind of thing done is I'll hear someone say something like, they loved it at One Harbor.

They don't have to dress up to come to church. Hey, that's great. It's, you know, feel free to enjoy that. You know, in the summer our preachers are in flip-flops. And a lot of people really love that kind of thing. There's nothing wrong with that.

But then what can follow, not, you know, what can follow that kind of a comment is a comment about churches where people do dress up. I've heard people say this kind of thing.

Oh, yeah, you know, it's not like the church I used to go to where everybody had to wear a suit and a tie. And, or the women got all dressed up to the nines. And it's just a social club thing. And they're doing it to impress one another. Man, the Bible says you barely understand your own heart.

[20 : 56] You should never be too quick to think you know what's going on in someone else's. And if someone else is wearing a suit and a tie or a fancy dress because they want to bring their very best to Jesus, do you want to be the one to discredit that?

If the Lord smiles on it, do you want to be the one criticizing? I used to be in a church growing up where there were people who worshipped in ways that I did not like to worship.

We had a group of people that would, it was like a flag ministry, and they would run around waving these flags. And I, you know, I used to really make fun of that kind of thing. And I regret it.

Because if any of those people are running around doing what looks silly to me with all of their might to honor the Lord, I know the Lord smiles at that, and I don't want to be the one tearing it down.

It's in the Bible, guys. King David brings the ark of God into Jerusalem, and he's dancing like a maniac. His wife is in the window, and she's filled with contempt. You want to be the person worshipping your heart out, not the one criticizing those who do.

[22 : 05] You've got to watch out for that. There's a warning here in that. Worship is everything, but you also, you can make a show of it. You can fake it.

And here's how to know if you're faking it. Genuine worship is marked by sacrifice and commitment. Genuine worship will always, and not even just in the religious sense, all worship, genuine worship will be marked by sacrifice and commitment.

If it's not sacrificial, and if you're not totally committed, it's not really worship. That's fundamentally what makes worship. And this story is, again, it's like the premier example of this.

We know that this perfume that got poured out was expensive. Mark tells us that. The disciples say it's worth 300 denarii, while the average worker in that day made one denarius a day.

That means that this was worth almost a year's wages for the average person. I just want you to think about that. That means that, like, Martha and Mary, this is probably the most expensive item that they own.

[23 : 13] We don't know that for a fact. But unless they were extraordinarily wealthy, it was most certainly the most expensive item that they own. Now, how many things do you own that are worth a year of your compensation?

You might have a few, but you probably don't have a lot. And if you did, how quickly would you part with them? How quickly would you part with them in this kind of a way? And so this is part of, you know, everyone's feeling the impropriety of this.

And that's why they're scolding her. And that doesn't mean, like, tsk, tsk. It's the word for animals bellowing. The room is shouting this poor lady down. They are angry.

But, again, it's easy to sort of, you know, hindsight's 20-20. It's easy to be critical of them. You've got to put yourself in their shoes. Put yourself in Martha's shoes. And we don't think, you know, it is the grace of the New Testament writers that we actually don't know what Martha was really said in this moment.

Maybe they did protect some of her dignity. But, like, we don't know that, like, there's, what if Mary didn't even tell Martha she's going to do this? Doesn't we, doesn't seem like there's even any conversation here. You know, you watch someone take something that is worth, like, more money than you make in a year or as much, and they just dump it out without even consulting you.

[24 : 28] I'm telling you, I would have been scolding her, and I would have spiritualized it. This is what I would have done. I would have spiritualized it. I would have said, Mary, where's your sense of proportion? Don't you know the Lord sees your heart?

He sees your heart. You don't have to be so extreme. He doesn't, like, need all your stuff. He doesn't need your money. He just, you know, I would have taken that kind of tone. And then I probably would have, like, criticized her for being so impulsive.

Because it does seem like she's pretty impulsive. We have this great detail in Mark's story. And Mark is the only one that tells us this, that she shatters the flask. Like, no one's talking me out of this.

I'm going all in. And if you did want to talk her out of it, you could just appreciate it. In that moment, you're like, oh, well, she's not coming back from this now. It's commitment. She's all in. And these are the signs of genuine worship.

And Jesus doesn't, he doesn't correct her. He doesn't rebuke her. He doesn't say the things we would say. He doesn't say, Mary, I see your heart. That wasn't necessary. No, he says, people will always remember this moment.

[25 : 32] He celebrates it. This is what I'm talking about. It's lavish. It's extraordinary. It's heartfelt. It's sacrificial. And it's costly. And it's fully committed.

She holds nothing back. And the thing is, Jesus does not merely desire this or kind of like it when some people do it. But he demands this kind of response.

He demands it. Tim Keller says you can't sample Jesus. Now, you can sample some other stuff. You can sample the church. You can sample the singing. You can sample Sunday school.

But you can't sample Jesus, which is to say that you can't know him unless you're fully committed to him. You can know things about him. But you can't know him.

The way that Jesus talks to his disciples, he basically says things like, if there's anything that you don't want to give him, if there's anything that you would hold back from him, that means you can't come.

[26 : 34] Everyone can come, but only those who are willing to bring everything with them. All your eggs have to be in his basket. You can't come with any kind of conditions, even little ones.

And the minute we start talking about this, it can feel like, oh, man, well, who can, who does that? You may even be feeling like, gosh, Brian, I've been following Jesus a long time.

I struggle to give Jesus access to my whole life every day. What are we saying? Like nobody can know Jesus until they're perfect at these things? Nope. We're not saying that. But we've got to be careful here.

Got to be really careful because I think we get this wrong a lot. Your record of commitment is not as important as your intentions of commitment each and every day.

Here's what I mean by that. You don't have to be perfect every day, but you do have to want to be. I get nervous when I hear people say things like, oh, you don't got to be perfect.

[27 : 33] There's a sense in which that's true. But I fear that the tone in which that's offered sometimes suggests, and it doesn't really matter if you try. No, Jesus never actually says the words, you don't have to be perfect.

He seems to say the opposite. In the Sermon on the Mount, he says, be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect. And then when you aren't, the answer is, the scripture doesn't say it's okay, no biggie.

No, scripture says, wow, it's a serious deal. But you can be forgiven and you can only be forgiven because of the broken body and the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

You're not living up to your commitments is such a big deal. He had to die for it, but he did. And so you can be made clean all over again. That's a lot different than saying, don't worry about it.

You're just a human, no big deal. Very different. Jesus assumes that you are going to want to be like him. You don't have to maintain a totally perfect record, but you have to commit yourself totally every day.

[28 : 39] So here's a way of thinking about this. Imagine you're at a wedding and the bride and the groom are getting ready to say their vows, which are some of the most extraordinary words a human being will ever say.

I mean, you will never else in your life ever to anyone else say things like you will say at a wedding. You promise to give everything. And no matter what they do, you're going to keep giving everything for the rest of your life, no matter what.

I mean, it's just mind-blowing what people say at a wedding, in these vows. Now, imagine it comes time for the vows, and they begin making their vows, but the couple begins to say things like this.

You know, I don't want to get carried away here. I promise to love you mainly, but there will be days. There will be days where I'm going to wonder what life would have been like if I had married somebody else.

And that's okay, because I'm not perfect. And I am going to serve you a solid 90% of the time, but 10% of the time, I'm going to be selfish. We both know it. Let's not pretend otherwise.

[29 : 39] You know, if those were the kind of vows that people were making, you would rightly feel like we're not off to a good start. Think about when you're at a wedding, the vows are made totally, even though we know no one's going to live up to them.

You know that. But because you made them, that's why if you're in a healthy marriage, when you blow it, you repent because you say, I promise not to do this. I actually told you I wasn't going to be selfish, and I was.

Forgive me. Not it's okay. It's no big deal. Forgive me. And that's what Jesus is looking for. This kind of total commitment. He talks about it.

Look at the language he uses to describe it elsewhere. In Matthew 13, he says, The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy, he thinks to himself, maybe one day I'll get back there and do something about it.

No. In his joy, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Next verse. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it to Jesus.

[30 : 48] What Mary is doing with Jesus in this story is she's treating him like he's actually the pearl. She's not just talking about it. She's doing it. Do you?

Like, do you treat Jesus like he's the pearl? Can we look at your life? Can anyone look at your life? And see this kind of worship.

Worship that is extravagant, sacrificial, costly, and committed. Mary was convinced, this man is the Christ. Only the best of my possessions will do. Only the best.

We sing that hymn. We're going to actually close with it today. The wonderful cross. And it's got these lines. Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small.

Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all. If all of nature were yours to give, it would still be too small.

[31 : 51] So maybe you think, gosh, man, but I don't have all of nature. I don't even have a perfume that's, like, worth a year. I don't have that to give. Well, here's where the love of Christ. Well, it's both comforting and excruciating.

It's both. Because Christ does not compare you against anyone else. Which in one sense is a comfort. But in another sense it's not, because it means that no one's off the hook.

So he says that whatever you have is enough. That's right. It doesn't matter what someone else has. Whatever you have is enough. Ah, that's wonderful. But it also means whatever you have is required. So if you are a prince or a pauper, Jesus looks at you with blazing love in his eyes and he says, all of it is mine.

And he demands all of it. The story of the widow's mite in Mark 12. You got a woman putting in two copper coins that add up to a penny.

And Jesus doesn't, again, he doesn't stop her. He doesn't say, oh my gosh, you are so, you know, I, the Lord sees the heart. Why don't you hold on to that? You clearly could, it'd be better if you just held on to that because you clearly got a lot of needs.

[32 : 59] Now he looks at her and he says, yes! She put in more than anybody. That is worship and it's glorious. And the way that you live like that, the way that you do that, man, you have to be a worshiper if you're going to be in Christ.

But the attitude that you do it with really, really matters. It really matters because it should be a loving gift. It can never be a compulsory gesture. And only you will know your heart on this, but the Lord will know as well, obviously.

In the parable that Jesus uses, he says, the man who finds the treasure hidden in a field is filled with joy. Mary is overwhelmed with emotion. John tells us she's literally weeping. She's got tears coming out of her eyes.

Do you know why? Do you know what happened right before this meal? This is Mary, the sister of Martha, the sister of Lazarus.

This meal happened right after Jesus brought Lazarus back from the dead. Mary is so overwhelmed because of what Jesus Christ has done for her. So filled with gratitude that she's giving him her very best.

[34 : 04] Not out of the sense of resentment and, oh, I guess I got to do this thing. No, it's this, Jesus has given so much to me. How can I not? There is, there is.

So even in her giving, there's gratitude. And that's the hard part. You've got to give Jesus everything you have and be grateful while you're doing it. And the only way to do that is to be convinced of the surpassing worth of Jesus Christ.

Because you know now more than what Mary knew then. Mary only knew that her brother came back from the dead. You know that everyone's coming back from the dead. You know that resurrection is the story for everyone.

Some people think if they give God everything, well, things are going to improve right away. But what if they don't? What if you give God everything, your very best, and all you seem to get in return is a cross to bear? Can you still be joyful?

Can you still be grateful? If you're reluctant to give your best to Jesus, it only means you are not fully grasping. You're not believing all the way down, which none of us do, by the way.

[35 : 09] None of us believe the gospel all the way down. Otherwise, we wouldn't so often sin and take matters into our own hands. There's a big disconnect for all of us between what we know in our head and what we believe in our gut.

You've got to believe all the way down that what has been given to you is of so much greater worth than anything that you could ever give in return. And so that doesn't mean that the sacrifice isn't painful.

It just means the pain pales in comparison with the joy of Jesus Christ. And the most wonderful thing is that even when you feel like you've given him everything, he still gives you more. No matter what you give, Jesus Christ will always outgive you.

It will always happen, and it happens in this story. It's the most amazing detail. Look what Jesus says about Mary's anointing. He says, She has anointed my body for burial. She's anointed my body for burial.

I have always wondered what Mary thought about that line. Sorry, I did what? Mary doesn't know it's coming. Mary is clearly reacting what Jesus has just done for Lazarus.

[36 : 12] And yet Jesus acts as if she does know it's coming. Jesus has his entire body. John tells us that the whole house is filled with the smell of this stuff. His whole body is covered in this perfume.

Within a couple days, he's going to be on the cross. I don't know if you ever thought about this, but Jesus Christ, when he died on the cross, was probably still smelling very strongly like the fragrance of Mary's perfume.

And he gives her the credit for it, even though she had no idea that's what was about to happen. Do you know what he did? He multiplied the meaning of her sacrifice. He gave her dignity.

He increased the dignity of her gift beyond what even she had intended. What will he do with your sacrifice? Because maybe you think, well, no one sees what you do.

Nobody sees. You're like the widow putting in the copper coins. And you're like, man, this is all I got. And it's going to make, it's just a drop in the bucket. It means nothing. No, no, the Lord sees. And maybe you might even think, yeah, but Mary had Jesus physically there.

[37 : 13] Like, what am I going to do? Well, actually, Jesus said, hey, even when he's not physically in the room, he still acts like the good things that you do when done worshipfully, he acts like he's the main beneficiary. And then gives you the credit as if that's the case.

He says, when you clothe the naked, when you feed the hungry, when you go and visit those in prison, do you know who you're really doing it for? He said, you're doing it for me. And then gives you, again, gives you the credit as if you have just given the honor, not to the poorest of the poor, but to the Lord himself.

The resurrection, that is ultimately what happens too, isn't it? Jesus is going to actually, he's going to reward you as if your gifts to him have equaled his gifts to you.

He gave you Jesus. Whatever you give him is pennies compared to that. But he says that for eternity, you're going to share in the inheritance of Jesus. You're going to get the reward that Christ deserved, and it's credited to you.

So let's sum up here as we close and the band comes up. First, following Jesus is about worship. Are you really a worshiper? Do you have that experience of having your hair blown back by Jesus?

[38 : 26] Are you moved by him? Do you ever have the feeling of being so overwhelmed by him? And then do you have a way to express that? So first, if you're feeling like, no, you haven't experienced that ever or in a long time, a great thing to do is to ask that God would overwhelm you with who he is.

It's a great prayer to pray. God, maybe you have grown tired of the things of the Lord. Ask him to wake you up to what he's up to in your life and who he is.

And the second thing, and this is very practical, but when you pray, always start with praise. It will have a huge impact on you. The prayers of the Bible almost always start with praise. Tell him what you need, but first, start by talking to him about what he is like.

When I teach my kids to do this, I tell them, give God compliments. Tell him what he's like, and you will find that when you do the acts of worship, you begin to feel like a worshiper.

If you were here and you are not yet a Christian, I want you to know, this is what it looks like to be a Christian. It's actually not first and foremost about what you do for God and the rules that you obey and all that.

[39 : 33] It's first and foremost about being a worshiper. The invitation is to come and receive what he is offering you. Have your life totally transformed by that. And then you will not have to give him everything in return.

You will want to. You will feel, how can I not? Are you a worshiper? Secondly, does your worship demonstrate sacrificial commitment? The grace of God in your life is overpowering, overflowing, super abundant.

It is not calculated. It is not proportionate. Does your love for him ever kind of look like that? Or are you like Judas and the disciples, always making calculated, proportionate responses that always kind of make sense with the grid of your life?

I read a writer who said, you know what the problem with Judas was? He knew the price of everything and the value of nothing. I am the executive pastor at this church. I get paid to not act on impulse.

It is like my job to be the guy that's like, are we really going to do this? You know? But even for people like me, this is a good word. There should be times where we act on impulse, extravagantly, in ways that don't make sense in our worship of Jesus.

[40 : 46] Do you know the value of Christ? Does your love show it? Is there any way to see that he really is the pearl to you? And then thirdly and lastly, do you give with the expectation that he will outgive you?

Mary got Lazarus back. You are getting far more than that. You're getting the resurrection of everything. You're getting your body back and better.

You're getting your loved ones back. You're getting your dreams. There is no good thing that you want that will not be given to you a hundredfold, a thousandfold. That is the future.

You do not have to hold anything back from Jesus. It's all coming back to you. All of it. He is not a withholder. He is a giver. Do you live like that?

Like you really believe it? This is what's going to happen is that there's coming a day where we will not be anointing the Christ. God will be anointing you. He will be pouring out on your life, covering you from head to toe, blessing upon blessing upon blessing.

[41 : 46] And it's going to go on forever. You can afford to be rich toward God. He has been and he will be so rich toward each and every one of you. Amen. Amen. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the goodness of your grace toward us, your great mercy, your favor.

We thank you for the gift of Jesus Christ who modeled for us what real sacrificial giving looks like. As we come to this meal, this table, and get ready to eat of the bread and to drink the juice, would you prepare our hearts for this?

Bless this meal to our bodies. Bless it to our hearts. Bless it to our minds and our souls. In Jesus' name, amen.