

We have a Bible feast before us today.

This is one of my favorite stories in the Bible and, Rylee, that is one of my favorite songs. Thank you.

Speaking of feasts... we had a good one last Sunday. I enjoy being together with all of you.

If you go through the gospels and look for the times that Jesus had meals with people you might be surprised.

Jesus often ate with people, and when He did, special things took place.

There was the wedding at Cana where He turned water into wine. (John 2)

There was that time when He served lunch miraculously to 5,000 families and preached a sermon.

There was his meal with Zaccheus when He said, "Today, salvation has come to this house." (Luke 19)

There was his Last Supper with His disciples when he washed their feet and taught about His departure.

There was that time when He ate fish breakfast with His disciples by the sea after His resurrection. (John 21)

And then there is this special moment in the home of Lazarus after Jesus raised the man from the grave.

It is not a surprise that at this supper we are going to learn about worship.

What is true worship of our Lord Jesus the Messiah?

Though the word worship is not used in this passage, that is what we are witnessing.

For worship means sacrifice, service, giving honor, offering. And this is what Mary is doing.

And, in the Bible a person is supposed to worship only God, no one else, not even a prophet or an angel.

Even this, however, is not a problem because we are learning in John's Gospel that Jesus is God.

We have seen, even from the first chapter, that John is showing us that Jesus is God Himself come in the flesh.

John 1:1-3 Jesus is God, the Word of God, with God, the agent of creation.

John 1:14, 18 Jesus shows us God because He is God, the Son of God, of the same essence as God.

John 1:29 What is John the Baptist is saying about Jesus? We will get back to this.

Nathaniel, even after just meeting Jesus sees something unusual. **John 1:49**

In John 2 Jesus calls the Temple, "My Father's house."

In John 3 He calls Himself the Son of Man and the Son of God. Messianic titles. **John 3:34-36**

The Samaritan woman in John 4 says, "Come see a man who told me everything I ever did."

In John 5, Jesus describes Himself as equal with God.

In John 6, Jesus claims resurrection power. **John 6:40** Jesus says, "I am the bread from heaven."

In John 7 Jesus insists that He came from heaven and is going back to heaven. No mortal does that.

In John 8 Jesus says, "I am from above," and that He is older than Abraham. Crazy?

John 9:39 Jesus is the judge of all? Only God can be that. And **John 10:17-18**. Who says stuff like that?

In John 11, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. But before He does that... **John 11:25-26**

So, no wonder that when He comes over for supper, Mary worships Him.

And come over for supper is exactly what Jesus does, months after he had raised His host from the grave.

I. Jesus has supper with Martha, Lazarus, and Mary.

John 12:1-2

In Mark 14 we learn that the supper took place in the home of Simon the Leper, another whom Jesus healed.

This is probably because Simon had a big house.

Here, Lazarus and his two sisters, were entertaining Jesus for supper, a supper in His honor.

But not just Jesus. Everywhere He went His disciples came as well.

This was a house party with a houseful.

Here is Lazarus, who once was dead, having supper and a lengthy conversation with Jesus.

And Here is Martha, in her element, entertaining Jesus as hostess.

She is cooking and rushing around and loving every minute of it.

It is Jesus. What could be more special?

And then in comes Mary, and the party changes into something even more special.

II. Mary gives everything because Jesus does everything for her. John 12:3-8

Mary comes into the feast with perfume. A Roman pound was about 12 ounces. That is a lot of pure nard.

The fragrance would have filled the room.

The cost of this bottle would have been a year's wage for an average worker. Think \$80,000.

Mary enters the room, and she pours out on Jesus what had to be her most valuable treasure.

Mary's gift is extravagant love.

She is saying to Jesus simply, "You, Jesus, are worth more than money or stuff. More than anything."

Moreover, she is worshipping Jesus with her whole body, posture, hair. **John 12:3**

When do you get to spend your money, time, energy on service to Jesus?

This is one of the reasons that we serve Him in His church, among His body, as part of His family.

When you love other Christians, you love Jesus.

When you give, you are saying, "Jesus, I love You more than money."

When you show up to serve you might be saying, "Jesus, I love you more than watching the World Series."

Or, "I love you more than hunting" or "more than watching the news." Whatever it might be.

And on Sunday, when you sing, are you telling Jesus that you love Him? That is what it's all for.

But you cannot just be here, you have to think it as you sing and listen.

Mary's gift is personal humble service.

Mary doesn't care who is watching. She doesn't care what people think. She is thinking only about Jesus.

She wants to bless Jesus. She wants to please Jesus. She wants to honor Jesus.

She's not showing off. She is actually doing something that many would consider embarrassing.

Wiping His feet with her hair? You might have thought she could have brought a towel.

She is on the floor in front of Jesus. There is no pride here. She loves Him and is trying to show it.

In the Bible the words for worship and service are overlapping. Often they mean the same thing.

It is because with Jesus they often are the same thing. When we serve, we worship Him.

And when we put all of ourselves into serving Him, we worship Him the right way. **Romans 12:1**

Mary's gift is a rebuke to fake religion.

So in verse 4 we learn that Judas is looking on and the scene is bothering Him.

There is a warning in this for me. I recall years ago in New Orleans. We went to a church on Sunday.

And people were going nuts. And I was thinking, "Do you really have to do all that?"

I've been influenced by many Lutherans and Norwegians. We don't jump about when we worship.

I mean if our hands get above our shoulders it is a major movement of the Spirit of God.

And if we shout an "Amen!" we might be headed to the cardiologist.

So, there I was, and the Spirit of God said, "John! They love Jesus. You got a problem with that?"

And I said, "Nope." And I shaped up in my heart and raised one hand.

Fake religion looks at others and says, "You are not doing it right."

Fake religion thinks, "I've got a better and more godly way to do that, to use that."

Fake religion covers sins of the heart, pride, and self-righteousness with a veneer of "I know better than you."

Fake religion lies to oneself and believes the lies. **John 12:4-6** He wasn't going to do that.

Her devotion made Judas feel uncomfortable.

Mary's gift is preparation for the death and burial of Jesus the Messiah.

Mary didn't know this. But Jesus did. **John 12:7-8**

Sometimes when we love Jesus sacrificially with all our heart we do more than we know.

She felt this love for Jesus even before she knew all of what He would do for her.

Ultimately, for all of us, we love Jesus because He first loved us... and died for us. So, we love Him.

This was her opportunity to love Jesus with her perfume, this moment and then His burial.

In some way she recognized that this is what God gave her this expensive perfume for, for this moment.

What has God given you? When is your moment to use it for Him? Don't miss that moment.

III. Others do not understand.

John 12:9-11

They often will not. Don't let that bother you. Worship Jesus. Serve your Lord. Sing your song. Out loud.

For some, your love for Jesus and desire to give Him all will cause them to think and then believe.

To see someone with an all-consuming passion for the Lord Jesus who loves them... it is compelling.

They will think, if Jesus is worth all that to you, maybe there's something about Him.

But, for others, they will be repelled by your love for the Lord. They won't understand.

And such devotion will cause them to feel uncomfortable, even guilty. After all He is their creator too.

But don't let that stop you from Loving your Lord. Mary is not now regretting her use of that perfume.