

Jesus Memorializes Only One Person— Ever!

Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-12

I. THE SETTING.

- A. **John 12:1** Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany...
- B. Jesus predicts His death. **Matthew 26:2**... and the Son of Man is [to be] delivered up for crucifixion.
- C. The Sanhedrin plot His Death [Matt. 26:3ff].
- D. Judas insures His death through deceit [Matt. 26:14ff].
- E. "Simon the Leper" is not Simon Peter or Simon Bar-Jonah or Simon the Zealot or Simon Niger or Simon the Black or Simon the Tanner or is he "Simon the Pharisee" of Luke 7:36ff.

II. THE GENEROUS GIVING OF THE GODLY GUEST— SPLENDID SELF-FORGETFULNESS

- A. **Matthew 26:7a** a woman came to Him with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume,
 - 1. The woman is unidentified in Matthew and Mark but then is revealed in John 12:3 as Mary.
 - 2. The alabaster (Egypt) cruse was carved out of translucent, usually whitish, fine-grained variety of gypsum stone used for expensive aromatic oils about 12 Troy ounces in this case (Spikenard).
 - 3. This was probably not a leftover from her brother Lazarus' funeral but bought especially for the anointing of the body of Jesus. Jesus is not getting her leftovers; This is her very best.
- B. **Matthew 26:7b** and she poured it upon His head as He reclined [at the table.] **John 12:3** ... and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. (NASB)
 - 1. She broke the seal and the essence filled the room. **Mark 14:3**... [and] she broke the vial and poured it over His head. (NASB)
 - 2. Philip Keller writes, "The delicious fragrance ran down over His shining hair and thick beard. It enfolded His body with its delightful aroma. Even His tunic and flowing undergarments were drenched with its enduring pungency. Wherever he moved during the ensuing 48 hours, the perfume would go with Him: into the Passover, into the Garden of Gethsemane, into the high priest's home, into Herod's hall, into Pilate's praetorium, into the crude hands of those who cast lots for His clothing at the foot of the cross. This special right of perfuming the head and body was a rare ritual reserved only for royalty. Jesus recognized this and so did those around Him. It was a significant moment of momentous meaning."
 - 3. The fourth squeezing of the olive [cheapest] was used to clean the hair and water for the feet.
 - 4. She used the costliest for His entire body. And she wiped them with her hair to show that no service was too demeaning. "The proper place for a disciple's head is at the feet of Jesus."

III. THE GRACELESS GRUMBLING AT THE GOODNESS OF HER GIFT.

- A. **Matthew 26:8** But the disciples were indignant when they saw [this,] and said, "Why this waste?"
 - 1. Actually they more than saw it, they smelled it also. John 12:3... and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. (NASB)
 - 2. Judas instigated the indignant remarks about the waste. **John 12:4-5** 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 (\$51.00), and given to poor [people]?" (NASB) [Grown in the Himalayas]

3. The other disciples took his lead, however their rebuke was from the vantage point of waste, not greed as was Judas'. **John 12:6** 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.
4. The ointment was worth, as Judas quickly calculated, 300 denarii, about a solid years wages.
5. The condemnation was not only for Mary, but for Jesus as well.
6. It is so strange that Judas rebukes Mary for the waste of 300 denarii and turns right around and accepts half that [120 denarii] 30 pieces of silver to betray Jesus.
7. How quick we are sometimes to criticize the extravagance of someone else, while we perpetrate the same behavior in another way.

IV. HIS GALLANT GRATITUDE FOR HER GLADDENED GRACIOUSNESS.

- A. **Matthew 26:9-10** "For this [perfume] might have been sold for a high price and [the money] given to the poor." 10 But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you bother the woman? For she has done a good deed to Me. (NASB)
 1. It was useful service to the poor. 2 Cor. 8:9
 2. It was unselfish. Lavishness is the proper expression of devotion and gratitude. Eph. 1:7-8
 3. It was devotion to Christ.
 4. It was the intelligent expression of faith that planned.
 5. The decision was rightly hers alone. Acts 5:4
- B. **Matthew 26:11** "For the poor you have with you always; but you do not always have Me.(NASB)
 1. Every duty has its place and time.
 2. The poor shall remain until the end of time, some from circumstance and some willfully.

V. THE GLORY OF A GENUINE GRASP OF THE GIST OF THE GOSPEL.

- A. **Matthew 26:12** "For when she poured this perfume upon My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial. (NASB)
 1. Jesus reads her mind. Mary not only has keen insight but wonderful foresight.
- B. **Matthew 26:13** "Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done shall also be spoken of in memory of her." (NASB)
 1. Mary is the model of faith that comes from hearing the words of Christ.
 - a. Her faith understood. She fellowshipped in the sufferings of her Lord. Phil. 3:10
 - b. Here faith is a model of great initiative despite weakness to avert the eminent tragedy.
 - c. Her faith was bold. She had no guarantee of acceptance from the Lord, but she gained it.
 - d. Her faith was uncalculating and yet she is memorialized for all time.
 - e. Her faith was creative. She had the freedom to worship Jesus in utter devotion.
 2. G. Campbell Morgan writes, "That is the only time Christ ever suggested the raising of a memorial to any one, and the memorial He suggested was not a memorial of marble or of gold, not of a temple upon which old time will act until it crumbles its magnificence to dust. It was a memorial of a fragrance; and earth is sweeter, and heaven richer, for Mary's love and Christ's acceptance of it."