

## “MY LOVE IS MEASURELESS”

“My love for you knows no bounds. Just as My thoughts toward you are precious and *“more than all the grains of sand”* (Psalm 139:18, NCV), My love for you cannot be comprehended or contained. It is measureless. There is nothing that I would withhold from you (Romans 8:32); there is nothing that I would not sacrifice to have your heart. No cost is too great. I would do *anything* for you. In fact, I have... My love will abundantly exceed your thoughts and imaginations, your hopes and dreams (Ephesians 3:20).”

At his feet, Mary of Bethany sought to know the love of Christ and to be filled with all His fullness (Ephesians 3:19), but the offering of her life and most valued treasures resulted in misunderstanding and judgment from others. Loving Jesus without limits came at a cost; a cost some were unwilling to pay. Mary had come to understand that Christ’s love and His power were without limits; the love she poured out in return reflected it. To her, Jesus was worth everything.

Do you believe that loving Jesus is worth any cost? \_\_\_\_\_  
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### Limited

The fragrance filled the house as Mary of Bethany broke the marble-like flask. To the disciple’s astonishment, she lavishly poured the oil it contained on Jesus’ head. As she looked into His eyes, she fell at His feet in humility and reverence. In an act of worship, she began to wipe His feet with her hair.

Read the account in Mark 14:3-9 and John 12:1-8.

What was the value of Mary’s offering? How might Mary’s extravagance have consequently affected her life? \_\_\_\_\_  
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Would you be willing to offer such a gift? Do her actions reveal any personal limitations in your relationship with Christ? \_\_\_\_\_  
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### Devoted

Mary of Bethany appears only three times in the Gospels. Although each encounter with Jesus is different, one thing is the same: Mary at His feet.

Read Luke 10:38-42.

Considering the culture, what was unusual about Mary’s actions? \_\_\_\_\_  
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What was Martha’s concern? What words are used to describe her? \_\_\_\_\_  
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Jesus does not condemn Martha's service but corrects her perspective. Of what did she accuse Christ and her sister? What advice did she offer Him? \_\_\_\_\_

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Why should sitting at Christ's feet precede service? What occurs when these things are reversed?

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Why was Christ unwilling to grant Martha's request? (v.42) \_\_\_\_\_

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Although Mary was criticized for her choice, she seemed to believe that the cost was worth the reward. What was the cost? What was the reward? \_\_\_\_\_

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Mary was found attentively listening to Jesus while Martha was distracted with meeting other's needs. Although both women sat at Jesus' feet (v.39) and both served Him, Mary set time aside for that which was better, or *good* (*agathen*: "beneficial, profitable, useful"). Mary was indeed determined to seek Christ's heart, to understand His teachings, and to know His promises. She did this by giving Him her full attention *before* succumbing to the demands of service.

How does Matthew 6:25, 31-33, apply? \_\_\_\_\_

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### Believe

The second time Mary is mentioned is in John 11:1-37. After sending word to Jesus about her brother's illness, Mary expected that He would immediately come to Lazarus' aid. But while she and her sister waited, Lazarus died.

What did the messenger report to the sisters? (v.4) \_\_\_\_\_

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What thoughts and emotions might His statement have evoked in Martha and Mary upon Lazarus' death? \_\_\_\_\_

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Why do you think the author felt the need to communicate Christ's affections for Lazarus, Martha, and Mary? (vv.3, 5) \_\_\_\_\_

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When Mary learned that the Teacher was calling for her, how did she respond? (vv.29, 32). \_\_\_\_\_

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What did Mary conclude about Christ's lack of action? His will and purposes? (v.32; Also consider vv. 21, 37.) \_\_\_\_\_

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Contrast Jesus' response to Martha's and Mary's statements. How does this speak of His individual care? \_\_\_\_\_  
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What limitations had Martha *and* Mary *and* the people placed on His abilities? \_\_\_\_\_  
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Are your expectations of God's abilities based on what you can imagine, or upon what He says He will do? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_  
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Why is it difficult to believe that Christ can, or will achieve the impossible in your own life? (Consider what knowledge Mary was privy to, if she was not physically present, in Luke 7:11-17 and 8:49-55.) \_\_\_\_\_  
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Christ knew the outcome of Mary's trial (v.4), and yet He wept. Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
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Continue reading in John 11, verses 38-44.

Martha and Mary sought Christ to heal their brother, but He intended to accomplish far more than they could imagine. Review verses 4, 15, 25-26, 40, 42. What was Christ's greater purpose? \_\_\_\_\_  
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Read Jeremiah 32:27 and Matthew 19:26.

Mary and the disciples knew Jesus as Teacher and Healer; He needed them to *believe* that He was the limitless, all-powerful Son of God, unconstrained by human reason and unbound by natural means.

### Surrender

Mary must have carefully considered how she could give back to the One who *had given* and *would give* so much. Her extravagant gesture was not merely an act of service, but an outpouring of what was in her heart.

Return to John 12:1-8.

Mary unbound her hair without stopping to consider the implications. For the second time she was met with harsh criticism while she sat at His feet. What freed Mary to express her love for Jesus in this way?<sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
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Judas was first to offer his opinion about the oil Mary had just "wasted" on Jesus. With what was he concerned?<sup>2</sup> (v.6) \_\_\_\_\_  
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<sup>1</sup> Think on Mark 10:28-31.

<sup>2</sup> Review Matthew 16:25.

Judas and the disciples had heard the same teachings and witnessed the same miracles as Mary. Why then, do you believe they criticized her? What did Mary understand about Christ that the others did not? \_\_\_\_\_

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Continue reading in Mark 14, verses 10-11. What do you believe caused Judas to immediately set out to offer up Jesus to the chief priests? \_\_\_\_\_

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Based on Judas' words and actions, what was Jesus' worth to Judas? \_\_\_\_\_

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In John 17:12, Judas is called "*the son of perdition*". Ironically, it means "son of waste". While he accused Mary of such, Judas assessed what cost he was willing to incur to follow Jesus. Apparently, he concluded that Jesus was a waste of his time.

According to verse 7 of John 12, how would Christ display His immeasurable love for Mary, and all people? \_\_\_\_\_

How was Mary honored for "doing what she could" (Mark 14:8)—giving her most valued earthly treasure to the One who would soon make an invaluable sacrifice for her? (Mark 14:9) \_\_\_\_\_

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Jesus was worth everything to Mary. There was no cost too great, nothing she was unwilling to sacrifice. At His feet, she surrendered her glory (1 Corinthians 11:15), knowing that soon He would do the same in an act of measureless love.

Luke 6:38 says, "*Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you*" (NIV).

In closing, read Ephesians 3:14-21.