

"My Love is Measureless"

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.

Mary must have carefully considered how she could give back to the One that *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.

Oftentimes our offerings to the Lord are set by limits that we ourselves have made. What you may not realize is that the giving of your life: your time, your money—*the giving of your heart*, is in direct correlation with who you understand Him to be. If you believe that God is without limitations, that He desires to lavish you with love and give you good gifts, the love you offer in return will reflect it.

Read Romans 8:32. What does it say God will withhold from you? Write the verse in the space provided.

Mary's love for the Lord gave her insights that the others missed. By this one act, what do you believe Mary understood about Christ that the others did not?

Wholehearted Devotion

Mary of Bethany appears only three times in the Gospel. Although each encounter with Jesus is different, one thing is the same: Mary at His feet. Each time she knelt before Him, a different facet of her devotion was shown. What do you believe kneeling at the Lord's feet represents?

Read Luke 10:38-42. Record Mary's actions as listed in verse 39.

Mary was found attentively listening to Jesus as her sister went busily about her business. She was indeed determined to seek His heart, to understand His teachings, and to know His promises. She did this by giving Him her full attention.

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You can spend time with the Lord and neither hear, nor believe the words He has spoken to you. Is there something in your heart that is keeping you from accepting His Word?

Read Job 15:11-13.

Confidence

The second time we see Mary is in John 11:28-32. Her brother Lazarus had been dead for four days. When Jesus asked for her, how did she react? (vv. 29, 32).

Mary knew that Christ could have saved her sick and dying brother because He had healed so many. But, would she believe His word? (John 11:4). Would she believe that He was able to accomplish the impossible?

Do you evaluate God by what you expect, or by what He says He will do?

Read Proverbs 3:5-6.

John 11:40 says, *“Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?”*

Humility

Mary now understood that Christ was who He claimed to be. He was not only Teacher and Healer, but the infinite and measureless Son of God. Because of this knowledge, we see Mary unafraid to express her love in ways others would misunderstand.

In John 12 we read that Judas was quick to offer his opinion about the oil she had just “wasted”. Paraphrased, Judas said, “If you would have given the proceeds away instead of wasting it on Him—someone in need could have actually benefited!”

Mary had *“done what she could”* (Mark 14:8), while the others sat back and missed the opportunity to worship Jesus while they were still able.

Read Mark 14:10-11. What do you believe caused Judas to immediately set out to offer up Jesus to the chief priests? What does this reveal about who he believed Jesus to be?

Judas had seen and heard all that Mary had. But somewhere along the line he began to measure what Jesus was worth. He pretended to have a relationship with Jesus, but his heart was far away. Read Luke 6:45.

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In John 17:12, Judas is called *“the son of perdition”*. Literally, it means “son of waste”. How had Judas wasted his opportunities—and his life?

Mary showed her respect, submission, adoration, and worship in every aspect of her life. She also recognized her helplessness, hopelessness, weakness, and inability without her Savior. She had surrendered her glory (1 Corinthians 11:15) and laid her best at His feet; assuming the lowliest place.

When was the last time you bowed before Him?

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.

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