
Jn 12:1-3 Extravagant Perfume Pourers (LCCM—8/22/21)

Introduction

People deeply in love, often express their love in extravagant ways.

- When seen by others, it certainly looks wasteful.
 - I remember this young man, who bought 100 roses for his girlfriend, and I thought, what a waste.
 - Of course, to me it was wasteful, because I didn't love her.
- But to the young man who spent something like \$200 for these roses, he said, "Of course it was worth it, just to see her face lit up, was worth every penny."
 - The young man taught me about love that day—sometimes you got to be extravagant, because she is worth it.

For Mary

For Mary, Jesus was worth her extravagant gift.

- To recap the story—Mary's brother, Lazarus, fell gravely sick. So, Mary and her sister, Martha, immediately sent word to Jesus, through Someone. After they sent the word out to Jesus, their brother seemed to have died very soon after. As for Jesus, He arrived three days later, when Lazarus was already buried. There was nothing more a person could do. He was dead.
- But to their shock and dismay, Jesus tells them about the dead being resurrected, which they believed it will happen at the last day. But what Jesus meant was that their dead brother, Lazarus, would be raised up right there and then. So, Jesus went to his tomb, and said, "Lazarus, come out!" And their brother came out, still wrapped in cloth all over him. His eyes were draped with cloth, so I am not sure how he was able to walk straight, but he did walk out like a mummy.
 - How do you believe something like that? You see it with your eyes, but you know this is just not possible. Dead people don't just rise, because you called out their name. But here he was, their own brother, whom they buried three days ago, came out exactly the way they laid him on that tomb. No person can do this. Only God can. And the Jesus they loved, must therefore be God, standing with them.
- So, imagine the excitement running through the house, because Jesus, their God, who raised their dead brother, had now come to their home, to eat supper.
 - **Jn 12:2**—"Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with Him."
 - What an honor, what a privilege, to have the Lord of lords in your house.
 - It goes without saying, Mary and Martha wanted to serve their best dish, for their honored Guest.

- But, cooking a delicious meal for Jesus was just not enough for Mary.
 - She needed to do more; she wanted to do more.

So, to express her great love for Jesus, she brought out her special perfume, and poured it out at His feet.

1. Normally, a perfume is lightly touched behind one's ear, not at the feet.
 2. Also, a perfume is never poured out so lavishly, it is usually slightly sprinkled.
 3. Moreover, after an anointing, it is never wiped away.
- But with Mary, all conventional wisdom went out the window.
 1. She did not sprinkle the perfume, but poured it.
 2. Instead of pouring at Jesus' head, she did so at His feet.
 3. Then, she wiped them off with her long hair.
 - Why such unconventional extravagance by Mary?
 - Because Mary simply loved Jesus so much, that she could do no other.
 - Like the young man, Mary would have said, "Of course, Jesus is worth every last cent I have, and if I had more, I would gladly give more."
 - **Extravagance**—is the word.
 - Wives—imagine, your husband loving you this extravagantly; wouldn't that be heaven on earth?
 - Husbands—imagine, your extravagant love for your wife will make her believe, living with you, is heaven on earth.
 - Husbands and wives and ALL God's people, let's learn to live and give extravagantly, and bless each other to taste a little bit of heaven on earth.
 - What I am saying is, let's not simply do a few good deeds for each other and think we have done enough, but when we serve and give, let's pray that we can learn to do so extravagantly, so your loved ones can taste heaven through you.
 - Imagine that, we can bring a little bit of heaven to people—that's a life worth living, isn't it?

The meaning of the perfume pouring

The message here is not the extravagance of this perfume, which impresses God.

- But the costliness of this perfume is mentioned for two reasons.

I. It has to do with the supreme worth of Jesus.

- His value, not the cost of the perfume, is central to this story.
 - Have you truly considered how worthy Jesus is to you?
 - A while back, I was speaking with a good friend, who is also a pastor. He shared with me how his church had shrunk from about 100 members to 60 people. So, I naturally expected him to share his grief and pain. But instead, he said the most wonderful thing. He said, "Pastor Joshua, I know Jesus saved me

and therefore, I know I will be entering into heaven. You know, that really is enough for me. I am happy because of Jesus.”

- Many years ago, I remember reading about a man, who thought Jesus was so worthy for him, that instead of offering a tenth of his earning, he actually gave 90% and lived off from the 10%.
 - Some people might think that he must have earned a lot of money to be able to live from the 10%, but that wasn't it.
 - In fact, the 10% was just enough to meet his basic necessities.
 - But, for him, the thought of offering God only 10%, while he lived off from the 90% did not sit well with him.
 - So, he reversed it.
 - Do I do this?—Sadly, I don't give 90%, but I do love to give more than the tithing we are accustomed to giving.
- For God's people, I do believe giving our God the minimum is a poor way to give back to our God who has given us His everything.
 - And the way I understand God's way is, that a tithe is the minimum that His people should give.
 - May I encourage all God's people, let's stop giving our God our minimum, let's savor God's generosity for us, and reflect Him in our giving.
 - Isn't that how God's children should reflect our Father?
- You know, I think it is safe to say that the worthiness of Jesus in our lives will be seen, on how costly a price we are willing to offer to honor Him.
 - Before we count the cost of how much we should give to Jesus, allow me to remind us how much He gave to us.
 1. No one has loved us longer—because He loved us even before this world was ever created, for His love actually began before there was Genesis 1:1.
 - God's love for us began before the creation of the world—amazing, isn't it?
 2. No one has loved us more sacrificially—because out of His love, He died for us; the cross is not a jewelry, but a message of Jesus' amazing and sacrificial love for you and I, for His people.
 3. No one has cared for us so completely—for even to this day, everything that is good, every good gifts—from our breath, to the ability to think, to the muscles that allows us to sit or stand and walk, to blinking our eyes and our eye lashes, for our lung, kidney and liver, to our fingers, finger nails and pores in our bodies, to the sun and the rain, they all really come from our Father.
 4. No one will lead us into a better eternity—for when Jesus comes back, He will take us to His kingdom of everlasting love and joy, where sorrows and pain, and tears and failures, anger and frustrations, and any and all kind of sinfulness, will be FOREVER wiped out from us.
- Now, returning to the thought, what would be our reason to pour out the most costly thing to Jesus?
 - The answer is simple: because of the infinite worth of Jesus.

1. It is my prayer that for every one of us, Jesus would be the most valuable being in our lives—may He truly be the first and greatest love of our lives.
2. And I pray that we would feel He is so worthy to receive our best gifts, that we will be extravagant in our giving to Him, and never feel that it is a waste.
 - Before we do anything for Jesus, please savor His extravagant love and forgiveness first, for us.

II. The costliness of the perfume speaks on how our worship impacts our witnessing.

- The aroma of Mary’s offering filled the room.
 - **Jn 12:3**—“Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus’ feet and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.”
 - What she offered to Jesus in worship, could not be kept to itself.
 - It wafted—it means, it gently spread throughout the whole house.

Interestingly, there were two responses to Mary’s extravagant offering.

1. Sadly, there will be those like Judas, who sees the negative, even in such outpouring of God’s goodness.
 - **Jn 12:5**—“Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor?”
 - For many people who do not see the infinite worth of Jesus, they would say that we are wasting our money and good things.
 - Sadly, I have often heard from Christians, that some people spend too much time in church service, as a negative thing.
 - Some people believe that serving in God’s church should be done in moderation, never too much, because doing too much it’s just not good for them, they say.
 - Have you noticed, that a light also attracts bugs—some people would criticize, what the Lord considered beautiful.
 - I am not trying to say, the people who are negative are like bugs.
 - But, I am saying, people who are negative, often miss seeing Jesus, and therefore, their view is focused on the waste and not the beauty.
 - Are you bitter, angry, and not able to forgive?—could it be, the focus is on the negative and not on the beauty of Jesus?
 - For people like Judas, for people who are angry and are not able to forgive—the focus must not be on Mary’s outpouring, but their focus must be lifted up to Jesus.
2. The second response to Mary’s extravagant offering is, there will be people who are refreshed, even turned right side up, in the midst of such outpouring.
 - For people who see the infinite value of God, the outpouring will be a fragrance to behold and imitate joyfully.
 - People will be inspired to also pour their good things extravagantly.

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- Friends, whenever we see someone do good, like we see Mary do here, may that vision truly excite us to want to also learn to do the beautiful thing ourselves.
 - Whenever we hear someone do beautifully, may that be our imitation, our example, that's what we want to learn and offer them to our God.

 - I have been praying for Thanksgiving Sunday, as I told you last week.
 - Why?—because I am praying, what God has taught me through the worshipers I met in Burundi, Africa, will be the example we will also learn and imitate.
 - If I may say so again, it was the most joyful, genuine, thankful, and love-filled offering I have ever experienced, as they lined up singing and dancing.
 - I can't dance like they, but it sure will not stop me from giving it joyfully and love-filled as they.
 - So, brothers and sisters, please pray for Thanksgiving Sunday, and let's do this, all for God's glory, because we love Him more than anyone or anything—Amen!

 - I say, whenever we are not sure how much we should give, it is my prayer that from now on, when we give, **let's offer more rather than less**.
 - I don't mean only in our offering giving, but in every area of our lives, with every person we meet, in every situation we may find ourselves—may generosity rule our hearts and minds, and not stinginess or our calculations.
 - When we serve others, let's learn to do it extravagantly—when we give, let's give extravagantly—when we help others, let's help extravagantly—when we worship, let's worship extravagantly—when we trust and obey our God, let's obey extravagantly—when we love and when we forgive, let's do it extravagantly—let's make **extravagance** our new normal, as we pray that it will be our new character.

 - Of course, I am not advocating recklessness, and give everything away today, and leave nothing for yourself tomorrow.
 - Let's be prudent and wise and know, when to give and who to not give, but I pray that the new normal in our giving will be one of extravagance and generosity.

 - May I remind us, we will FAIL in our new endeavors, and fail often, because extravagance is not natural for us.
 - But, whenever we fail, let's not let our sin hold us down, but look up to Christ and **see His extravagant forgiveness and love for us**, and seeing Him, let's rise and learn a little bit more, how to be extravagant like our Lord and Savior.
 - Can you imagine, yourself, your family, and the people near you, changing because of your extravagance like our Lord Christ Jesus?

 - Brothers and sisters, let's not let the fear of our failure stop us from learning to live in this blessed way—it is OK to FAIL often, but don't let failure define us, but let Christ and His grace re-mold us.
 - As Christ is extravagant for us, may we be extravagant to the people around us.
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- Remember, if we have received Christ's love and forgiveness extravagantly, then there's only proper response for God's people—we also must learn to love and forgive extravagantly.

In closing

What do you see, whether be in our passage or in most things in life—do you see the infinite worth of Jesus, or an extravagant waste?

- For Mary, Jesus was most worthy, so she gladly gave her most precious treasure.
 - And this treasure, just filled the whole room, causing everyone in that room to enjoy her beautiful fragrance.
- Besides the extravagance, that's the other thing I love about this offering.
 - Sure, the costly offering was undeniably good, to offer her most precious possession just displays her beautiful heart.

But, her offering did not simply stop with her, **but it filled the whole house.**

- Her offering was felt by everyone in the house.
 - Everyone near her was blessed.
- As we can see, if Mary had just poured perfume on Jesus, it probably would not be recorded in God's word, but her extravagance spoke of the beauty of Jesus' infinite worth.
 - It is my prayer that everyone of us will truly savor the infinite worth of Jesus, so that together, we also can **become extravagant perfume pourers.**

Prayer Time

1. The people—in Haiti (earthquake), in Afghanistan (Taliban—the women), and in Myanmar (persecution of Christians—Nigeria and North Korea)
2. For Tammy's family—her father passed away late last night.
3. For Sandra's mother surgery—this Tue (8/24)
4. Women's Fellowship—at Mrs. Kwihwa Staszak today, at 12:30pm.
5. For the worship

Church News

1. Welcome
2. Tyler Jung—will be starting his collegiate life, at the University of Minnesota.
3. Women's Fellowship—at Mrs. Kwihwa Staszak today, at 12:30pm.
4. Sunday Devotion Time—join us today at 11am; we will be studying on baptism.
5. Prayer Warrior Ministry—several of our members are gathering every Wednesday evenings from 8-9 to pray. Our sister, Caty, is leading us in this ministry. Let me call her to come forward and share briefly about this new ministry.

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- **Jn 12:1-3**—“Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus’ honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with Him. Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus’ feet and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.”
- **Jn 12:2**—“Here a dinner was given in Jesus’ honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with Him.”
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- It wafted—it means, it gently spread throughout the whole house.
- **Jn 12:5**—“Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor?”

Praise for Offering Time — I love You, Lord

I love You, Lord. And I lift my voice, to worship You, O my soul, rejoice.
Take joy My king, in what You hear. May it be a sweet, sweet sound, in Your ear.

Responsive Hymn — My Jesus, I love Thee

My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine,
For Thee all the follies of sin, I resign.
My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ’tis now.

I love Thee because Thou hast first loved me,
And purchased my pardon on Calvary’s tree.
I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ’tis now.

I’ll love Thee in life, I will love Thee in death.
And praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath;
And say, when the death dew lies cold on my brow;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ’tis now.

In mansions of glory and endless delight,
I’ll ever adore Thee in heaven so bright;
I’ll sing with the glittering crown on my brow;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ’tis now.