

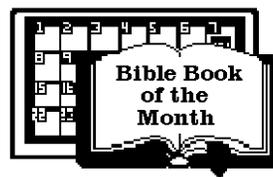
price of a slave (see Exodus 21:32), the basest act of treachery in history.

SOME LESSONS:

1. We learn the beautiful lesson to show our love by our deeds and not to wait until it is too late (1 John 3:17, 18).
2. We can learn the great lesson of “unselfish” love, a love that gives unsparingly! Our Lord’s unselfish love should lead us to repent of our own lack of love.
3. We should be alert to opportunities to do all the good we can (Galatians 6:10). And if we can’t do some “great” thing, let each of us “*do what he can.*”
4. One should learn the lesson not to be surprised when good deeds are criticized. Even a “Judas” was able to get others to follow his lead in criticizing a good deed.
5. Let no one be discouraged by the failure of others to see clearly themselves. The Lord knows not only our actions but our motives as well.

QUESTIONS:

1. Who were the famous relatives of this Mary of Bethany?
2. Mary is seen in three different events in the gospel, where is she pictured each time?
3. In whose house does this event occur?
Who else is there?
4. Who led the criticism of Mary?
Can just about “anyone” get a following?
5. What was the complaint? And what was the real motive?
6. What did Jesus say about this deed of Mary’s?
7. What was the reaction of the chief priests and scribes to Judas’ proposal?
8. What contrast do you see in Mary and Judas?
9. What do you think is one of the most important lessons from this scripture?



Mark

Lesson #3

Devotion to Christ

Mark 14:3-11 — The New King James Version

The Anointing at Bethany

3 And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head. 4 But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, “Why was this fragrant oil wasted? 5 “For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.” And they criticized her sharply. 6 But Jesus said, “Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. 7 “For you have the poor with you always, and

whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. 8 “She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. 9 “Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.”

10 Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Him to them. 11 And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. So he sought how he might conveniently betray Him.

I. ADORED BY ONE DISCIPLE — 14:3-9

This event took place six days before Passover, which would put it on the Friday before the Triumphal Entry (John 12:1). By placing this story between the accounts of the plot to arrest Jesus (Mark 14:1-2 and 14:10-11) Mark contrasted the treachery of Judas and the Jewish leaders with the love and loyalty of Mary. The ugliness of their sins makes the beauty of her sacrifice even more meaningful.

Neither Matthew nor Mark gives us the name of the woman, but John tells us that it was Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus (John 11:1-2; 12:1-3). This feast at Simon the leper’s house was given in honor

of Jesus and her brother Lazarus.

Mary is found three times in the Gospel story, and each time she is at the feet of Jesus (Luke 10:38-42; John 11:31-32; 12:1-8). Mary had a close fellowship with the Lord as she sat at His feet and listened to His Word. She is a good model for all of us to follow.

Mary's anointing of the Lord must not be confused with a similar event recorded in Luke 7:36-50. The unnamed woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee was a converted harlot who expressed her love to Christ because of His gracious forgiveness of her many sins.

In the house of Simon (the one who had been healed of leprosy) Mary expresses her love to Christ because He was going to the cross to die for her. She prepared His body for burial as she anointed His head (Mark 14:3) and His feet (John 12:3). She showed her love for Jesus while He was still alive.

It was an expensive offering that she gave to the Lord. Spikenard was imported from India, and a whole jar would have cost the equivalent of the average worker's annual earnings. Mary gave lavishly and lovingly. She was not ashamed to show her love for Christ openly.

There were three consequences to her adoration:

First, the house was filled with the beautiful fragrance of the ointment (John 12:3; also note 2 Corinthians 2:15-16). There is also a "spiritual fragrance" in that home where Jesus Christ is loved and worshiped.

Second, the disciples, led by Judas, criticized Mary for wasting her money! It sounded so pious for Judas to talk about the poor, when in reality he wanted the money for himself! (John 12:4-6). Even in the upper room, six days later, the apostles still thought Judas was concerned about helping the poor (John 13:21-30). It is interesting that the word "waste" in Mark 14:4 is translated "perdition" in John 17:12 and applied to Judas! Judas criticized Mary for "wasting money," but he wasted his entire life!

Third, Jesus commended Mary and accepted her gracious gift. He knew the heart of Judas and understood why the other disciples followed his bad example. He also knew Mary's heart and quickly defended her (Romans 8:33-39).

No matter what others may say about our worship and service, the most

important thing is that we please the Lord. The fact that others misunderstand and criticize us should not keep us from showing our love to Christ. Our concern should be for His approval alone.

The Lord said, "*Let her alone. She hath wrought a good work.*" The word "good" here is not the usual one, but kalos which means a beautiful work. It was a beautiful work that Mary did.

1. **Beautiful in motive!** It was a motive of love and gratitude that prompted Mary to do what she did.

2. **Beautiful in timeliness!** Jesus said she anointed me "before hand." Later some rich men anointed his body "after hand," after he is dead, but Mary anoints him "before hand." She shared with Jesus the flowers while he lived.

3. **Beautiful in consequence!** Jesus said that wheresoever the gospel should be preached throughout the whole world that which this woman had done should be spoken of as a memorial to her.

Mary was a blessing to Jesus as she shared her love, and she was a blessing to her home as the fragrance spread. Were it not for Mary, her village, Bethany, would probably have been forgotten. What she did is recorded three times in the Bible.

II. BETRAYED BY ANOTHER — 14:10-11

At one time Judas was a loyal disciple. He *became* a traitor. Luke tells us that he allowed Satan to enter into his heart and he became his tool for working mischief against the Lord (Luke 22:3; John 6:70).

Likely Judas had heard how the chief priests and scribes desired the arrest of Jesus. They were afraid to take him openly for fear of the multitude. They needed a subtle way. When the Jewish leaders heard of Judas' proposal, "*they were glad, and promised to give him money.*"

While one disciple is seen worshiping Jesus in this lesson, another is seen involved in: 1. covetousness, 2. stealing, 3. pride, 4. disloyalty, 5. impenitence.

Mary gave her best in faith and love; Judas gave his worst in unbelief and hatred. He solved the problem of how the Jewish leaders could arrest Jesus without causing a riot during the feast. He sold his Master for the