

## EXTRAVAGANT WORSHIP Mark 14:3-9

Jesus was in the town of Bethany where his good friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived  
They were gathered for supper at Simon the leper's house

We don't know much about Simon the leper yet the fact that he here hosts Jesus in his home speaks volumes

Leprosy was a terrible disease, the worst of the worst

It invaded the body like poison, paralyzing one's flesh, turning it pale white and rotting it away leaving it's victim disfigured

Lepers were cast out of their city and forced to find shelter in primitive, pitiful places with other lepers, totally isolated, feared and looked down upon by all

But here Simon the leper is home! He's not only home, he's hosting Jesus for supper! His life has been radically changed since meeting the master healer, Jesus the Christ

Instead being in isolation, he is in celebration

Instead of dying with lepers, he is dining with the Lord

Simon's life has been forever impacted by the Son of God!

As if to declare the majesty of Simon's guest of honor...Mary of Bethany performs one of the most beautiful acts of worship recorded in Scripture...she anoints the Savior with Spikenard from her alabaster box

Spikenard - a rare and costly perfume from India made with nard plants that are grown at the highest elevations of the Himilayas... precious in its fragrance, Enormous in its value

Kept in an alabaster box...a translucent stone used to make the finest jewelry boxes and perfume flask...valued at 300 pence by Judas..a whole year's wages

Mary's gift on the Savior represented the best she had to give..no doubt the perfume was her dowry..her chance at the thing all Hebrew girls desired..marriage

Mary's gift was a gift given only once...she broke the box, it couldn't be used again

Mary's gift was a gift that affected everyone in the house...Jn.12:3 says, "the house was filled with the odor of the ointment

Mary's gift was a gift that was criticized by others... Judas and other disciples called it a waste., .he said that she could have put her gift to better use (given to poor- no, more for him to steal)

Mary's gift was memorialized by the Lord. ..He forever linked it with the Gospel, which, like the woman's pouring out of costly and precious ointment to anoint the Savior...proclaims the pouring out of the precious and costly blood of Christ to atone for the sinner

Mary's gift was her ultimate act of worship.. .the pouring out of the ointment was symbolic of her heart poured out in adoration to Christ

I call Mary's anointing "extravagant worship" "extravagance" defined - going beyond reasonable limits

We are extravagant in so many areas of our lives...homes, vehicles, clothing, dining out, jewelry, sports interests and hobbies, vacations, gift-giving

Yet when it comes to worship we are often like the people of Malachi's day... bringing the least we have to give or the worst we have to offer

Our God deserves extravagant worship - worship that goes beyond reasonable limits...worship that is costly and precious...fragrant and sacrificial...a pouring out of our hearts to God

#### WHY SHOULD WE OFFER GOD EXTRAVAGANT WORSHIP?

1. Because of the extravagant love He has for us - His love for us goes beyond reasonable limits...

Rom. 5: 5 because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us For when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die (that's most of our reasonable limit regarding love) but v.8 says "But God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" - God's love goes beyond reasonable limits...His love for us is extravagant!

God's love is extravagant in it's time frame - Eph.1:4 "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world" You and I have been an object of God's love before the foundation of the world He loved us in eternity past and He's never stopped loving us

God's love is extravagant in it's scope - Jn.3:16 For God so loved the world His love extends to all men of all ages - the deepest sinner is loved extravagantly by God God's love is extravagant in it's expression - Jn. 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for His friends

1 Jn.3:1 Behold what manner of love the father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God

The ultimate demonstration of God's love for us is Calvary where God's Son was given as a sacrifice to pay for our sins that through faith in Him we might receive eternal life

Calvary...that bloody hill where Jesus suffered the weight of all our sins

Calvary...where the God man faced the loneliness of rejection by the Father, Who could not look upon Him as He became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God Calvary...where mercy and truth are met together and righteousness and peace

have kissed each other Calvary.. .where God's love flows in the form of sinless blood drops flowing down

to us like the Amazon River watering a single daisy

The love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell; it goes beyond the highest star and reaches to the lowest hell Oh love of God how rich and pure! How measureless and strong! It shall forever more endure, the saints and angels' song

Oh the love of Christ which passeth knowledge...Oh the matchless, extravagant love of God

WHY OFFER GOD EXTRAVAGANT WORSHIP? Because of the extravagant Love He has for us and...

2. Because of the extravagant salvation He has provided for us 1 Pet.1:3-5 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To

an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away reserved in Heaven for you. Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation..."

When you receive Christ as your personal Savior you receive the most extravagant gift ever given - it goes beyond reasonable limits

If all we received was forgiveness of sins it would be more than we deserve but our salvation affords us eternal life with God in Heaven where He has reserved for us a mansion in the city built of solid gold

We receive the Holy Spirit to dwell within us and seal us from the moment we're saved until Christ takes us to Heaven - The Holy Spirit abides in us to comfort us in every situation, teach us the Bible, intercede with us in prayer, convict us to live holy lives, empower us to serve through the gifts of the Spirit and conform us to the image of Christ through the fruit of Spirit

We receive the new nature so that we might have power to overcome temptation to sin and to yield our members as servants of righteousness

We are afforded the privilege to come boldly to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need

We are seated together with Christ in heavenly places where God has blessed with all spiritual blessings

We are baptized into the body of Christ, united with all believers and afforded the privilege to unite with a local church through water baptism and worship God corporately with the people of God

We become ambassadors for Christ in this world entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation - sharing the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ with the lost with assurance that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation

This salvation we enjoy-this salvation we have been blessed with...it is rich and deep and full and extravagant! It merits a worship that is extravagant.

Mary knew that she deserved hell...she knew she did not deserve to be loved by Jesus so extravagantly

Mary knew her sins were great and that if it were up to anyone else in Bethany, she would be condemned without an ounce of mercy yet this lovely Lamb of God had saved her so extravagantly

She MUST offer a worship beyond reasonable limits...a worship that would exceed the bounds of even Simon the leper

She opened her hope chest as she had done so many times before when dreaming of the day she would be engaged to some handsome Hebrew man and there it was...her most priceless possession...her most costly asset

Without hesitation she took it in her arms...already her tears were flowing, dripping down the alabaster as she made her way to Simon's house where the One she loved and longed to worship was seated at supper

She took a deep breath... now she wondered if the gift she brought would be enough to convey the extravagant gratitude she felt towards her Savior

She broke the box and as she did she broke her heart...the ointment flowed out upon the Messiah's feet and her love for Him flowed out as she wiped them with her own hair

Her hair - a woman's glory - yet not enough for One so glorious as He  
He turned to face her now, for a moment she feared He would be displeased with

such an elaborate display

Her fears quickly faded as He smiled with approval and bowed His head so that she could anoint Him even more

The Master had received Mary's extravagant worship with joy and approval

And now we come to the moment of worship

We who are so extravagantly loved and have been so extravagantly saved and what will we offer... what will it cost us...how much will we give...how deep will our sacrifice be?

Let us worship Christ today with an extravagant worship - one that fits such an extravagant Savior

Let us offer extravagant Praise - as we sing, let us sing straight to Heaven - straight to the throne - with every fiber of our being let us sing extravagantly

Let us render extravagant Prayer - not content to voice the same old prayers but a pouring out of our hearts in prayer - a crying out to the God of Heaven

Let us give extravagant Offerings - not stopping at the status quo but digging deep and giving beyond reasonable. Limits, beyond our power, not giving til it hurts but til it feels good

Let us practice extravagant Obedience - not content to be stirred by the message but moved by the Spirit to real change, genuine heart revival

Let us pay extravagant Attention - Let us put aside the cares of the world and gather around Him in the midst and make His name supreme, make His glory preeminent, make His will primary

In 1495, Duke Ludovico of Milan asked the Florentine artist Leonardo da Vinci to portray (he dramatic scene of Jesus' last supper with His disciples as they gathered in the Upper Room before His crucifixion. The scene was to be painted on a large wall of the dining hall at Santa Maria delle Grazie monastery in Milan. Da Vinci, then forty-three years old and already famous as a painter, sculptor, and architect, agreed to take on the assignment.

Working slowly and with great care for detail, he spent three years completing the painting. The disciples were grouped in threes, two groups on either side of the figure of Christ, who sat at the center of the table. His arms stretched before Him. In His right hand He held a wine cup, painted with marvelous realism. At last the painting was ready, and da Vinci called in a friend to see it. "Give me your honest opinion" da Vinci said.

"It's wonderful," the friend told him. "That cup is so real I cannot keep my eyes off it." Da Vinci immediately took a brush and drew it across the sparkling cup. "If it affects you that way it must not remain," he exclaimed. "Nothing shall distract attention from the figure of Christ."

Time is running out if we would worship Christ extravagantly - When Judas criticized Mary's worship the Savior said "the poor ye have with you always but me ye have not always"

**NOW IS THE TIME TO WORSHIP HIM EXTRAVAGANTLY**