

“WHAT IS PRECIOUS TO YOU?”

- What are some things that may be precious to people?(Power, prestige, family, friends, etc.)
- Popularity is another one. Athletes, politicians and all kinds of entertainers rate this high on their list.
- How about your health, can that be precious to you?(...)
- What about money? (...)
- The Bible tells us that the “LOVE” of money is sin, but we need money to survive and pay for things. When it becomes one of your most prized possessions that is when it is not good.
- Can friends be precious to you? (...)
- What about your careers? (...)
- What about church? (...)
- How about creation? What do you love most, plants, animals, trees, stars? (...)
- Can power be precious to people? (...)
- These are some things that people treasure, some are worth treasuring and some are not.

-We are going to talk about this today and to start us off, let’s read our first verse together on our Verse Sheet: (John 12:1 “Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.”)

-Let me give you a little background. Six days before every Passover, the Jews would travel to Jerusalem to celebrate it. The Passover was a time to celebrate when God rescued them from 400 years of slavery in Egypt and brought them into the Promised Land, the land of Israel. It was a time to remember when the Angel of Death passed over their homes with the blood of the lamb painted on their doorposts and destroyed all the firstborn of Egypt. So each year, the Jews would travel to Jerusalem to celebrate this Passover. This is Jesus’ last Passover.

-Let me ask a couple of questions:

- Does anyone remember what Jesus rode on when He entered Jerusalem for the last time? (Donkey)
- Then a few days later, on Friday, what was going to happen to Him? (He was going to be crucified.)
- Then on Sunday what was He going to do? (Rise)
- So we can say after 400 years this is not a normal Passover.

-From the verse we just read, it says that He arrived in Bethany. Bethany is a small village, not too far from Jerusalem. It is so interesting if you read the Bible. It says that Jesus had to leave Jerusalem because so many people wanted to kill Him. And so He left Jerusalem and went out to several surrounding villages and came into Bethany.

-According to this verse, who lived here? (Lazarus)

-Do you remember the story of Lazarus? Would anyone like to briefly share it with us? (He was brought back to life. His sisters were Mary and Martha. Lazarus died but before he died they sent word to Jesus that their brother was dying and asked Him to come quickly and Jesus did not come quickly. He waited a few days but He did this on purpose so it would be a greater miracle with Him rising Lazarus from the dead than just healing him of his sickness. It was also a representation of what was to come. So, there is always a reason for His timing.)

-Let's think about the relationship between Lazarus and Jesus now, He has raised him from the dead! You know there was a closeness that Lazarus and his sisters felt toward Jesus that many others did not have or could not understand because of what they went through.

-Have you been through a situation that brought you so close to Jesus that there is a special bond between you and your Savior? (...)

-Let's continue and read verse #2 together: (John 12:2 "Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with Him.")

-A banquet was prepared in Jesus' honor. Martha served and Lazarus sat at the table with Him. And we get other little bits of information if we read Matthew and Mark with more details about this banquet.

-Can you imagine if you heard Jesus' was coming to your town? (...)

-How would you feel? (...)

**-Can you imagine if you heard Jesus was coming to the place you are living in? (...)
Would you want to prepare a banquet? (...)**

-Something that is in the other books of the Bible was that this banquet was being prepared in the home of Simon the Leper, the one that Jesus had healed before. So, Simon the Leper must have been friends with Mary, Martha and Lazarus as well as Jesus.

-There were other people there as well along with Jesus' disciples. They don't know it's His last week on earth. They are honoring Him because they know Who He is and He raised Lazarus from the dead and healed Simon.

-Now, let's move forward. Who is serving? (Martha)

-Does anyone know what Lazarus was doing? (Lounging at the table with Jesus. They didn't have chairs like we do, they would actually have their meals while reclining on the floor. They would lay on the floor next to each other so they could converse.)

-I want to ask us all a question, if we were there, would we want to do what Martha did or would we want to do what Lazarus did? (...)

-If you are a type A person, you would probably want to do what Martha did. You would probably want to be cleaning, cooking the best meal and preparing a

wonderful experience for everyone else. Maybe just the ability to serve Jesus His food, to be close to Him, to honor Him in that service would mean a lot to you.

-Do you think Martha is sometimes criticized for always being busy at this time?

(...)

-But really, we have to eat and what she was doing was very necessary. It was a big part of this. But Lazarus was choosing to sit and chat with Jesus.

-Which do you think you would be doing? Would you be serving everyone or sitting and chatting? (...)

-Neither was wrong, but at the moment, what do you think would have been most beneficial for Martha? (...)

-Does anyone know what Mary was doing? (...)

-Let's read verse #3 to find out: (John 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.")

-So Mary comes in with an alabaster jar, it looks like marble, and it would have been sealed. It contained an essence of perfume called nard. Back then it was not like the chemical perfumes we have today, this was made from aromatic amber-colored essential oils from flowering plants. She had about two pints of this very, very costly perfume in this jar. According to scripture, this would have been worth a full year's salary.

-Can anyone guess how much a full year's salary back then would be in today's dollar? (\$30,000-\$40,000)

-I can't even imagine how Mary accumulated that much or how long she must have saved up for it as well. What she did was open her alabaster jar and poured it all on Jesus' feet.

-In other scripture it says she also poured it on His head as well. Back then that was normal practice to anoint people's heads with oil but she went beyond that and poured it on His feet and began to wipe them with her hair.

-Let me tell you what happens in the next few verses. Judas, who is going to betray Jesus, criticizes her. He told Jesus that she should have taken that oil and sold it and given the money to the poor. He got the others stirred up about this as well. Do you know what Jesus said?

-Let's read our next verse to find out, #4 (John 12:7-8 "'Leave her alone,' Jesus replied. '*It was intended* that she should save this perfume for the day of My burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have Me.'")

-Notice that He said she was *intended to save* this for the day of His burial. He was honoring Mary's sacrifice and obedience.

-Jesus said that Mary did the right thing with her treasure because He said that we would always have the opportunity to help the poor, and we still do today. But He was only here for a short time and she was sacrificially honoring Him.

-That week was the end for His time here on earth. He honored Mary as Mary honored Him.

-We have three points I want to talk about at the bottom. Let's read them together. The first one is #5 on our Verse Sheet: (Mary's gift was costly, sacrificial and bold. She did this because she loved Jesus.)

-What this cost Mary was huge. She not only gave up a year's salary, she also gave up her future security. That would be like you going to your bank, taking all your savings out, and just giving it to someone.

-She took that and made that costly sacrifice for Jesus, her Savior. She gave up her security and what she thought was her future.

-A question we can ask ourselves from this is "Are we willing to give up what we hold on to for security, whether it is financial, family, friends or something else, because we hold Him more dear to our hearts than those things? (...)

-What about her reputation? Here she was, humbling herself in front of a crowd, bowing on her knees and pouring this perfume on Jesus' feet and wiping it with her hair. She cast her pride out the window.

-Does anyone remember what people thought of her when she did this? (She was criticized.)

-She knew her reputation was at stake and people would talk about her, but did she care? (No)

-A question we can ask ourselves is do we cast our own pride out the window for the love of our Savior? (...)

-Do we humble our hearts to hear Him and obey Him, not caring what others think? (...)

-Let's read our next point together, #6 on our Verse Sheet: ("Jesus' gift was costly, sacrificial and even painful. He did this because He loves us.")

-Although Mary gave Him a great gift, later that week He gave her a greater gift. When He died on the cross, it was a sacrifice of His perfect life for her sins, for all of our sins.

-It was very painful, it was humbling, it was costly and it was sacrificial. He did it because He loves us.

-Let's read our last point together, #7 on our Verse Sheet: ("Don't forget, you can't out-give God! Ever!")

-The point in this whole lesson is what is precious or valuable to you?

-Is anything more precious or valuable to you than Jesus?

-Jesus was the most precious possession that Mary had.
-Is your faith in Christ the most precious thing you have? Or do you put your faith in other things, like your mate, your family, your friends, the doctor if you are ill, your money to help you out in tough times, etc.
-Or do you put your real faith in God?
-We need to remember that He is the author and the Finisher of our faith. His gift of faith is the most precious and valuable thing we could ever want or have.

-Life always comes back to our precious gift of faith in Christ.
-We need to ask ourselves, for all that Christ has given us, what do we need to give Christ?
-We know we need to give Him our heart and soul, but do we need to also give Him our children, our grandchildren, our health and wisdom for our doctors and our finances to Him in full faith? (...)
-Is there anything better you can do in all of these things than to give them to Jesus? (Not one thing more!)
-You just have to give them to Him and rely upon that most treasured faith that is in Christ.

-If there is something you need to let go of or give over to Him, even anger or loneliness, if Jesus is your prized possession, then you can't out give Him.
-He is going to give back to you so much more. Peace, joy, love, hope and the list goes on! His gifts are precious and immeasurable!
-Let us hold fast to Him and trust in Him to do great and mighty things in our lives and all those we love today!

“WHAT IS PRECIOUS TO YOU?” VERSE SHEET

- 1. John 12:1 “Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.”**
- 2. John 12:2 “Here a dinner was given in Jesus’ honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with Him.”**
- 3. John 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.”**
- 4. John 12:7-8 “Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. *‘It was intended* that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.”**
- 5. Mary’s gift was costly, sacrificial and bold. She did this because she loved Jesus.**
- 6. Jesus’ gift was costly, sacrificial and even painful. He did this because He loves us.**
- 7. Don’t forget, you can’t out-give God! Ever!**