

life groups' sermon guide

jump: mary - john 12:1-8



LIFE GROUPS

doing life together

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Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

John 12:1-3

In this passage we get an intimate glimpse at Jesus' inner circle. Mary, the brother of Lazarus - a man whom Jesus wept over prior to raising him from the dead - and his disciples. During an intimate meal, Mary breaks out a container of perfume that many scholars say is worth close to a year's wages and anoints Jesus' feet.

[Q] Why would Mary give a gift that was worth so much?

[Q] Does it make sense what Mary did? Why or why not?

[Q] In what ways could her actions be seen as foolish?

Regardless of what prompted this, the value of her gift was obvious to everyone who was there. The sacrifice involved would also have been obvious, as would the value that she saw in Jesus.

[Q] What things do we have that are valuable in the way that the perfume was valuable?

[Q] How did Mary's actions show her faith?

But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it.

John 12:4-6

Judas was taken aback by Mary's gift. To him, everything was measured in terms of its monetary value. In his statement, he put the value of things the money could purchase over that of the value of Christ. It revealed a fundamental flaw in his perspective.

[Q] What does Judas' statement reveal about his priorities?

[Q] Would the poor have benefited from Judas' "solution"? Can we deceive ourselves with excuses that seem legitimate, but are just that - excuses?

Mary's actions and Judas' statement reveal two ends of how we can look at our motivations. John Bloom puts it very well:

John 12 shows Mary and Judas in stark contrast. One "wasted" her costly perfume on Jesus' feet. The other stole from Jesus' moneybag. What was motivating them? Gain. They both pursued the treasure they believed would make them happy. To Mary, Jesus was the Pearl of Great Price, far more precious than money. To Judas, thirty pieces of silver was a fair price for the Pearl.

[Q] What is shared in common between Judas and Mary? What is different?

[Q] What was Mary's goal? What was Judas' goal?

[Q] How do our actions and sacrifices reveal our goals?

Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."

John 12:7-8

Jesus affirmed Mary's position, and rebuked Judas.

[Q] What does this tell us about how Jesus reacts to those that put him first?

[Q] What does it tell us about how He views our excuses?

Application

What is it in your life with which you refuse to step out in faith? Last week Matt asked us all to ask God for what our next step was in our walk with Christ. If you have not done that, what's holding you back?

life groups' sermon guide

jump: mary - john 12:1-8



LIFE GROUPS

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