

**“Mary & Judas”**  
**John 12:1-8**  
**April 19, 2020**  
**Faith Presbyterian Church – Morning Service**  
*Pastor Nicoletti*

We return this morning to the Gospel of John, and we come now to the beginning of chapter twelve.

In chapter eleven we read the account of Jesus raising Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, from the dead. After he did that, many came to believe in Jesus. But others, among the leaders, began to plot to have Jesus killed.

And now we come to the time of the Passover festival in Jerusalem, and the question on everyone’s mind is whether Jesus will show up. And that brings us, then, up to the beginning of chapter twelve.

Let’s now turn to John chapter twelve, verses one through eight.

Please listen carefully, for this is God’s Word for us this morning.

<sup>12:1</sup> Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup> So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, <sup>5</sup> “Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> Jesus said, “Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup> For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.”

This is the word of the Lord. (Thanks be to God.)

“All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever.” [1 Peter 1:24-25]

Let’s pray ...

Lord, your testimonies are wonderful;  
therefore our souls cling to them.  
The unfolding of your word gives light;  
it imparts understanding to the simple.  
Therefore we long for your word  
and your commandments.  
Turn to us now and be gracious to us,  
as is your way with those who love your name.  
Keep our steps steady according to your promise,

and let no iniquity have dominion over us.  
Redeem us from the oppression of the world,  
that we may keep your precepts.  
Make your face to shine upon us, your servants,  
and teach us your statutes.  
Grant all of this, we ask, for Jesus's sake. Amen.  
[Based on Psalm 119:129-135]

Each of the four gospels have an account of a woman anointing Jesus with ointment. We have it here in John chapter twelve. Other accounts are found in Matthew twenty-six, Mark fourteen, and Luke chapter seven. Without getting too deep into the details, a closer look at these texts reveals that they describe two different events. Luke describes one event, which has a number of different specific details from the other accounts, while Matthew, Mark, and John all describe the same second event, though they include or highlight different details. [Carson, 425-427]

And so, by not only the Spirit's design, but also by John's intention (having written last of the four gospel writers), we can also turn to the accounts found in Matthew and Mark to shed additional light on what we find in John.

And as you look at the three accounts side-by side, one of the first things that might strike you is that John presents us with two contrasting individuals in a way that Matthew and Mark do not.

In Matthew and Mark, the woman is unnamed, and no real background is given. And those who respond to the woman are similarly somewhat anonymous – Mark just reports that “there were *some*” who responded to her negatively, and scolded her [14:4-5]. Matthew reports that “when *the disciples* saw it, they were indignant.” [26:8].

By contrast, John focuses us on two three-dimensional individuals, whom we know from other parts of the story, and whose motivations are made more clear to us. First, John identifies the woman as Mary, the sister of Lazarus, whom we encountered in the last chapter. Second, while John's account does not deny that there was a larger group that responded negatively to Mary, he focuses on one individual: Judas. And with that, he tells us what he knew of Judas in hindsight.

By fleshing out these two individuals, John not only sharpens the contrast between these two possibilities, but he presents them to us more clearly, as two opposed paths, two opposite patterns: the pattern of Judas and the pattern of Mary. The two are set side by side for us to consider: one serving as a mirror, and the other as a calling. As one commentator puts it: “There is no escaping the challenge posed by the stand-off between Mary and Judas [in this passage]. It is one of those scenes which positively shouts at the reader, ‘Where are *you* in this picture?’” [Wright, 23]

And that is what we will consider together this morning: “Where are *you* in this picture?”

And we'll consider that by asking three questions of this text.

First, where do we see the pattern of Judas in our hearts?

Second, what is the pattern of Mary that is held out before us here?

And third, how do we follow in Mary's footsteps?

So:

- Where do we see the pattern of Judas in our hearts?
- What is the pattern of Mary here before us? And,
- How do we follow in Mary's footsteps?

So first, where do we see the pattern of Judas in ourselves?

And to answer that question ... well, we actually have to ask three more questions:

- What is Judas's motivation on the surface?
- How does Jesus respond to Judas's stated motivation?
- And what is Judas's motivation in his heart?

So let's start with those questions.

First: What is Judas's motivation on the surface?

And Judas's stated motivation – his surface-level motivation matters. We can't just run by it, though we can be tempted to. John tells us what was going on in Judas's heart. And because he's Judas, it's understandably easy for us to focus on that. But John's account, and the accounts of Matthew and Mark, help us distinguish between what everyone knew when these events occurred, as opposed to what they knew in hindsight. [Carson, 428-429]

John knew Judas's motivation later on ... but not at the time of this conversation. John knew Judas was a betrayer, but that too he knew only later on, not during this conversation. Jesus, regardless of what he already knew about Judas, responds, in verses seven and eight, not to what was going on in Judas's heart, but to what Judas said.

Moreover, we should start with what Judas actually said, because otherwise we tend to let ourselves off the hook. We tend to distance ourselves from Judas. We fail to see his pattern in our own hearts and lives ... when maybe we should.

Judas, after all, was not alone in objecting to Mary's actions. From Matthew and Mark we learn that others, including the disciples, joined in criticizing Mary. They scolded her. And so right off the bat, we need to be careful not to assume that we would not have joined in with Judas as well, just as so many others did. Part of what we are challenged to ask ourselves is ... might we have joined the others and thrown our support behind Judas too? Might the pattern of Judas be in our hearts as well?

What then, is Judas's stated concern? Why does he criticize Mary?

Judas says in verse four: "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?"

Judas's argument is that it would have been better to have used the value of the ointment to care for the poor than to have poured it out on Jesus.

And before we shake our heads at Judas, let's make sure we understand what he's actually saying. The ointment was costly. Judas, along with others (according to Matthew and Mark), estimate that it was worth 300 denarii. 300 denarii are a year's wages for a full-time laborer [Carson, 429]. It was a *significant* amount of money. It was enough that a poor family could have lived on it for at least a year.

With that in mind, *now* consider Judas's claim. Mary held in her hand something that could be sold to fully support a family in poverty for a year. And instead of offering a family that life-changing assistance, she just poured it out on Jesus's feet.

Now imagine you see this. Imagine you are there. And you see it happen. And Judas says, "Wouldn't it have been better to have fed, housed, and clothed a poor family for a year, than to just pour this stuff on Jesus's feet?"

Think about that – and now, tell me Judas doesn't make a good bit of sense.

Why does Judas's point make sense to us? Why does this objection resonate with us?

Well, in part because caring for the poor *is* a good thing. Jesus himself emphasizes that again and again, and we'll come back to that later on.

But another reason why we, in our culture, can be especially sympathetic to this objection is because Judas's objection is consistent with a utilitarian approach to morality.

We are sympathetic to the idea that actions are right or wrong based on how much human happiness they can and do cause. [Oxford Reference] This is an approach to morality that has influenced people's thought throughout history, but that has especially shaped our thinking in the West over the past two centuries. [Stanford]

Philosopher Charles Taylor goes so far as to say that it is an essential component of Western secular society. [Taylor, 18] He says that foundational to how we think as modern Western people is the assumption all around us that the greatest good is human flourishing – that the greatest good is human wellbeing and happiness. [Taylor, 16]

And so, without even thinking about it, we tend to fit Jesus into that system – into that ethic. Jesus becomes a means to the goal of human happiness – of human flourishing. Human happiness, human flourishing, is the greatest good there is ... and Jesus is one who helps us get ourselves and other people there.

Judas was not a modern Western secular person, but his stated argument fits so well within our culture. He says that more good would have been accomplished – by which he means more human flourishing, more human wellbeing – more good would have been accomplished if this ointment had been sold and the money given to the poor, than if it had been poured out on Jesus's feet. And

I think that if we are honest ... most of us, if we had been there, in the moment, would have felt the pull to agree with him.

Because we see the same pattern in our own lives.

If you're a secular person, then it means, among other things, that you can easily see how Jesus – and the Bible, and the Church, and Christianity – can be good and beneficial, *so long as* they promote human happiness. But, when you come to a place where the Scriptures – where the Word of God – puts something else *before* human happiness – when it places something else as a greater good than human happiness, then your impulse will be to either walk away from Jesus, or to perform an amputation on the Word of God.

And so you might say that Jesus was a helpful moral teacher “for his time,” and that the Bible presents the best wisdom “of its time,” but that of course we need to “adjust” it. Parts of it are “backwards.” Parts of it “we now know are harmful.” Parts of it need to be “rethought.”

What should strike you, is that just about every place where we want to modify or amputate parts of the Christian Scriptures is a place where we believe that what is there is an obstacle rather than a help to promoting human happiness. And so our critiques are almost always based on the fundamental assumption that promoting human happiness is the greatest good there is in the universe.

And if that's how you tend to think, then you need to ask yourself how you can be so sure that that really is the case. Could there not be something higher? Could there not be something greater?

While the tendency to make that assumption is most overt among secular people, it is an assumption that Christians in our culture are incredibly prone to it as well.

We see it, for example, in the way we think about our own faith. We may not profess it outwardly ... but we generally expect our relationship with God to make us happy in this life. We expect it to enhance our quality of life. And the way we can see this expectation in our hearts is in the anger we have at God when he *doesn't* enhance our lives the ways we want him to – when he *doesn't* seem to treat our happiness and our flourishing here and now as the greatest good.

We often treat our Christian duties as a means to greater happiness and contentment. We often urge other Christians to greater faithfulness *on the basis* that it will make them happier. And when debating ethics with non-Christians, we often find ourselves asserting the validity or the superiority of Christian morality *because* it will lead to more human happiness.

Now, the Christian life brings joy and peace, and to live according to God's commands is to live along the grain of God's creation. But the highest goal of the Christian life is *not* human happiness. And Christian morality is not valid *because* it leads to the greatest happiness. More than that, the Christian life brings joy, but as Jesus himself said, the Christian life also is a call to take up our cross daily.

And yet, we Christians can still slip into that pattern of making Jesus a means to another goal – the goal of human flourishing and happiness.

Judas argues here that it would have been better if the ointment had been sold to help the poor. He argues, essentially, that Mary's devotion to Jesus should have been a means to an end – that Jesus should have led her to promote the happiness and flourishing of the most people possible, which would have been accomplished by something like providing for the needs of a poor family for a year, rather than pouring this expensive ointment out on Jesus's feet.

And in many ways, we resonate with Judas's argument here.

Which brings us to our second question about the pattern of Judas: How does Jesus respond to Judas's argument?

And we get his response in verses seven and eight: "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.'"

Jesus rejects Judas's argument. And to understand Jesus's rejection of the argument, we need to understand a few things Jesus *is* saying, and a few things he *is not* saying.

First, Jesus *is not* saying that caring for the poor isn't important. He stresses the role of alms again and again. Giving to the poor is important to Jesus. But it's not *the most* important thing.

Second, Jesus *is not* saying that since the poor will always be around, there is no point in trying to help them. He is instead saying that giving to the poor is something they *will always* have the opportunity to do – while giving to Jesus while he is physically present on earth *is not* something they will always be able to do.

Instead, Jesus *is* saying first that Mary's action is appropriate because of his presence and because of his movement towards the cross.

Matthew and Mark include more of Jesus's response, and in that we learn he was even more positive. Jesus also said of Mary's actions: "She has done a beautiful thing to me." [Mark 14:6; Matthew 26:10]

Take a minute and consider what that means. Jesus is saying that *this* – that *this act* of Mary was the *best* way for her to use this expensive ointment. He's saying that it was better to pour that ointment out on his feet, to prepare him for his death and burial, to honor him, and to show him devotion – it was better to use that pound of ointment for *that*, then for it to be used to support a poor family for a year.

And if we really hear that ... then it should sort of shock us ... at least a little bit.

It means, if you are a secular person, that you *cannot have* Jesus as just a nice moral teacher who shows us how to love other people. Jesus just said that the best way for Mary to spend a year's salary was to pour it out on him rather than to feed the poor.

That means either that Jesus is a self-centered narcissistic human being, and therefore not good – or, if what he commends here *is* good and moral, then he must be, as he claimed to be, God himself ... and therefore he is a being who *truly is* more worthy to receive that gift than anyone else. [Carson, 430]

Along with that, it also means that Jesus will not fit into a nice secular ethical framework. Because according to Jesus – and according to the Christian faith – human happiness and flourishing *are not* the greatest goods in the universe. There is something of more value than that.

Charles Taylor puts the question like this – he says that the question we are forced to ask is: “Does the highest, the best life involve our [...] serving a good which is beyond, [...] [and] independent of human flourishing?” And then he says, “It’s clear that in the [...] Christian religious tradition the answer to this question is [yes]. Loving, worshipping God is the ultimate end.” [Taylor, 16-17] Helping others in need is a good thing. But it is not the *greatest* good. The greatest good is loving and worshiping God [Taylor, 17], which is exactly what we see in our passage this morning.

Because Jesus is God. He is not just another human being. He is the God and Maker of the universe. And our devotion to him is the greatest good we can pursue. It is an even greater good than helping those around us.

And so, Christ does not call people to just be more committed to improving the human happiness of others. He doesn’t call on people to be a bit more devoted to the ethical outlook they already have. Jesus calls on people to have a total upheaval of their ethics and values. He calls on people to place love for God as their greatest good, then love for their neighbors, and then love for themselves.

Which brings us to our third question about Judas: what is Judas’s true motivation in his heart?

And what John tells us is that Judas’s true motivation was self-interest.

We read in verse six that Judas made the argument he made “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.”

In other words, Judas’s whole argument was actually a lie. It was self-interest masquerading as moral indignation. [Carson, 429]

John didn’t know that at the time. Maybe Judas didn’t even admit it to himself. But that’s what it was: self-interest masquerading as moral indignation.

Chief among his self-interest was his greed. Judas took a portion of the common purse for himself, and he wanted to get the money for that ointment into the common purse so he could take some.

But one wonders if there was not also an element of internal self-defensiveness in Judas’s response. Here he is, *taking for himself* from the purse that’s supposed to be devoted to Jesus’s ministry and the needs of the poor. And here comes Mary, *giving of herself* so much in devotion to Jesus. Surely some part of Judas felt conviction as he saw her in contrast with himself. And often, when we feel

convicted, we lash out. We try to put down those who seem better than us. We produce moral indignation ... but it's really self-interest.

We criticize others for *how* they do good works that we ourselves do not do at all. We disparage others who have taken on responsibilities that we ourselves would not touch. We deride others who in truth are more righteous than we are. And we do it to make ourselves feel better. We act morally outraged, and morally superior, but we do it out of self-interest.

In our text we are given the pattern of Judas. And it's a pattern we see in ourselves far too often. First, Judas places human happiness as the highest good, while Jesus tells us that God is truly our highest good. But then, along with that, we see that the human happiness that Judas is most concerned about is really his own. Judas places himself on top, then other people, and only then God. And we can be prone to think and act in the same way.

But instead of that, Jesus and John direct our attention to Mary.

Which leads us to our second big question for this text: What is the pattern of Mary that is held out here before us?

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And what we see is that Mary gives herself radically and extravagantly to Jesus, and she is more concerned about her relationship to him than about how others perceive her.

Mary gives herself radically and extravagantly to Jesus, and she is more concerned about her relationship to him than about how others perceive her.

We see this first in the gift of the ointment. As we've already said, this was an extremely expensive possession that she was pouring out for Jesus. It would seem that either her family was very wealthy, or that this was a family heirloom passed down to her [Carson, 429]; but in any case, it was costly to her and to her family to pour it out for Jesus. But she does it, nonetheless. Such a possession could have been a source of financial security, or a source of family pride, or a symbol of family status, but Mary pours those things out at Jesus's feet in order to honor him. It was a radical and extravagant sacrifice.

But then Mary goes even further. She pours the ointment out on Jesus's feet, and she wipes his feet with her hair. This was an act of profound humility and it shows us that Mary was not just offering what she had – she was not just offering from the abundance of her possessions, but she was offering Jesus her very self.

John says that Mary anointed Jesus's feet. From the accounts of Matthew and Mark we know that Mary also anointed Jesus's head. Taken together, many have concluded that she must have anointed Jesus's whole body. Jesus would have been reclining at table, with his head towards the table, and his feet away from the table. And his body in general and his feet in particular would have been easily accessible to Mary. [Carson, 428] But John emphasizes her presence at Jesus's feet – which focuses on her humility before Jesus. [Morris, 576]

Then she goes even further than placing herself at his feet, when she uses her hair to wipe his feet. In a culture where Jesus used washing his disciples' feet as a pointed example of humility and service, we should not lose the significance of what Mary does here. And by using her hair, she makes her care and attention to Jesus even more personal. The sense of this would be even more profound in their time and place, as Jewish women did not typically unbind their hair in public. [Morris, 577] One commentator compares it to a woman at a proper, formal dinner party suddenly hitching up her long skirt to the top of her upper thighs. [Wright, 22] Mary's act would have shocked people. Her act was not a sexual one, but was more like David, dancing with abandon before the ark of the covenant, in worship [2 Sam 6].

In all these ways, Mary gives herself radically and extravagantly to Jesus.

And it quickly becomes apparent that she is far more concerned about her relationship to Jesus than about how others will perceive her.

It should not have been at all surprising that pouring out such an expensive ointment on Jesus's feet would cause shock, confusion, and even indignation. And one would have expected Mary's letting down of her hair to cause similar distress to many.

But Mary does those things anyway. Either she expected this response and consciously decided it was worth the cost to love and honor Jesus in this way, or she was so focused on Jesus and showing her love for him that she didn't even bother to consider about what others might think.

And so, as we look at this text, we see that Mary gives herself radically and extravagantly to Jesus, and she is far more concerned about her relationship to him than about how others might perceive her.

What, then, might that look like for us? What does it mean for our relationship to Christ? And what are its implications for our relationships to others?

Well, first, it means that we too are to offer ourselves to Christ – and that we are to see doing that, as Mary did, as our greatest good.

Offering all that we are and all that we have to Jesus, in love, is the greatest good we can devote ourselves to.

And because that is true, it should first and foremost drive our relationship to God.

There are all sorts of secondary benefits that come to us when we pray, worship, study the Scriptures, and so on. And those are extremely important. But they are *not* the primary thing that should drive us to these acts of devotion. The *primary* thing that should drive us to the Scriptures, to prayer, and to worship, should be a desire to offer ourselves – to pour ourselves out in humility – to Christ our Lord. *That* is what should drive our spiritual lives. *That* is what should drive our devotional lives. Like Mary, we should be driven to prayer and worship for the sake of offering ourselves to Christ.

Consider your own devotional life. What would it look like if the primary goal you held out before yourself every Lord's Day before corporate worship, and every other day before times of prayer or Scripture reading – what would it be like if the primary goal you held out before yourself in those times was to pour yourself out to the Lord? How would that change things?

Because *that* should be the primary goal of our relationship with God.

But along with that, *that* should also be the primary goal of our love and service to others.

And this is an interesting thing to think about in light of this text.

Augustine, in considering this passage, comes to an unexpected conclusion. He notes that Mary could pour this ointment right on Jesus's feet because he was physically present with her. But, as Jesus himself says will soon be true for them, so it is also true for us, that we do not have Jesus physically present before us. So how do we pour out what we have on his feet? Augustine's answer is that we pour out what we have on Jesus's feet by sacrificially serving others who are in need. [Tractate 50.6]

Now, that might seem a bit counter-intuitive, as this whole passage revolved around how it was better to pour those riches out on Jesus himself than to give them to the poor. But Augustine points out that Jesus actually said regarding those who are in need – those who are hungry, or thirsty, naked, sick, or imprisoned – that “As you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.” [Matthew 25:34-40]

Which means, when we bring these two passages together, that you can do the same thing for two very different reasons. Some might urge us to serve those in need so that our devotion to Jesus would be turned to the “*greater*” goal of promoting human happiness and flourishing. But Jesus urges us to serve those in need because when we serve them, he will consider it as service to him – which is the greater good by far. And so, we are to serve those in need knowing that Jesus will receive our acts of service to others as service to him, and that makes them of far more value than any improvement we might make to anyone's life here.

When you give to those in need, when you serve someone who needs your help, when you pour yourself into someone else in sacrificial service, whether a friend, a stranger, a child, spouse, or family member – when you sacrificially serve others, Christ calls you to do it as if you do it for him, and *in that way* it becomes an even greater good.

Taken together, what we soon see is that the ways we are called to radically and extravagantly pour ourselves out for Jesus, are, unsurprisingly, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love our neighbors as ourselves, for the sake of Christ.

But we should remember, as we do those things, that we too are also called, like Mary, to be more concerned about our relationship to Christ than about how others will perceive us.

And this is important to reflect on.

Mary does what is best for Jesus. And for that, she is scolded by those around her [Mark 14:5]. She is accused of waste [Matthew 26:8]. She is met with indignation from Jesus's own disciples [Matthew 26:8]. And she is denounced as having done wrong [John 12:5]. When Mary does the right thing – when she radically gives herself to Jesus – she is met with confusion and with accusations.

And we should often expect the same thing – just as many have before us. When Christians in the ancient world would not make a sacrifice to Caesar that acknowledged him as a god, the pagans around them were confused. “What was the big deal? Why was religious loyalty to *one* deity so important to these Christians?” And soon that confusion became accusations. “Why are these Christians so stubborn? They must be insubordinate and rebellious!”

And so it has often been since. The world, which so often treats the spiritual realm as a means to worldly ends, is dumbstruck and confounded when Christians pledge their ultimate allegiance to Christ and will not go against his word. But their initial shock soon turns into anger when our allegiance to Christ gets in their way.

And while we often are surprised by this, we shouldn't be. For the world, by necessity, has a completely different moral structure than followers of Christ do. And by that I do not mean that the two moral systems don't overlap in many, many areas. The *do* overlap in many details. They overlap so much that often both Christians and non-Christians fail to see just how different they really are. And they are different because they are both aimed at different ultimate goals. One is aimed at its vision for maximizing human happiness and flourishing in this life. The other, while valuing human flourishing, is nonetheless aimed at something else as its highest good – it is aimed, above all else, at loving, honoring, and serving Jesus Christ, our God and king.

And so, we pour ourselves out for Jesus.

That is the goal. That is the ideal. That is the picture we are given in Mary.

How then, do we do that?

How do we follow in Mary's footsteps?

And there, the answer is quite simple: We set our eyes on what Jesus has done for us.

That is what Mary does here. Mary is the sister of Lazarus, whom, we are reminded in verse one, Jesus raised from the dead and returned to Mary and Martha.

Jesus has blessed Mary. Jesus has loved Mary. Jesus has restored to Mary what she had lost in her brother's death. And with her eyes set on that, Mary gives what she has to Jesus just as Jesus gave what he had to her.

And that is a great thing. But then, in this very text, Jesus points us to something even greater.

In verse seven Jesus says that in doing what she did, Mary was preparing Jesus for his burial. And that must have been a jarring statement to everyone present. Even Mary must have been taken

aback, as her actions pointed to even deeper truths than she herself had known when she enacted them. [Carson, 429-430]

Because Jesus would give of himself for Mary – and for all of his people – far more than Mary had just given of herself for him.

Jesus would go to the cross. Jesus would pour himself out for his people completely – he would pour himself out even to the point of death, and he would do it for our sake. He would do it to save us – to save us from ourselves, to save us from our sin, to save us from the judgment of God that we deserved.

Jesus poured himself out for you, that you might be made right with God, that you might know your Maker, that you might be a child of God, and that you might dwell in the household of God in joy and peace for all eternity. For that – for you – Jesus poured himself out utterly and completely on the cross.

And knowing that, and believing that, and setting the eyes of your heart on that, is how you then pour yourself out for him.

We do not pour ourselves out for Jesus by sheer force of will. We don't do it by pure moral fortitude. We don't do it in a burst of emotion. We don't do it out of cold, steely resolve. We may call on some of those qualities. But by themselves, they will not get us there.

No. We are able to pour out what we have and what we are in service to Jesus in the same way that Mary was able to: by setting our eyes on him and what he has done for us.

Jesus Christ, the Maker of all things, the King of the universe, has poured himself out for you on the cross. And now you can live your life pouring yourself out for him. What could be a higher goal than that?

Amen.

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**This sermon draws on material from:**

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