

Extravagant Love

by Glenn Meldrum

Glenn Meldrum's sermon on 'Extravagant Love' explores the profound devotion of Mary towards Jesus, highlighting themes of forgiveness and sacrificial love.

Duration: 55:54

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 9:36, Mark 1:40, Mark 11:15-17, Luke 2:49, Luke 19:10, John 1:1-3

Topics: "Love"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the story of Mary anointing Jesus with perfume. He emphasizes that Jesus is not just a man or a prophet, but the Son of God and the Creator of the universe. The speaker highlights the significance of Mary's act, as she prepared Jesus for his burial. He also mentions Judas' betrayal and how Mary's story will be remembered throughout the world wherever the gospel is preached. The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing Jesus' true identity and the value of acts of devotion and sacrifice.

Transcript

And I want to look at extravagant love. So we are going to look at a woman that demonstrates to Jesus extravagant love. So beginning in Mark, the 14th chapter, in the first verse, it says, now the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were only two days away.

And the chief priests and teachers of the law were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill him, but not during the feast, they said, or the people may riot. While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.

Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor, and they rebuked her harshly. Leave her alone, said Jesus. Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me.

The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want, but you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial.

I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her. Then Judas Iscariot, one of the 12, went to the chief priests to portray Jesus to

them. They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money, so he watched for an opportunity to hand him over." A very astounding story here, and I hope I'm able to adequately try and portray what is in this section of scripture.

This is such an important section of scripture, I think that we kind of miss it. We kind of read it and say, isn't that nice? But we have to understand that Jesus said something about this Mary and this circumstance that is so important that He never made this statement to another person in scripture at all. It is not made anywhere in scripture.

In the Old Testament or New, and He says, wherever the gospel be preached, what this woman has done to me will be told in memory of her. It is an absolutely astounding statement when we look at what Jesus said in relation to this woman. Three of the Gospels record this account.

It's interesting that this woman could do something that would move Christ that much that He would make such a statement like that. Now, this particular account is sandwiched in between two little stories, in essence, or two little statements that are brought out for a very important purpose, so I'm not going to directly touch on them. I'll just highlight these two things.

There's two contrasts that are presented, and a contrast is presented in the beginning about the Pharisees and then Mary. So you have these Pharisees that are plotting for Jesus to kill Him, and what is Mary doing? She is going and she is adoring Him. She is showering upon Him extravagant love.

And then at the close of the story, you have another contrast that is presented, which is a contrast between Judas and Mary. And here you have the situation of Judas where he is selling Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, and Mary that is taking a year's worth of wages and showering it upon Him in an act of love. And so I think it's very interesting that these two contrasts are put there, and Mary's put right in the middle of it to focus upon the beauty of the act that she ended up doing.

Mary was a common woman. Her sister was Martha. Her brother was Lazarus.

They were people who strove to follow Jesus. They were disciples of Christ. They strove to support Him in His ministry.

So they may have had a little bit of money, but it doesn't seem, at least as I read it, that they were some wealthy individuals. But they strove to try and do what they could to help Jesus, to support His ministry. So they followed Him in various situations and so on.

Not a lot is known beyond Mary and the aspect of her sister and her brother. Not much is known about them. But there's a section of Scripture that I'm going to take a couple of minutes on and explain that many theologians are divided on.

And some think that this section of Scripture speaks of Mary, and other ones think that they don't. I happen to believe that it is speaking of Mary, and so I'm going to approach it from that standpoint. And the reason why I think that is because there is a similarity of acts that takes place in this.

And this is the story of the sinner woman in Luke 7. And so in the story of the sinner woman, no name is given to this woman. But she has a similar act where she comes to Jesus and she anoints Jesus. In this situation, it is an act of repentance that she's doing.

But let's look at the story just for a brief moment about this sinner woman. The term sinner woman is just a very polite way that the Scriptures will use that she was a prostitute. So she was selling herself.

And so we know what that's all about. So here's this woman selling herself. And we're not told from the situation and how she became a prostitute and how she came to live that type of life.

But guaranteed she didn't come by it because it was going to be fun. She came into it somehow through misery and pain, whether it was the aspect of a young woman that went into rebellion or whether her family died in some tragedy and she was left alone and all she could do was sell herself or whatever. We're not sure how that came about.

But yet, nonetheless, that was the occupation that she had picked up. That's how she was trying to put food on the table to survive. And you can just imagine the pain that this woman went through, the tremendous pain that was in her life.

Imagine all the promises that men gave to this woman. Went up to her and says, baby, I love you. We'll be together forever.

But then he's gone. He gets what he wants and he's out of there. Can you imagine how her whole life just became a business in essence? She was selling herself just to get by and so she hardened her conscience to it.

She became numb to it so she could try and cope with the pain and the sorrow of her life. Some way or the other, she heard about Jesus. Though the Scriptures doesn't say it, what I imagine the situation to be that she went out and heard Him preach.

Maybe multiple times heard Him preach. I believe that when Jesus spoke, that the power of God was there in such a tangible way that conviction was so heavy upon the people that the crowd would be weeping under their sin. And so I can just imagine Mary here, a woman so filled with pain and hopelessness and despair, feeling totally, completely trapped in her life.

Feeling that there was no way out, no escape from it. And then she hears Jesus. And here is a message of deliverance, a message of forgiveness.

They had to be eating at her. Had to be just burning inside of her this desire for liberty, this desire for freedom to be able to escape from what she had gotten herself into. And so for whatever brought her to that point, I believe that it was such a desire to be free from the sin that she was in, that she finds out where Jesus is dining that night.

And He's dining at a man called Simon as well. Another Simon, but he's not Simon the leper. He's Simon the Pharisee.

And she runs into Simon's house, uninvited, runs in and falls at Jesus' feet. And I can imagine that the Pharisees wanted to take her out and throw her out of the house, but because of Jesus' request, they allowed her to stay there. And she began to weep at His feet.

And she wept at His feet and washed His feet with her tears and then went and took her own hair and dried His feet with her hair and kissed His feet. She was in an act of repentance from the message that Christ had delivered that was piercing her heart and bring her to this place of surrender to Him. And the

Pharisees grew angry in their self-righteousness.

They said to themselves, if He knew what kind of woman this was, then He wouldn't allow her to touch Him. But He knew what they were thinking, so He confronted them. He makes a statement, I think, that is so interesting.

He turns to Simon. He says, But he who has forgiven much, the same loves much. But he who has forgiven little, the same loves little.

The whole idea that He was presenting here was this woman that was a great sinner came to the point to want forgiveness. And because she wanted forgiveness and she understood the greatness of her crimes against Heaven, that she became a woman that would want to love much. But the Pharisees, and every Pharisee in that room was just as wicked a sinner as she was, but they could not see their sin.

So they were not willing to love much. They didn't love Jesus. Jesus came in the house and with the statements that Jesus made, they didn't wash His feet.

That was a common thing. If you came into the house, they would wash your feet just out of respect. They didn't even wash His feet.

They would give Him a kiss as a greeting. They didn't even give Him a kiss of greeting. It was a statement of despising Him.

Their very actions were actions that they were there only trying to entrap Him. Not wanting to gain anything from Him, but they were wanting to hope to find something to accuse Him is all. And here this woman comes in and does in a way that none of them could even imagine or was willing to do of those things of hospitality, of kindness to Christ that none of them were even willing to do.

So he who is forgiven little loves little but he who is forgiven much loves much. And so here's this sinner woman tremendously, wonderfully forgiven of her great crimes against heaven. And so now she became a woman that would want to love in an extravagant way.

You know, we don't have to have a filthy life to understand how evil our sins are. We have a concept that the great testimonies are those who have lived the crazy lives and shot people and done all kinds of evil. And we go and we esteem those as the great testimonies.

And people who have not had that same type of testimony can sometimes feel half a Christian. Well, I've not been that evil of a person. The issue is not how much sin we do in and of itself.

It is the revelation of how evil sin is that we come to the place of tremendous thanksgiving that He would forgive us. So the person that's been a murderer and a rapist and all the other things that could go on he can be thankful of God and have that same concept of accepting the pardon from Christ and be extravagant in his love towards God. And a kid growing up in the church that comes the same identical revelation of the evilness of their sins of how it is so damnable can come to the same place of forgiveness and thankfulness as that other individual.

Because what it comes down to be is understanding the greatness of the gift that He offers us. And so I believe Mary was a sinner woman. Let's look at the story of what we have just read in Mark the 14th chapter.

Here's this woman that has just been wonderfully forgiven of Christ. And so now this woman wanted to do something for Jesus. What do you do for Jesus? What do you buy Jesus? I want you to think about that.

How many parents have wished for the perfect child? But you know the worst child to ever raise on this planet would have been Jesus. He would have been the worst child to raise. Can you imagine here's mom and dad having an argument and there's Jesus looking at you? Can you imagine being the brother of Jesus? What a nightmare to follow.

What a nightmare to follow. We don't understand this. We are so flawed and here is just absolute perfection in the flesh.

Absolute perfection there. It would be a constant reproof. It would be terrible.

I think it would be terrible raising Jesus. Absolutely terrible. So what do you buy Him? Just think of birthdays.

What does mom and dad buy Jesus? Well, here's Mary wanting to buy Jesus something. What do you do for Him? What do you do for Him? You could go and give Him a Mercedes and He wouldn't care. He doesn't care about it.

You could go and buy Him a Rolex watch and He wouldn't care. He's not moved by it. You could give Him a million dollar home and He'd give it away for whatever reason because none of those things move Him.

What do you buy Jesus? He doesn't care about designer clothes. He won't wear a \$5,000 suit and \$1,000 shoes. None of those things move Him.

He's not impressed by the wealth of men. He's not impressed by the power of men. He's not impressed by their possessions.

None of it impresses Him. What do you buy Him? Well, Mary wanted to do something for Jesus. And so one day, she got the idea.

Her heart was so filled with joy, thanksgiving of the forgiveness that she had so freely received from Him that she wanted to buy Him something. And she went to the market to try and find Him something. Now, I've never been to the Middle East.

I don't know whether I'll ever go or not. I have no idea what the Lord's plans are. But I've been to Mexico.

I've been to the markets in Mexico. And so I have seen them. I hear there's certain similarities.

There's differences with it. Here you're walking down the road or the little lanes that are there and stalls are on both sides and they're clamoring and screaming and shouting at you trying to sell you their stuff. So I can just imagine Mary walking along and as she's walking along, people are trying to sell her stuff and so the guy that has all the Rolex watches comes out and says, oh, you want something for a man? Yes, I have the best watches.

Look at this one. And look at that. And she walks away and says no.

She goes down further and there's the guy with the Mercedes and he's wanting to sell her Mercedes and the Lexus dealers on the other side. All these wares trying to come to go and say, oh, get the best. We've

got the best.

The best prices and the best product. She keeps on going. One stall after another and comes to the end of the market and there's one final stall there and she comes up to that stall and he's selling perfumes.

Ointment. Not perfumes like what women would wear where they spray a little perfume but it'd be an ointment that would be a perfumed ointment. Be very strong, very pungent.

And so she goes up there and out on the counter is the Walmart brands. You see back a little bit the JCPenney or the Sears brands that are a little bit better and then you have the Saks Fifth Avenue ones and he has the more exclusive ones set aside because he wants to make sure those ones there aren't stolen. So she looks at him and says, well, is this all you've got? Is this the best you have? He says, little lady, what do you mean the best? Look at this stuff.

This is good. You won't find better here. He says, but is that the best that you have? He says, I have something better but I don't let people know that.

He says, well, what do you have better? I say, I have something fit for a king but lady, you don't have that kind of money. And she says, how much money does it take? He says, well, it costs you a year's wages. Well, what's a year's wages around here? Let's just make kind of a national average.

Let's say, I don't know what the national average is, probably \$35,000 but let's just say in the area \$30,000. Well, do you know how long it takes if you make \$30,000 a year to save \$30,000? I mean, it takes a long time. \$30,000 for a millionaire is nothing but for an average individual it's a tremendous amount of money and like I said in the beginning I don't believe that Mary, Martha and Lazarus were wealthy individuals.

So they were average individuals. So however she came across her money we have no idea. We could guess at some possibilities.

Maybe her parents died and a dowry was set aside by her brother so that when she got married and she was going to take her money for a dowry and what that meant that if she gave away her dowry she wouldn't be able to get married. Maybe it was money she accumulated from prostituting herself. We don't know where the money came from but nonetheless she went and saw this ointment.

The man took it out and showed it to her. Wouldn't even let her touch it. And she says, I'll buy it.

And he laughs. Yeah, right. Where are you going to get that kind of money? He says, hold it.

I'll be back in a little bit. She runs home and gathers all her nickels and dimes together all her denaries or whatever else makes all that would be a day's wages and she comes back with a little purse weighted down with all the wealth that she owned. Everything she owned.

She stands before the man and puts it on the counter and the man's just flabbergasted. So he goes and he grabs this ointment fit for a king and puts it on the counter and as she slides the money to him he slides the ointment to her. Can you imagine her walking from that marketplace? She would want to get to Jesus as quickly as she could.

She knew where he was dining that night. So she takes this ointment to herself and holds it very tightly but walks as fast as she dared. That's the last thing you could imagine.

What a nightmare to drop it upon the streets there to be totally wasted. So she takes this ointment then and she comes into the home of Simon the leper. Now Mary was a figure that was always around.

She was always there. So her coming in would not have been thought of something strange. So she would come in and everybody would just basically ignore, see Mary there.

So Mary comes in and she walks around and she comes behind Jesus and the influence of the Greek culture into Israel is mentioned in the way that you hear in multiple situations where they reclined at the table. That was not the original Jewish way. That was a Greek influence into the Jewish culture.

And so people would lay down when they would actually eat. They'd be laying on their side like in sofas and they'd be reclining and she came behind him as he was reclining at the table and she went and opened up that jar. It says that she broke the jar.

It doesn't mean that she literally broke it. It means she broke the seal and she opened it up. And she took that ointment and she began to pour it on his head.

Now the moment that ointment started coming out of that jar and started falling upon his head and flowing down his head and down his face and down his beard the moment it started coming out all of a sudden that entire room was filled with this pungent, beautiful aroma because it was pure in art. It was absolutely the best. It was imported.

It was not something that was natural there. They could not get it from Israel. So it was this rare imported ointment that was filling the place with this beautiful aroma.

And it only took a moment after that aroma filled that room that every head started turning around saying where's that coming from? Where's that coming from? And they see Mary there, oblivious to them all, just pouring this on Jesus' head and Jesus just sitting there going, just literally enjoying it. Years waging. When was the last time we squandered years wages? You see this has really little to do with money.

It has to do with the attachments of the heart. She gave up easily what she was not clinging to. She could give up a year's wages because that was not the goal, the idol of her life.

That was not the prize of life. The prize of her life was the freedom that she had received and the one who set her free. And so as a result of the great liberty that she'd experienced because of the love of the Savior, she did not know Him as who He truly and fully was.

She believed, I believe that she believed that He was the Messiah but they didn't know what Messiah was because the Jewish concept of Messiah at that time did not have the concept that He was God incarnate in flesh and blood. It wouldn't be until the resurrection, after the resurrection and Jesus opened more fully to them the reality of who He was after the resurrection before He ascended to heaven and then the Holy Spirit bringing a greater revelation to them would they begin to understand it. Only after the resurrection.

So she believed Him to be the Messiah but it was a Jewish concept of Messiah as this reigning King that would come in and deliver them from the tyranny of the Romans but Jesus came to deliver them from a tyranny that was worse and that was the tyranny of sin. And so her spending a year's wages was less about money but it was about devotion about the passion to bring joy to God. You see true love never asks what will it cost.

Never ever asks. You know that. The more I fall in love with Jesus the less I will ever ask what will this cost me because then it becomes irrelevant.

When I love Him, if He asks of me, it's irrelevant what it's going to cost me. You want me to do it? Yes. We stop the aspect of is this convenient? Is it comfortable? Is it easy? Those things are gone because love brings us to the point that we'll do whatever.

Holiness is not a burden for those who are in love. Not a burden at all. It's a joy to be holy because we understand that holiness is the highway to His presence such as Ezekiel 35 brings out.

That holiness is a path to His presence. That through holiness we enter into intimacy with Him. We can only be holy through relationship.

Holiness can come no other way. Legalism can never give holiness. A legalistic concept of Christianity is a miserable, cruel taskmaster that can give no joy, no peace, and no victory because it's not based in relationship.

In the Old Testament, holiness came through relationship alone. So a utensil could be holy. A building could be holy.

A sheep could be holy. A man could be holy, but only in relationship to God. And so when the temple was dedicated to God, it became holy to Him.

When the utensils used in the worship was consecrated to God, they became holy to Him. When the lamb was sacrificed to God, it became a holy sacrifice. And when the man was consecrated to God, he became holy.

It was only in relationship with God. It was not centered around the do's and don'ts of the law. It was centered around the relationship.

And that very concept is the same identical thing that is in the New Testament. That holiness comes through relationship. And those who love Him love holiness because they want to be close to Him.

So holiness is not a burden. It's a joy to their heart. It's a joy.

So the more I love Him, the more I will love holiness. Not legalism, because those who are legalists have no concept of intimacy with God. Talk to those who are suffering under legalism, and you'll just see bondage.

No concept of intimacy. But those who are in love with Him, holiness becomes beautiful. And so the prize that He would ask, He would go to us and say, Child, there's sin in your life.

And we'll say, How do I get it out? Help me to get it out. No more do I want that in my heart. He could say, Go and sell everything you have and reach these people.

And you'll say yes, because love will bring about the trust that He knows best, that Father knows best. We're told from this section of Scripture that she poured perfume on Christ's head as a prophetic act, preparing for His burial. She had no idea that she was actually being led of the Spirit of God to do what she was doing.

Had no idea. But she was doing it just for love's sake. She was doing it for love's sake.

There's a principle here that is so interesting. Something that we need to learn in a deeper way. You see, when she came into that room, she entered that room to pour this ointment on Jesus' head and she came for an audience of one.

Worship is about an audience of one. When we come together as saints and we come to worship God, we do it together, but yet we come alone before this God for an audience of one. If I come for anybody else, for any other reason than I'm not coming for Him, I'm coming for an ulterior motive.

If I am afraid to worship because of what people will think or what they'll say, or if they think I'm foolish or whatever, if I'm afraid to do it, it's not about them then. It's still about me. I'm still the focus of that.

When Mary went and bought this ointment and poured it on Jesus' head, she was not caring what the apostles thought, what the disciples thought, what anybody in that home thought. It wasn't about them. It was about the Savior.

She was out to love on the Savior. She was out to demonstrate the grateful heart that she had and she was going to do it the best way that she knew to bring joy to His heart. It was all about an audience of one.

That's what worship is to be. About an audience of one. You know, that's what prayer is to be about an audience of one.

That we come before Him for Him though we're in the midst of a people, that we come before Him to be just with Him. But there's something else about that I think that is so interesting. And this is one of the places where Jesus really wants to take us.

And it's the idea of a selfless act of worship. Selfless act of worship. You know what Mary didn't do? I think this is very interesting.

You know what Mary didn't do? She didn't go up to Jesus and whisper in His ear and says, Jesus, I'll pour this very expensive ointment on your head if you give me a hundredfold return. I absolutely despise the prosperity gospel. I despise it.

It is a humanistic gospel that is not the gospel of Jesus Christ. It's another gospel. Because it is totally a self-absorbed, self-centered, selfish message that's all about the person and nothing to do with God.

It is, I will pour this ointment on your head if you will give me a hundredfold. People that do that don't go to the market to buy the ointment for Jesus because they want to love on Jesus. They buy the ointment because they want something back.

It's totally selfish. It's totally self-absorbed. Her act had nothing to do with whether she would get anything back from Him.

It was irrelevant. She wasn't doing it to get anything back. It was just a sheer act of extravagant love.

Just she loved Jesus. And all she wanted to do was just shower Him with the love that she could as she understood it. It wasn't about getting one thing back.

How many times, let's be honest with ourselves, how many times have we given to God in one way or the other and we expected something in return? Or we're going through trials and we get angry at God. He says, Oh God, I'm just trying to serve you. Why is all this trouble happening to me? Because the moment that comes in, what has happened is we are to realize that none of it has been for Him then.

It's all been for us. Now there's a growth in this and I don't want to bring us in a place where we look down upon this. Jacob is a very interesting man in Scripture.

When you look at Jacob, you find a very selfish, self-absorbed individual. I mean, look at the prayers of Jacob and all the early prayers of Jacob is all about me. I'll serve you if you bless me, oh God.

And God in His kindness just did, but He was in the process of changing the man. And then you look at Jacob's final prayer. You know what Jacob's final prayer was? Just praise Him and adore Him.

Ask nothing of this God in return. Just praise Him and adore Him. A life's journey to bring him to a point of selflessness.

Now I don't believe we have to wait until we're old to finally come to a point of some selfless love. He wants us to learn it now in our life. He wants us to learn it now in our marriage.

The only way I will be able to love selflessly another person is I must first learn how to selflessly love Him. As long as I love Him with a selfish agenda, I will only know selfish love and be able to give it to others. That's all I will have.

So if I want to learn selfless love to people, I must first learn selfless acts of love to my God. It must first be between me and Him, because when I learn it between me and Him, then I will easily be able to start manifesting it to others. But every time I find the selfishness of my love made manifest, it's because I'm lacking in that selfless love between me and God.

What health that brings to marriages. And let's just be honest here. How many times have we loved our spouses with a selfish agenda? Why do marriages break up? Because we say that there's a limit.

I'll love you only so far. Well, you don't love me anymore? Well, I'm not going to love you anymore. I mean, isn't that some of the attitudes we get in marriages? Well, if you're not going to be kind to me, I'm not going to be kind back.

Well, you're going to have an attitude at me? Well, I'm going to have an attitude at you then. What madness. What madness that we live out.

Instead of understanding that the greatest thing that we can do is selflessly love our spouse, because even if they're being a snot, you want to know what selfless love does? It brings change where nothing else could. Selfless. Selfless act of love.

William McDonald made this statement I think is interesting. He says, any sacrifices we make are no sacrifice at all when seen in light of Calvary. Besides all this, we only give to the Lord what we cannot keep anyway and what we have ceased to love.

See, when we really do fall in love with Him and we learn selfless love to God, sacrifices are no longer sacrifices. They become easy. You know, the problem that we have is we hold on to things in this life.

We hold on to our possessions. We hold on to people. We cling to things that cannot satisfy.

And so we cling to them and then God reaches down and says, this is an idol and He goes to grab hold of it and start pulling it out of our hands and it hurts so bad. We scream and shout. We claw.

We fight. We drag it back down. We rip it out of His hands.

When we cease loving the things and we love Him more, we hold everything in our hands. Open it. And we allow Him anything God.

You can take anything. I'll let you take anything from me. And I'll let you put anything in my hands and I will not grab hold of it and I will not possess it myself.

I will not let it possess me. But you can come and take it if you want. You can let me keep it if you want.

That's where He wants to bring us, to a selfless love where He is the pride. Now let's take a few minutes and look at the response of the Apostles and Disciples. I think this is so interesting when we look at this.

The Apostles and Disciples were that far away, only that far away from being a Pharisee. They were acting like Pharisees here. I mean, church, we really don't understand how close we are.

I mean, we could become Pharisees real easy. So they were on the way to becoming Pharisees and thank God for His mercy because He was going to help them out of it, but ultimately help them out of it by going to the cross and taking them there with Him. So let's look at them.

Well, when they see Mary doing this act of extravagant love, what happens? They get angry at her. Why did they get angry at her? Well, really what it comes down to being, we'll look at in just a moment, they got angry at her because she was doing something that they did not have the heart nor the ability to do because they weren't willing to love Christ in that way. But they got angry at her and they got angry at Jesus.

They were angry at Jesus because guess what? Jesus was enjoying this act of devotion. So they were angry at Mary and angry at Jesus and they tried to bring a justification for it. It says, well, you could look at all the poor that could be fed.

It had nothing to do with the poor. Had nothing to do with the poor. You know what it had to do? Is the act of extravagant love of Mary reproved the selfish love of the Apostles and Disciples.

Rebuked them. And so what happens? And we've all done this in our own ways. You know, somebody's walking is what they should do or loving like what they should or giving is what they should and we're not and we get angry at them as a result.

And so we somehow try to ridicule them or whatever or we go and say, well, you know, they'll grow out of that or whatever. We somehow try to justify it because we ourselves have the problem and not them. And so they didn't look at themselves.

They weren't willing to look at themselves. That's the thing that's so interesting. These Apostles that we revere so much and we rightly should.

I mean, it was Christ's choice to pull them out of the world and to make them His followers in such a way but they're the ones who became Pharisees in the situation condemning Mary for her extravagant act of love. They were not willing to look at themselves. They didn't go and say, well, why didn't we do that? Well, why didn't we love them enough that we would take of our wealth and put it into His hands? Why didn't we think of it? None of them did that.

They weren't angry at themselves. There's a price of being a radical. Mary was striving to be a radical, though she didn't understand what that really was in that situation, but that's what she was.

She was abandoning herself to her God and she was becoming radical as a result and what happened is she was even being abused, not just from the world, she was now being abused even from within the church. There's a price when the fire of God, if we want the fire of God in us, there will be a price. There will be those who will reject us.

The world will reject us to some extent. There's those who want the truth that will embrace it, but sometimes the greatest rejection can happen from within the church as we try to grow closer to Him and everything else. Then they'll condemn us.

Ah, you're just becoming self-righteous and look at you, what, you think you're holier than thou or whatever, come against us because you're going zealous for God. There is a price and we have to understand that, that there is a price and be unafraid to pay that price if we really want to draw near to Him. But a point I want to take a couple of minutes on and I want to touch, because I believe it's important.

You see, they grew angry at her because they were easily offended. They were easily offended. Jesus told us in John the 16th chapter in the first verses, these things I've spoken on to you that you should not be offended.

I want to look at a couple of minutes at being offended because I'm going to say this from the standpoint of a man who pastored 16 years and as an evangelist I have had to deal with people being offended as well. And you know, I really pity people that are easily offended because people that are easily offended are miserable in the home. They're miserable husbands or miserable wives or miserable children because if they're making everybody miserable in the church, they're also making everybody miserable in the home and they're making everybody miserable in the workplace because they're easily offended by everything.

They always got a chip on their shoulders, they always got an attitude. Nobody's doing anything good enough and all the criticism that flows from it. It's a critical spirit that is so destructive and so miserable so all those people that are touched by that spirit feels miserable as a result of it, then the person that's suffering under it themselves is miserable, it's a terrible thing.

So you know what that does to marriages? Wives, if you're easily offended, your husband doesn't say the right thing to you, then you cop an attitude and you're going to give him the silent treatment. Or husbands, if you're easily offended, same thing, if you don't get the response of your wife or she doesn't cook the meal the way you want her, she says a word a little cross to you, you cop an attitude and you're easily offended and then you give her the silent treatment. We can be a people very easily offended and you all know it, we can get easily offended at God.

You didn't do what I wanted, you didn't do it my way. I don't want to go through this trial right now, what are you doing? So we grow easily offended. But he told us that he told us that he gave us these truths so that

we would not be easily offended.

You all know it, I'm just going to say this in passing, if you're a person that's easily offended, there's a God that delivers. But you have to want deliverance from it, you have to see that you're easily offended and you've got to start going to the throne of grace and saying, dear God, deliver me from this ugly mentality. Do you hear what I'm saying? God, deliver me from this thing that is so ugly in my life.

You all know it, it is tremendous liberty to be free from a critical spirit from being easily offended at all the time. I know what it's pastoring. There's some people, if you don't go and hug after service, man, they're going to have an attitude at you.

You may not see them for a couple of weeks as a result. I'm not joking. I'm not joking, it's absolutely true.

It sounds funny, but they get so self-absorbed that you think that, and then as a pastor, you know, you're trying to deal with these people because if you don't talk to them, man, they're going to have an attitude. Then you're going to pay the price down the road. What craziness when we're called to love.

I just say this in passing because the apostles were easily offended. They grew offended at Mary. For extravagant love reproved their selfish, self-centered love.

I want to take you to another story of Mary. You see, when you start looking at all the stories of Mary, that's why I think Mary's that sinner woman, because I think there's so much that speaks of a life and the acts that came from this woman that was forgiven in such a way. But let's look at another situation of Mary, which is in Luke 10.

I'll just give you the story for time's sake. Luke 10. It'll come out of the verses of 38-42.

And here, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus are having Jesus over for dinner. Now, let's look at this from a very natural standpoint. They didn't know Jesus was God incarnate in flesh and blood.

That'd make the whole scenario even more complicated. They believed He was the Messiah. I don't know if they fully knew.

They truly believed He was the Messiah. And they knew that He was the most controversial man in all of Israel. They knew the man prayed for the sick, and they were healed, made the blind see the lame walk, and the dead raised.

They knew this, and that man was coming to their house for dinner. Now, ladies, if Jesus was coming over your house, what would you do? Would you get the barbecue out and put some hot dogs on it and some styrofoam cups and plastic silverware and paper plates? What would you do if Jesus was coming to your house? I bet you the first thing you'd do is you'd clean your house. Even if you stuffed everything under the sofa and in the oven, you'd make sure that it needs to look good on the outside.

Jesus coming over. The most popular man in all of Israel, the most hated man in all of Israel coming to your house to eat. And so what does Martha do, man? She gets all in a tizzy over it.

She gets into the kitchen, man, she's cooking up a storm. And you know if Jesus was coming to your house, you would not experiment on Him. What would you do? You have a dish that you make just absolutely great no matter what.

And that's the dish you would make. Because you'd want the best thing to put before Him. You wouldn't want some burnt sacrifice to offer Him, so you'd make sure you did something that was good.

So Martha's laboring away in that kitchen, slaving up a storm, man. She put the best silverware on the table, the best plates, the napkins and the tablecloth. I mean it's looking good.

She's sweating up a storm in there. But the whole time she's easily offended. She is getting angry at Mary.

She's getting angry at Mary. And she's fuming in there. And ladies, I want you to think about this, because men, we've done it too in our own ways.

This fuck, this wine and so and so, help me. Just copping this attitude the whole time. Finally it comes to the point where she can't take no more.

She goes in the other room and she goes to Jesus. Jesus, tell my sister to come in and help me with dinner. I'm just trying to put a wonderful spread on for you.

Jesus, what an upsetting individual. He'd just look at her with these beautiful eyes. Oh, Martha, Martha.

Hot dogs on the barbie would have been fine. You've missed it all, Martha. What Mary has chosen cannot be taken from you.

Imagine Mary and Martha are in their eighties and they're in a convalescent home together sharing a room. And you go and visit them. And you sit down at Martha's bedside.

And you go to Martha and you say, tell me about your life. And Martha starts saying, oh, the meals we had. We had Jesus over and we had Peter over and John and the Apostles.

Oh, we had such great times together. We just loved those times. And then you sit down on the bed of Mary.

And you say, tell me about your life. And you know what she would say? She says, I looked in those eyes. I saw those eyes.

I sat at his feet. I heard words that burned in my heart. Martha loved Jesus.

I'm not going to say she didn't love Jesus. But she didn't love Jesus like Mary did. Mary had a passion for Him.

The greatest thing in her life was knowing this God was being near Him. It was not the meals or the busyness of life or the possessions or anything else. The passion in her life was an extravagant love.

The thankfulness for what she had done in forgiving her of her great crimes, of purchasing her as she would soon understand in a few days' time from this event that she would soon understand that He would die in her place for her sins, that she could be forgiven and He would rise again from the dead that she might have eternal life. Mary was learning what selfless love was all about. So what does Jesus do to these apostles? He sharply rebukes them.

Leave her alone! Why are you bothering her? And I want you to hear this one statement that He said because this is the core of what this whole message is all about. She has done a beautiful thing to me. Who is Jesus? He was the Son of God.

He was God incarnate in flesh. So we've got to understand who's speaking here. This is not just a man, not just a prophet.

He is the Creator God that spoke and everything came into existence. And when you look at who is saying these words it is absolutely astounding that He would say to a person she has done a beautiful thing to me. She did what she could.

You know what Jesus was saying? He was saying, I can be pleased. They can bring pleasure to my heart, my mind. You know, I don't comprehend this.

I'm just going to be honest. I don't comprehend it. It's like you sit down in a park and there's a bunch of ants out there and you sit down and you look at one ant and say, you are bringing pleasure to me by what you're doing.

I mean, we have no idea. We have no idea. We cannot condescend down to that level to be able to understand such a thing that God would so stoop down so far that He would so stoop down to a level that He could understand who we are and what we are and that we could then bring pleasure to Him.

That my life can be something that would bring joy to the Creator God. That my worship can be pleasure to Him. That my prayers can be pleasure to Him.

That my strivings for holiness can be pleasing to His heart. That the extravagant acts that I do in devotion to Him can bring pleasure to Him. That I could bring pleasure to the heart of God.

Isn't that absolutely astounding? That we that are just frail, broken vessels could bring pleasure to this God? That we could bring joy to His heart? I think so many times people, because they don't understand this, they're always striving to try and make God happy, but yet they feel that He's unable to be happy with them and so they never come to the place to ever know what it is to enjoy their God. Paul told us a little bit about pleasing God and he told us how to please Him in Romans 12, 1 and 2. And what is the whole scenario of those two verses? That I am to give my life as a living sacrifice. I'm to surrender, abandon myself recklessly to Him and not conform anymore to this world, but be transformed by the will of mine.

And then he says, then you will know my good pleasing and perfect will. The only way I will be pleasing to God and knowing His will is that abandoned life, that recklessly abandoned life to Him out of a devotion of love. Out of a passion for His presence.

I can only speculate, just looking at my own life, that after Jesus died and rose again and ascended to heaven, I can imagine they kicked themselves. I can imagine them going and saying, why didn't we do that? Why was I so blind to who Jesus was? Why was I so selfish? Why did I waste the time? Why did I grow angry at Mary for what she did when she was doing what was right and I was selfishly loving Jesus? They didn't understand who was reclining at that table. They didn't understand fully what it meant for Him to be Messiah.

And more than that, they didn't understand that it was God right there before them. How astounding. Mary's devotion brought pleasure to God.

She can come to a place in your life, if you really want to be, that your life brings pleasure to God. You can bring pleasure to God. It doesn't mean that you will be without fault.

It doesn't mean you will strive to live a life without fault, but it doesn't mean you won't fall and fail and make mistakes. A father can be pleased with a little baby that's just learning to walk, and every time it walks, it falls down. Be totally pleased with that child as it's striving to learn to walk.

Totally pleased. But when the boy is 20 years old, he expects him not to be wearing diapers anymore. To be pleased with a young man is different than what it is to be pleased with a little baby that's learning how to walk.

Two different things. He expects two different things. How many of us should be walking as men or walking as women, and we're still in the infantile place, always falling down, always in the same spot, instead of learning what it is to walk and to become the men and women God ordained us to be.

It's in that place that we fulfill what He's called us to do, that we become pleasing to God. Not in the place where there is no fault with us, but in the place where we strive to be pleasing to Him in everything that we do, where we long to live out a life of extravagant love to Him, in whatever way that we can. How can you shower Him with love? What can you do with Him in expressing love that brings pleasure to His heart? Extravagant love produces extravagant devotion.

Extravagant devotion produces extravagant sacrifices. Extravagant sacrifices produces extravagant fruit. You know, when you look in the history of missions, in the history of revival, in the history of men and women of God who have touched this planet, you will find that they understood extravagant love, extravagant sacrifices, and that they produced extravagant fruit as a result.

We will not produce extravagant fruit if we will not love extravagantly and sacrifice extravagantly. There is a price for it. But you know, when we fall in love, the price ceases to be expendable.

Now, as I begin to close, I want to touch on extravagant love of somebody else. I want to look at the extravagant love. Who is this who demands my love and devotion? Who is this who demands my total surrender? Who is this guy? Is he truly worth my total abandonment? Is he truly worth the extravagant love? Is he truly worth the giving up of everything that I own, of everything that I am, of everything I hold dear? Is he truly worth holding everything in my hands so loosely that I hold nothing dear unto myself except him? Is he truly worth it? I don't have the time to go deeply in this, but even if I did, I would fail terribly in trying to adequately express the wonder and the magnificence of this God and how worthy He is of our total abandonment, but let's begin in the very beginning stage of what this is all about.

Every year we celebrate Christmas and we've turned Christmas into some tame holiday. The world has turned it into something that is Christless and nothing about a God who loved us like that. But the church has made it all about a tame little baby in a manger.

And do you know who that baby in a manger was? It was God incarnate in flesh and blood. The same one who spoke a word and all of heaven came into existence. And all of earth was created.

The same identical one. And that little baby did not come into this world to be a nice little savior. He came in this world to upset the kingdoms of men and the kingdom of hell.

All I've ever been my entire life as a human being. So I have no idea of the tremendous sacrifice it would be to be God. Almighty God.

And to empty myself of certain divine attributes to take upon flesh and blood. I have no idea of the tremendous act of extravagant love that this God did for me. To be conceived in the womb of a woman, birthed through natural childbirth, and then be raised in obscurity right from his birth he was hated.

They wanted to kill him. Herod wanted to kill him right from his birth. His life from birth was an offense to the world.

Was antagonistic to hell right from his birth. Extravagance of his love that he would do that and be raised in obscurity and would not show himself to the day the Father told him to. Matthew the 9th chapter and the 36th verse.

It says when Jesus saw the crowds he had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. We're told in Scripture that when Jesus was 12 years old he knew who he was. I don't know if at that time he knew about dying on a cross that that's what he would be doing, but he knew who he was.

Because here he is in the temple debating with the teachers of the law and his family didn't realize that he wasn't in their company and finally realizes and comes back to Jerusalem and finds him debating with the teachers. And so what does he say? I must be about my father's business. He knew who his father really was.

So I want you to think about this. When did he finally know what his mission was? Can you imagine as a young man that he knew he was the remedy to the sin of the world? He'd look at people that were lame and say, I am the answer to that. He'd look at the blind and say, I am the remedy to that blindness.

He'd know of people that died and he'd weep over their death knowing I am the resurrection. But yet he held himself back from being that answer because the Father said not yet, son. That was an extravagant act of love that you and I don't understand.

The holding back of himself until the time that the Father said no. Because he came for the purpose to touch humanity. He came for the purpose to bring deliverance to them.

He came for the purpose to forgive them of their sins. And so when Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them. He looked at them and his heart was broken.

He saw their true spiritual condition and he broke over it. It tells us in Mark the first chapter in the 40th verse, he says, a man with leprosy came to Jesus and begged him on his knees. If you are willing, you can make me clean.

Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. I am willing, he said, be clean. Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.

Extravagant love of Christ. I sat down once and I did a study looking at healing in the New Testament. In the Gospel specifically.

And I went and marked every time that healing was spoken of. And you know it is multiple times that it says that Jesus healed every one in the crowd. Every single one.

So here you have thousands of people and when it gives the numbers, such as when he fed the 5,000, it was 5,000 men. So you could have easily a crowd of 15,000 people and he would heal every single one.

Not necessarily that situation, I can't tell you of that one, but there were times where he healed everyone.

Did he heal because he had faith? He healed because he was kind and tender and merciful. He came to be the remedy to their pain. And so he touched them out of compassion because he genuinely and truly loved them.

Luke 19 in the 41st verse, it says as Jesus approached Jerusalem, he saw the city and he wept over it. Matthew 23 37 gives a fuller picture of the situation where Jesus, when he wept over it, he says, oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem you who killed the prophets and stoned those sent to you. How often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wing.

But you were not willing. Jesus wept over Jerusalem because he came to save them and they rejected him. And he knew just in a few short hours of what would be happening, that they would be taking him and trying him in an illegal court sentencing him to death and he would die on the cross.

He knew it would take place. And he's weeping over them. And he knew what would happen in the midst of that trial.

When they would stand before Pilate, he knew that the crowd would call out and say, let his blood be upon us and upon our children. And it literally was 40 years roughly later when Titus came in and destroyed Jerusalem and Israel literally brought down every stone upon another just like Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24 and in Luke 21 that not one stone would be left upon another. He literally prophesied and it literally came to pass.

He cared. The extravagant love of God wanted to rescue them from their sin and their rebellion. But they were blind to it.

The greatest act of extravagant love that Jesus did was when he hung on the cross and then he made these bold, astoundingly compassionate words, Father forgive them for they don't know what they're doing. To hold back the wrath of the Father that was ready to be unleashed upon all of humanity. The extravagant love of God.

And then what does he do? He reaches into our history, into our life, each of our lives. And he reaches down into the filth and the misery and the rebellion and the lawlessness and in his kindness he reaches down and he pulls us out. I did not want God in my life.

I did not want him. I did not look for him. None of us looked for him.

Not one has looked for him. He sought us. And so as a young man in the drug culture, he sought me out.

Wanting me. Desiring me. Desiring me to draw near to him.

Desiring me to know him. He sought us out. The extravagant love of God.

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