

Mark - Greed's Protestation at Love's Profusion

by J. Glyn Owen

The sermon highlights the contrast between Mary's selfless love and Judas' selfish greed, and it emphasizes the importance of true discipleship and humility.

Duration: 50:37

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 12:1-8

Topics: "Greed"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the story of Mary anointing Jesus' feet with precious ointment. The speaker emphasizes the significance of Mary's act of love and gratitude towards Jesus. They highlight that Mary's action is considered one of the most beautiful and sublime deeds ever performed in relation to Jesus. The speaker encourages the congregation to follow Mary's example and be filled with love for Jesus, willingly serving and obeying his will.

Transcript

Now shall we prayerfully turn together to the gospel recorded by Saint John and to the passage that was read earlier this morning, namely chapter 12 verses 1 to 8. We have entitled our message this morning as Greed's Protestation at Love's Profusion. I'm not going to read these verses now in whole, but we shall be looking carefully at them and trying to expound them as we proceed. Those of you who read the New Testament carefully, and I hope that applies to all of us, will have noticed that there is a story of Jesus being anointed in each of the four gospels.

It is probable, however, that the one referred to in Luke's gospel is separate from what we find in the other, in the others. We take it that the episode recorded by Matthew, Mark, and John refer to one and the same incident, whilst that in Luke is something quite distinct. Now, this event is essentially one of the most beautiful, that's Mark's word, not mine, one of the most beautiful episodes that really took place in the entire life of our Lord upon earth.

At any rate, perhaps I ought to qualify that, at any rate, that aspect of it that related to Mary is essentially one of the most sublime and beautiful deeds ever performed in relation to Jesus Christ, in the flesh or since. The dismal strand that relates to Judas Iscariot only serves as a kind of black backcloth against which we see the greater glory of Mary's deed of unqualified love and gratitude for what her Lord had done

for her and her family. Now, with your New Testaments open before you, will you turn with me then to the first few verses in this passage.

Look at Mary's action as it is described in the first three verses of chapter 12. Let me read them. What really did Mary do? Well, here it is.

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. There they made him a supper. Martha served and Lazarus was one of those at table with him.

Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment. Now, just a word about the setting.

Jesus has already determined that the hour has come when he must now lay down his life in death. He determined the hour. He wasn't put in a corner.

He allowed himself to be surrounded by his foes. He triggered the motions that were ultimately to lead to the crisis resulting in his death. He is Lord of the situation.

He chose the hour. Having so done, he decided that he was going to die at the season of the Passover. Now, this is exceedingly important.

Jesus wants us to see his death, you see, against a background, in a context. And the context against the background of which he wants us to see his death is the context of the Jewish Passover feast. When a lamb was slain, indeed when many lambs were slain, and on the score of the sacrifice of the lambs, God was having peace with his people.

Now, it's against that and its history going right back to the Exodus that Jesus determined to die. On his way then to Jerusalem where this was going to take place, where he was going to lay down his life as the Lamb of God come to bear away the sin of the world, on his way to Jerusalem he makes a detour to Bethany. This is very precious, I think.

Before our Lord Jesus faces the total anger and fury and bitterness of the Jewish nation and the sins of the Romans, he goes to meet with those who really loved him. I don't know whether I'm right in interpreting it like this, but I seem to sense that our Lord is saying something like this to us. He's saying, let me have a day or so with those that love me in Bethany and then I can face my death with joy.

And once he has been to Bethany, there is no turning back. He now sets the whole machinery in motion that must lead to his crucifixion. He arrives then with his friends in Bethany before he faces his foes in Jerusalem.

Now, the incident before us is located in Bethany, but it takes place, you notice, not in the home of Lazarus that had been raised from the dead just a little time before, Lazarus and his sisters, but in the home of a person who is referred to as Simon the Leper. Matthew and Mark refer to him as such. Simon the Leper.

Now we don't know who Simon the Leper was. Somebody has suggested that Simon was the father of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. Well, there's no historical basis for that.

Somebody else has suggested that Simon was the unnamed husband of Martha. There is no basis for that. If we guess, if we're allowed to guess, I would suggest to you that the most probable guess is this,

the most probable thing is this, that Simon the Leper had experienced the healing touch of our Lord Jesus Christ very much as Lazarus had heard the resurrection word that brought him out of the when he'd been buried four days.

The one healed of leprosy and the other brought back to life by the same blessed Lord Jesus Christ. You see, they've got a sense of kinship and of gratitude, and they've talked about him because they love him and they sense that they owe him so much. And providentially, they decide that they will have a feast in his honor at this particular time.

So they meet in Simon's house. It may have been a house near Lazarus's own house. I don't know, but here they are.

That's the setting. And Martha, busy woman that she was, we learned this about her in the New Testament. Martha is one of those that served at the supper.

Now the guests have arrived. They've gone through the usual salutations and greetings and normal formalities. They're over.

The meal is ready. Now you need to imagine here the old oriental style of eating. Taking their places at the table, we are probably to think of the usual oriental mode whereby folk reclined against a sofa-like couch around a low table, which would make the shape of an inverted letter U. So you have them kind of leaning like this on the sofa-like couch with their legs under them.

They sit on their legs and the feet protrude behind the person. Mary's long-awaited moment has arrived. Oh, you know, you never know what love is preparing, do you? This is the wonderful thing about real love, real love, burning love.

You never know what love is up to. Mary loved her Lord. And she had something, probably she hadn't told anyone about it.

Quietly and unobtrusively, she comes into the room bringing a flask containing 12 ounces, the Roman pound or litre, 12 ounces of the most costly unguent. Apparently, this so-called pure nard was derived from an aromatic herb grown only in the high pastures of the Himalayas between Tibet and India. It was one of the most costly of its kind, and you need to add to its intrinsic cost the value of transporting it from India to the Middle East.

Perhaps the word ointment puts us off, I was going to say puts us off the scent, but you might think I'm being funny. I didn't mean to be. And perhaps the word ointment leads us astray a little.

It gives us the wrong impression. It is not a healing preparation that we have here, nor a solid of any kind, but a scented oil which might be poured on the head as a mark of festivity, as it often was, and J.B. Phillips renders it perfume. And this, of course, is the sense of it, a flask, not a bottle, a flask of perfume.

Now, Mary took this flask of exceedingly precious perfume that had cost at least what an ordinary working man would earn in a whole year. She takes it and she breaks the whole thing, as Matthew and Mark tell us, over the head of Jesus first. And then apparently she keeps so much of it and she pours the rest over the feet of Jesus, as John tells us.

Now, John, we are reading particularly from John this morning, John doesn't mention the fact that Mary poured oil on Jesus' head. And the reason is this, he wants to concentrate upon the extremity of her love and humility. You see, oil was often poured upon the head.

It was often poured upon the head at the time of festivity, and people would go nicely scented with nice perfume to these ancient Jewish festivities as sometimes they go today. Men folk as well as women folk. Not only that, it was often poured upon the head, as you have it in Psalm 23, to refresh people.

Thou anointest my head with oil. It was often done. But John wants us to see something bigger and even greater than that.

Says John, she poured it on her Savior's feet. This costly nard, pure nard, she poured it and emptied the flask on the feet of her blessed Lord. And that's not the end, says he.

There's something even beyond that. When she had done it, when she had poured that upon the feet of her Lord, she undid the tresses of her hair and she began to wipe the feet of the Savior with her very hair. Now, the moral daring of that action was no less significant than its monetary value.

Where did Mary get this from? This is a lifetime saving for an ordinary person in this day and age. And to save enough must surely have meant considerable frugality and foresight and possibly much self-denial. It must have represented Mary's life savings in large measure, if not in whole.

And yet she uninhibitedly poured it, not only upon his head, but upon his feet. And yet, my friends, that's not the main thing. That's not the main thing.

I think it's the daring. For a woman to undo the tresses of her hair in public was just, it just wasn't done in this ancient society. A woman's hair was her glory.

By the way she dressed her hair, you discerned her essential dignity and womanhood in all its glory. But look at Mary. She undid the tresses of her hair and she began to wipe her master's head? No, her master's feet with a hair of her head.

In other words, Mary is stooping as low and becoming as humble as a woman can ever get. She makes her glory wipe the feet of her Lord. Now if you want to see this in context, may I remind you that in John 13 we have an incident in which the disciples disdain from washing each other's feet with water and wiping those same feet with a towel.

No one did it. The disciples have met and no one was willing to do it. No one did it.

It was the menial task. But get this, my friend, this is why it's so precious. Mary brings her alabaster box of the most precious ointment that cost her so much.

She pours so much of it upon the feet of her beloved Lord and Savior and then she proceeds to wipe his feet with her hair. Mary's action, Judas's condemnation. Verses four to six.

Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, he who was to betray him, said, why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor? And then John comes to explain things which we wouldn't otherwise know. This, he said, says John, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief. And as he had the money box, he used to take what was put therein.

Now look at Judas for a moment. It's a sad picture. And you know, it's all the sadder.

It's all the sadder because the Holy Spirit, in inspiring the sacred scriptures, has brought Judas alongside Mary. You see, compare Judas with some of the Jews, the Pharisees and the scribes of some of the Romans and he doesn't look all that bad. But bring Judas into this particular picture, into this portrait, and set him alongside Mary with her magnanimous and her beautiful selfie-facing deed.

And the man looks a veritable wretch of hell, the kind of which we've never met before. Her beautiful deed makes his so black and heinous, it seems utterly unforgivable. Now, John refers to Judas's personal sentiments and personal reactions.

But now, in all honesty and in all fairness, we've got to say something. Judas wasn't alone in the feeling that perhaps this was a waste. You read the other two Gospels and you will find that Mark puts it like this.

But there were some, now some means more than one, you see, there were some who said to themselves quite indignantly, why was this ointment thus wasted? Matthew goes a little step further and Matthew puts it like this. But when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, why this waste? Have you got the picture? Apparently, all the disciples, or most of the disciples at any rate, felt that really this was outrageous. To bring this expensive ointment in and to pour it out so completely upon our Lord Jesus Christ surely could have been put to better use.

Why then does John focus attention only upon Judas Iscariot? He says nothing about the others. May I suggest to you? The fact that John so clearly centers our thoughts on Judas probably implies that it was Judas who was responsible for openly and vehemently expressing such sentiments and also probably because it originated with Judas. It is clear as crystal that however much these thoughts were shared by others, there was only one person present, only one person present, in whose heart the reaction was so seethingly serious as to betray a spirit that was as hostile to Jesus as it was condemnatory of Mary.

And that was Judas who should betray him. In his sad heart, there were seeds of greed and of envy and of hatred that betrayed a soul sickness of the most serious order. He was indignant with Mary that this waste, this waste should have taken place.

And he goes on to say, he goes on to express himself, it could have been sold and over 300 denarii would have been available to help the poor, as if Judas is the great philanthropic leader of the day. Now that's what you would assume, is it not? But I'm afraid I have to tell you that Judas was a hypocrite. And I'm not telling you that, the book tells you that, it's the scripture says that.

Did we not have the testimony of the scriptures and of subsequent history? We might wrongly conclude that Judas indeed was a philanthropic, open, lavish sort of character. But the facts are not so. The facts are not so.

Pretending to be a lover of the poor, Judas was simply a lover of himself, a lover of Judas. He is only a lover of himself and of material gain. But you see, his disguise is well tailored.

He hides his true self and his real motives under an outrageously exaggerated criticism of what was a wholly altruistic and utterly pure deed of self-sacrifice. And he's so seething that he doesn't know where to stop almost, in criticism of Mary. Why this waste? You know the word he uses? It's unbelievable.

It's unbelievable that a disciple of Jesus could use this word. You know, sometimes the New Testament uses the word for perishing. It talks of men and women who will not repent of their sin finally, who will not believe in the Savior, whatever is said, whatever is done, whatever is offered them, however the gospel is preached to them, they will not believe, they will not repent, they will go to hell.

And there they perish. You know that's the word that Judas used? Apulia. He says, in other words, this ointment poured out upon the feet of the Lord Jesus is sheer unadulterated loss.

No good can come of it. Which betrayed his view of his Lord as well as of Mary's deed. Now, apostle of love, even though John is, unquestionably is, he deems it necessary to tear the mask from Judas's face and he wants us to see the truth, lest the church live in the supposition that Judas is the good man here.

Judas is not the goody here. Verse 6 puts it like this, this he said, not, and John's negative comes at the right point there, this is where he wants us to fix our gaze, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief. And as he had the money box, he used to take what was put into it.

Now, this may take us by surprise, this may take our breath away, I don't know what you think of it, but here is a man who accompanied the Lord Jesus in the flesh. Here is a man who was called to be a disciple, here is a man who was called to live with the incarnate Lord, and who did so live with him for over three years. And there was only one office that they had among themselves, and that was they had a treasurer, somebody to hold the little money box and the little money they had in it, and they chose Judas.

Judas was the treasurer, no one suspected him of anything, but Judas was a thief. And this is the real reason, you see, for his anger. He saw himself deprived of a handful of coins.

My, what if he'd had 300 denarii to put in that box, he would have been able to put his hand in once or twice or three times, and no one would have known, no one was keeping accounts, you see, because they trusted one another. And Judas would have been able to get away with so much, 300 denarii, and of course he would have given something to the poor. Now, may I add something there, both Matthew and Mark, after this incident, after the record of this incident, immediately go on to tell us that Jesus left the disciples, and he immediately went to the scribes and the Pharisees, and struck a bargain with them to sell Jesus to them, to betray him.

Now notice the point. I'll put it, I'll put it as bluntly as I can. One source of income has dried up.

He sees that there isn't much in the box, in the money box, and he can't pilfer anymore, and he's been denied that 300 denarii. That source of income is drying up very well, says Judas to himself. I'll get it somewhere, and I'll sell him in order to get it.

And for 30 pieces of silver, the price of a slave, he was prepared to deny and betray his law. Now Judas's tragedy is beyond telling and beyond explaining. John has drawn aside the curtain that hid the heart of Iscariot, and permitted us momentarily to look inside and see the thoughts and desires of the man, and see the inner workings of his thoughts.

That selfish spirit which we see was not the product of a moment. It wasn't the product of a day, nor of a month, nor of a year, my good friends. This thing doesn't come into being, doesn't flower, it doesn't bud, doesn't come to full bloom in just a solitary hour.

The fact is, you see, that Judas was as much out of sympathy with his Lord as with Mary. He criticized Mary because he did not have a sense of his Lord's glory that she had. He didn't see her through the same kind of eyes.

He didn't feel for him with the same kind of heart. His view, his evaluation of Jesus was so different. How could it be when he'd been with Jesus all this time? I'll tell you.

He only had a talking relationship with Jesus Christ for three years. By that, I mean this. He was in his company physically, and if Jesus asked a question, he answered it.

He would sometimes lead the conversation that they just talked, but you say, what else do you expect? I'll tell you, Jesus was the Savior, the only Savior of men. As far as the other disciples were concerned, they did something more than talking. What did they do? I'll tell you what they did.

They brought their problems to Jesus. They brought their sins to Jesus. They brought their temptations to Jesus.

They brought their problems to him, and they opened up as a book, and they said, Master, look at me. Read the Gospels again and see how Jesus dealt with Simon Peter. Over and over again, you have the master telling Peter, Peter, Peter, Peter, you're wrong, you're wrong, and he has to tell him off, and he has to rub this off and rub that off.

He has to deal drastically with Peter, but you see, something was going on. He was changing Peter. He was molding the man.

He was making a new man. He was saving Peter. He was redeeming Peter.

He was sanctifying Peter, but you see, Judas kept him at arm's length. Judas talked, but no more. You keep Jesus Christ at an arm's length for so long, and you'll find that you can never get near him again.

And if you get into the habit of merely singing hymns to him, or merely saying prayers to him, or merely talking to him in the distance somewhere, and never bringing your knee to him, never opening your heart to him and saying, Look at me. I've got an awful lot of trouble. I'm all mixed up and tangled with myself.

Help me, please. I tell you, my friend, you're walking in the pathway of a Judas. Judas was no worse than Simon Peter when he enlisted with Jesus Christ.

Judas was no worse than the rest of us, but what made him the Iscariot who betrayed his Lord was this. He went on for three and a half years, nursing a sin rather than exposing it and asking the Savior to save him from it. And this can be a tragedy in Knox this morning.

There may be someone here who is a member of the church, and your name is written on the books, and you come to communion service, and bless you, you're very regular in service, and you sing the hymns, and you listen to the reading, and you listen to the sermon, and that says something. But you don't bring your sins to Jesus Christ. You see? You're on talking terms with him, speaking terms, but you don't bring your sins.

And I say to you, if you don't bring your sins to Jesus Christ and only talk to him from a distance, one day you'll discover that something has made a slave of you, and you'll never be able to get out of the vice. It'll be too late. And that makes a Judas.

Near his action, Judas is condemnation. Jesus is commendation. I must say a word about this.

Leave her alone, Jesus replied. It was meant 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.

Let me summarize. With the entire house filled with the odor of that precious ointment, Jesus nevertheless sensed a soured spirit. You see the contrast brought out here.

My, I wish I were an artist. Oh boy, I wish I could write. I could write.

You see the contrast brought out here. There is this beautiful deed of this woman who is absorbed with love, this Christ-centered woman. But our Lord is sensitive to a sour, ugly, hellish spirit in the midst of it.

Perfume and the odor of hell in the same room. Mary's abandon, her adoring devotion, as much as the costly means whereby she expressed her love and gratitude, had irked the whole company and Judas in particular, because they, you see, had no such expulsive affections for Jesus Christ. You know, it's always so.

There is nothing that elicits so much criticism for formalists in religion as this, that any individual, be it man or woman, just loses himself in praise of the Lord. And if you're a formalist, you resent that. You don't mind people shouting for football, shouting for this, that, or the other.

You don't mind any extravagance anywhere, but don't bring it into this matter of my relationship with Jesus Christ. Just keep your decorum. My friend, if you love him, there are times when you can't.

And if you don't know that, my friend, you need more of the grace of God. If there are not times when your heart and your spirit are uncontrollable, and the water is overflowing its band, and the river's in spate, and the flood of grace carries you along, my friend, there's something missing. This Christ-intoxicated soul brought Judas's envy and hatred and venom out to the surface, but Jesus comes to her rescue.

And he says, Judas, he says, leave her alone. And then he adds this, and he puts his finger on the raw spot here, you see. Oh, our Lord could do it, couldn't he? You've always got the poor with you, Judas.

But you don't always have me. You won't always have me. Judas, are you a champion of the poor? Marvelous, so am I. Was he not? Was he not? Judas and the rest of the disciples would have sent the whole company of 5,000 men besides women and children home without food when they'd been listening to our Lord for hour upon hour.

And they were all ready for the mothers and the children as well as the fathers to walk home wherever they were going to, just as they were. Jesus said, I can't let them home like this. They're hungry.

He cared. Well, we haven't got anything to buy. We've only just got a handful of silver coins or whatever it was.

We can't do it. Never mind, he says. They can't go home like this.

Not after listening to me, I see their needs. And he fed the thousands. You see, he cared.

Just now, just before coming to this point in time, do you remember blind Bartimaeus in Jericho? Here was the blind man who knew that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. Put yourself in his position. And you've

heard about Jesus of Nazareth healing the sick and raising the dead and even bringing sight to the blind.

And he's passing by. Now notice passing by, not coming to stay, passing by. Blind Bartimaeus squatted somewhere on the road, nursing his blindness and saying to himself, Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.

I'm going to catch him. And at last he hears the tramp of feet. And he says to himself, or he may have asked somebody, is this him? Is this the crowd? Is this the group? Is this Jesus of Nazareth? And with the excitement of the moment, blind Bartimaeus begins to shriek and to shout.

Now, that's not nice at any time. You mustn't shout, you see. And, you know, the disciples were quite a sedate group by this time, you know.

But you mustn't shout. A blind Bartimaeus is shouting, shouting on the top of his voice. And, you know, they feel a little bit awkward about it.

Why this shouting? Jesus said, quiet man. And he makes for the man and says, look, blind Bartimaeus, what's your need? And he deals with him and he said, oh, he cared for the needy. Don't you tell me you didn't.

Judas, are you a champion of the poor? Well, you've always got the poor with you. They're always around. I've never seen you.

I've never seen you going out of your way. But in any case, Judas, whatever about the past, you've always got the poor with you. And then he puts his finger on this.

Notice what he says. She has done what she could. She has anointed my body beforehand for burying.

And this takes us out of our depth, really. Jesus says about this woman, she has done what she could. What a tremendous testimony.

I would like to hear someone say that of me, but it will not be said. But I would have given any money in my right mind to hear the Savior say that of me at the day of the resurrection. But it won't be said because it's not true.

He did what he could. He did what he could. She did what she could.

She did what she could. There was nothing that she could do which was higher and which was better and which was more noble and glorious and God honoring and Christ evaluating than this deed. She did what she could.

And then says our Lord Jesus, giving an entirely new dimension to it. He says, she has anointed my body beforehand for burying. Now, can I summarize this? I can't go into the details, but I believe that what our Lord is saying here is this.

You see, this woman loves me. And because of her love for me, she has become sensitive to something that you people, you disciples, even though you're near me and always with me, you're not sensitive to it. I've tried to teach you intellectually about my kingdom and my teaching, and I've tried to tell you that I'm going to Jerusalem to die.

And I've told you that I'm going to be delivered into the hands of the Pharisees and the scribes and the chief priests, and they're going to crucify me. I'm going to be lifted up on a cross. I've used these terms to you many times, but you can't take it in.

And even Simon Peter wanted to dissuade him from going into the Jerusalem if it meant that somebody was going to try to kill him there. But you see, here is a woman who, because of her love, has had the key into the deepest understanding of our Lord's mission on earth. This woman has had a third sense given of the Spirit, and she's been able to enter into sympathy and fellowship with him.

And because of that, this is one reason why she's brought out this flask of precious ointment. She's afraid that the whole thing will take place so quickly and no one will have the time to pour perfume over his body. So she says, right, I'll get my moment in now.

Even though I don't see death imminent, it may be there just around the corner. It's coming somewhere. It's coming soon.

I can't see it yet, but I'll do my deed in time. And she poured the aromatic precious ointment upon his feet as upon his head in preparation for his burial. Jesus said, and this is the apex, this is the capstan of his commendation of the woman, truly I say to you, this is Mark's gospel.

Wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her. Jesus surprised what this woman did. Now, I'm through apart from two questions.

Our evaluation. Now, my friend, which is your evaluation of Jesus this morning? Now, bear with me. I shan't be long, but I want to suggest to you, it's the most important part of this day for you and for me and for the Lord.

If you and I can dare to be honest now, this can be the biggest day in our lives. Do you represent Mary or does Mary represent you? Do you feel that the Lord Jesus Christ deserves from you something that is costly? Something that you withhold from everybody else and something that you want to give exclusively to him, not because you must, not because people are telling you, you want to do this or you want to do that, but because in your heart, you love him. You love him.

And do you know anything of that? Is your evaluation of the Lord Jesus Christ this? Look, he's done so much for me. I just want to do that something for him that perhaps nobody else can do. And I'm prepared to be frugal.

I'm prepared to go without this and without that and without that. And I'm waiting for the moment when I can buy my alabaster box of precious ointment and pour it at his feet. Is that you? Is there someone here this morning who's brought an alabaster box of ointment to pour at the feet of Jesus in this service? Has love dictated that you should have something for him that you give to no other? Oh, men and women in Christ, how sad, how cold, how dismal, how unacceptable much of our worship is, unless this is so.

To those of you who have something tucked away for him and him only, I want to say to you, perhaps the moment has come to break it. Do it. Tell him I love you.

And I'll break the costliest treasure of my life at your feet, even though other people will say it's waste. I want you to have it, whatever it is. Do it now.

But now I tread very carefully and I trust sympathetically. Could it be that there is someone here who feels a little bit like Judas? You don't really feel that the Lord Jesus Christ deserves this kind of thing. And actually you're a bit jealous and you envy him.

And you feel that some people are going too far in spending their money and their time and their energies on him. You don't see him in that light at all. Is someone like that here this morning? Oh, my friend, I want to pray for you.

And I ask you to pray for yourself. You see, that's the soil in which the Iscariot grew to be a traitor. And it is all, let me repeat, because he did not bring his needs to Jesus so that Jesus was able to deal with them.

For example, to repeat, he carried the bag and he used to put his hand in and he bought himself a little bit of a name or a little bit of fame or a little bit of this or a little bit of that because he could put his hand into the bag. There are people still like that. The only reason why they're found in church and the only reason why they bear the name of Jesus ostensibly, apparently, is they think they can get something out of him.

It's not because they're convinced he is the son of God. And therefore, whether I get kicks out of religion or not, I must follow him. It's not a matter of truth.

It's not a matter of conviction. It's a matter of what I can get out of him. Either my business is a little bit successful because I bear the name of Jesus or I get some experiences because I bear the name of Jesus.

But it's because of what I can get out of him, what I can milk out of him, what I can get for myself. My friend, listen. Christianity stands or falls on this base.

Is he the incarnate son of God who came into this world to bear away our sins? If he is, then though I get nothing out of him, it is my duty to follow him and my salvation. I will get things from his hand. I will have grace.

I will have kicks. I will have joy. I will have exuberance.

I will have hope. I will have peace and a multitude of other things. But the reason for following him is not that.

The reason for my faith in him is the scriptures foretold him. He fulfilled the scriptures. He is the Christ.

The testimony is sure. I am convinced of that. Therefore, conscientiously and intellectually, I can do no other.

I may perish in the bargain. I may die on the way. But he is the Christ.

I don't follow him because I can put my hand in the bag and pilfer a little of what belongs to him. Now, I'm not saying that that's as true of me as it ought to be. I'm only using this language illustratively.

My friend, what's your evaluation of Jesus this morning? Now, I'm closing. I'm going to ask you to do something. Tell yourself the truth about yourself.

It's a very daring thing to do, isn't it? You come to think of it. Tell yourself. Don't tell anybody else for a moment.

Tell yourself, I really am more like Mary than I am like Judas. I've got a lot of Mary in me. Praise the Lord.

Develop it by the grace of the Savior. Keep close to him. Or it may be, I've got a lot of Judas in me.

I keep him at an arm's length, and I don't like him to come too near and get too entangled with the various things of my life. Don't let's get too mixed up in religion. Keep him at a distance.

Is that you? You've got no alabaster box of ointment. None at all. Keep him out there.

Tell yourself that. And the last thing I want you to do is this. Close your eyes as we pray to close the service and tell him that.

He's heard already, of course. You don't really need, in one sense, to tell him because he knows. But confess it.

You see, confess it. Confess either your faith or your doubt, either your loyalty or your disloyalty. Confess it and ask him to deal with you and save you from becoming a Judas that would betray him and make you into a Mary whose whole life will be one of giving and giving and giving again for Jesus' sake.

First giving to him and because you give to him, you give to the poor and the needy. For Jesus' sake, the Jesus whom you love. Let us pray.

Father, we find this word so clear that it is not possible to equivocate in the light of it. It's too clear for us to misunderstand it. What we need is the grace to accept its verdict and to walk in the light of it.

And to take our sides, recognize ourselves, and to take action accordingly. For, Lord, multiply the Marys in this congregation and in every congregation. And add to our number those who are intoxicated by love of the Lord Jesus that don't have to be coerced to do anything in his will, be it the helping of the poor and the needy or the service of the sanctuary or going to the uttermost parts of the earth or standing behind those who go.

For we love him who first loved us and gave himself for us. Hear our cry and our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/26/SID26531.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/j-glyn-owen/mark-greeds-protestation-at-loves-profusion/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net