

In Love With Jesus

by Jim Cymbala

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ, and how love for Him should be the driving force behind our actions and decisions.

Duration: 30:01

Scripture: Matthew 24:12, Matthew 26:6-7, Mark 14:1, Mark 14:3, 2 Timothy 3:1-2, Revelation 2:4

Topics: "Jesus"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of giving as an expression of love. He uses the example of buying books for his grandson to illustrate that love always gives. The preacher also highlights that if we claim to love God, we should be willing to give to Him and His work. He challenges the notion that teaching on stewardship alone will lead to giving, stating that true giving comes from a heart that is in love with Jesus. The preacher concludes by emphasizing that what we spend our money on reflects what we truly care about, and that love should be the driving force behind our giving.

Transcript

The name of this message is In love with Jesus. It's found in Mark 14 verse 1 This is the last week of his life here on earth before the crucifixion Now the passover and the feast of unleavened bread were only two days away And the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some Sly way to arrest jesus and kill him This is the religious leaders, but not during the feast the feast of passover and Unleavened bread they said or the people may riot while he was in bethany Reclining a table in the home of a man known as simon the leper who by the way He probably healed a woman came with an alabaster jar a 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 So imagine how valuable it was and the money given to the poor and they rebuked her harshly one translation as they scolded her Leave her alone said jesus. Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me the poor you'll always have with you and you can help them anytime you want But you will not always have me She did what she could that's what we're asking you to do tuesday what you can 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 look up here for a second and for 2 000 years people have mentioned this story Then judas iscariot then judas iscariot at that time that moment One of the 12 went to the chief priest to betray 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 This is not the last supper the last supper has not yet happened the last supper jesus washed their feet This is that week and he's at a house in bethany of simon the leper What's unusual ladies and gentlemen is that this story unlike most stories? Of jesus's life. It's told in all four gospels matthew mark luke and john There's not too many incidents in his life that are told in all four This is related by all four from john We learned that it was mary the the sister of martha who was the woman But i'll just call her the woman because that's how mark relates it Let's look at it and read it quickly through here So in case you didn't have your bible now the passover and the feast of unleavened bread were only two days away And the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some sly way to arrest jesus and kill him But not during the feast can't do that during religious holiday, it's not nice to kill people during holy days or the people may riot While he was in bethany reclining at the table in the house of a man known as simon the leper a woman came With an alabaster jar. It's not a box.

That's a poor translation in the king james You don't you wouldn't keep an ointment in a box alabaster jar a very expensive perfume made of pure nard In the king james, it's spike nard because the flower that it came from has petals that look like spikes That's how it got that name. 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'll always have with you And you can help them anytime 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'll 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 Maybe there's a relation to what he saw and the kind of gift that was being poured out for jesus Then one of the 12 went to the chief priest to betray 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 So this woman anointing jesus with this precious ointment and pouring it on his head is what I want to focus on at the beginning we see here a classic contrast between religion and relationship with god through jesus christ There's religion and then there's people who know god through knowing jesus christ The world is full of religion and i'm not even speaking of other religions Like islam and hinduism, etc. I'm talking about what we would call orthodox religion orthodox christianity There's people who have religion and then there's people who have a relationship And beyond that a devotion and love for jesus christ Here's religion at the beginning the high priests and the scribes who were the teachers the high priest There were several of them kaifas annas This was a family that the romans would switch high priests which really irritated the jewish religious establishment So you had the high priests who were the highest in religious orders and you had the teachers of the law They are plotting to kill the son of the living god And they're planning to do it slyly They're planning to do it under cover of night They're planning to do away with somebody who never said one thing wrong or ever hurt them But out of jealousy out of malice they are going to kill him They're the religious leaders. They're plotting his murder, but they say we can't do that during the holy days.

That's not nice We'll kill him but please not during the holy days Because that will cause a ruckus among the people because the people are attracted to this man Now there's religion with bibles You got to always remember the people who plotted the crucifixion of jesus were the people who quoted the verses the most The romans carried it out, but it was the religious establishment Who quoted the bible who had the big copies of the old testament law? Who were in the temple at every sacrifice everything in a punctilious way was observed They're the ones going to kill an innocent man, but they're held up by saying we can't do it

during the holidays That would look good. That's religion for you sick Hypocritical going to kill a man, but we got to choose a better day than a high holy day But you're going to kill him. That's what religion produces in us Not a relationship with jesus christ, not a love that's Contrasted with the woman who walks in She had a relationship and she had devotion to jesus Here was the religious establishment and that's a challenge to all of us because all of us have the tendency to fall into mechanical religion Go to church read the bible once in a while when somebody's in trouble pray But it's religion and you end up being a hypocrite and you say ugly things about other people and you do ugly things and your whole Prejudice views and you have secret things going on That no one knows you have like a double life in front of the people They were saying long prayers and they loved the greeting from the people with their long flowing robes these priests and these scribes But behind the scenes they were plotting all kinds of mischief.

That's what religion produces You can have religion and be totally lost. In fact, I sometimes wonder if it's better to be on crack Or better to be out there where god's love can reach you than to be lost in religion How many know what i'm saying say amen because in religion you think you know They were three feet from the messiah that they were waiting for and didn't even know it because they were blinded by religious tradition It's like the woman who said to me years ago She came to me at the altar one time pray for me And then I prayed for her and then she says I need to tell you something That's very important. And I said tell me she went not here.

We got to step aside I don't want to say it in the church and I went if you can't say it here Fulton street won't be any better. There are no sacred buildings There's nothing sacred about this spot. The church began in the upper room.

Are we right acts two? They never mentioned the upper room again. Nobody ever took anybody back to the upper room. There's no sacred buildings There's no sacred anything God is as close as the mention of his name.

Come on. Can we put our hands together? There's nothing sacred. That's old testament Holy of holies holy place.

We're done with that. We have no sacred buildings. No sacred places Jerusalem's not sacred.

Nothing's sacred. Jesus is sacred His power is sacred and we can have him anywhere anytime and if you can't say something in the church If you can't say something with the microphone you better not say it at all because he's listening He's listening whether we're here there or whatever. So that's religion hypocritical mischievous evil under the cloak of Religiosity and now we have this woman.

We have this woman who not only has a relationship with jesus But she has more she has a devotion a love for jesus What she's doing is an act of adoration Do you know the difference between praise and thanksgiving and worship and adoration Thanksgiving is when you open your heart and you give thanks to god for the goodness Worship is when you worship god and extol him for who he is you worship him. Holy holy is the lord Worshipping god for who he is separate from what he does for us That's the difference between thanksgiving worship and praise is for who god is in himself Now adoration is the deepest it seems to me of them all Because adoration is mi corazon my heart going to his heart in love It's telling god telling christ how much we love him. It's very tender It's very intimate It's adoration You can brag on your wife and say the greatest things My wife made some this is the truth in the last week.

She had always made delicious arroz con gandules You know what? That is you'll learn in heaven. That's where they're gonna have that But she never made much rice and beans just straight rice and beans she made rice and beans It was the bomb. It was a knockout.

It tasted like the most puerto rican like tasty rice and beans So I could praise that and praise her for that and tell you about that But that's different than telling her carol, I love you See praising her for rice and beans is one thing telling her. I love her is something different this woman Is adoring jesus So let's just see a couple things about loving jesus. She not only has a relationship.

Let's stop for a second What relationship did she have with jesus? He hadn't died on the cross She couldn't call him savior She probably knew him as rabbi But his teachings his presence his love had changed her life And she so loved him for what he had done in her life. She was so devoted She had to find some way to express that so she takes this alabaster Jar, which probably either had a seal on the top that she broke or she broke off the top of the neck And poured it on his head walked into the room where he was eating with all these people Not only 12 disciples other people were there martha lazarus simon the leper Maybe even some religious leaders and she just walks in and pours it on his head as an act of love So let's just notice her contrast with religion. First of all She walks in In front of everyone and notice in the story.

She doesn't say a word the disciples talk jesus talk She never says a word only thing she says is how much she loves him by what she does She walks in in front of everyone to do this very loving special thing To anoint his head with this precious perfume which costs this huge amount of money given the economy of that day a whole year's salary She's pouring out a whole year's salary on his head perfume She walks in front of everyone because when you love Someone when you love jesus, you don't care what anyone thinks when you care what people think You have an inferior kind of love for the lord You might be going now into religion when you have religion in church, you might praise them a little bit, but not too much But when it comes to other people being around you're going to keep the jesus stuff down You're not going to express your love for him. You're not going to stand up for him in a crowded place Why because only real true fervent love doesn't care what anyone thinks, you know She didn't care what anyone thought what their accusations were What what they thought about a woman coming in in a male dominated society and pouring ointment on jesus's head On spending all of that money in that gift She did not care whenever you and I are deeply in love with jesus. We are freed from self-consciousness We're freed from what other people think and we're just gonna love them.

Can we all say amen to that? And I think of some of you I think of some of us We can't even lift our hands to jesus you ever meet someone even in a church meeting They can't even lift their hands in a wedding. They'll go crazy at a sporting event They'll go wild something happens for their country in a sporting event or anything a football game They'll go wild but love jesus, no, no, no, they're afraid that someone might say fanatic Fanatic, what are you a holy roller? What are you crazy?

Well, i'm not talking about now emotional excesses because there's a danger of that But the lord does say I want to have people everywhere to lift up holy hands to me now If lifting my hands means something to jesus, I have no idea why that would mean something to him to god But if he says that that pleases him as a sign of my need of god as a sign of my praise to god If lifting my hands means something to him, guess what? I don't care what you think I'm gonna lift my hands to god.

How many are not embarrassed to lift their hands up to god lift your hands right now Come on, lift your hands up to god He died publicly on the cross and i'm not going to lift my hands because i'm afraid someone might say something He took nails in his hands took a spear in his side And now you and I are going to be afraid that if we say something about jesus will be turned on I always have felt that that's how one of the ways that god uses the choir Which they've learned from their director is that their worship is spontaneous and real and they don't care What you think of them lifting their hands or crying or whatever they're going to do it because they're praising god They're not trying to perform carol never teaches them what kind of expressions to use and how to move their hands nothing's choreographed They just praise god from the heart and I have seen myself affected by it Because when you see somebody else not care and want to praise god it breaks you free so that you can praise god so real love Saves us from self-consciousness and fear of what other people might think When I first went in the ministry I had that battle my pride made me act artificial because when I worship god and I Sometimes i'm moved by the holy spirit and I think about his love and his mercy toward me My joy is expressed by crying Anybody here ever just cry for joy?

Early on in the ministry I was totally artificial because I said I god I can't worship you that way in front of the people I'm a pastor now didn't go to seminary, but i'm the pastor They'll look up at me if i'm crying like a baby, they'll think i'm having an emotional breakdown of some kind I was embarrassed to cry in front of people about my love for jesus shame on me But now I don't care care what you think the person in the street thinks how many want that kind of radical love for jesus that We don't care what anyone thinks and notice this the world and the people who are serving the devil They don't care what we think do they care what we think? No, they're out of the closet They're out by your grill.

They're this is what we do. This is what we believe And we're the ones that are timid. No Come on That fervent love that she had for jesus saved her from the intimidation of peer pressure your family What does it care what your family thinks or your culture or your people in the office? What is that going to matter when you die and stand before the lord? I'd rather have jesus than silver or gold.

I'd rather have jesus than all of that Let's say amen by clapping our hands her strong love made her free from peer pressure And what others might think or say if that's a hang-up with you you just we got to get a deeper love for jesus Number two notice that when you're in love You don't count the cost You're lavish And what she did was not prescribed by any verse in the bible see when you have religion you only do When you have some form of religion You you have just you do the minimum. I go to church on sunday pastor. Don't talk to me about the lord I go to church on sunday.

I once in a while put a few dollars in but when you're in love with someone I know but that perfume's so valuable. Yeah, but it's jesus. It's jesus Nothing's too good for him There's a liberality.

There's a craziness when you love jesus you go beyond the letter of the law You splurge, isn't that what you do when you love someone? How does a mother do for her child just what she's supposed to or anything? Anything if she's a real mother when I got my first summer job in college, they got an alumnus of Rhode university rhode island where I was there to on a basketball scholarship to play and he had a Home improvement office in richmond hill queens I worked there and that was my first real full summer job that I had I had worked as a kid Delivering clothes from dry cleaners and had a little other odd jobs, but this was my first job. So I got my first paycheck What am I going to do with that first paycheck? I went and cashed it and spent all the home money on clothes and jewelry for my girlfriend carol No one told me to do it Because when you're in love, you don't need any reminders I don't know what I bought her some jewelry.

Probably the clothes didn't make sense nor the jewelry, but she received it graciously But that just made me happy blew the whole paycheck If my eastern european mother who's listening to me now, she probably just found this out not now right now She would have said now you got to be more practical.

You got to put aside But when you're in love, you don't care. I don't care just the whole thing Blow the whole thing Just blow the whole thing Yeah, what are you gonna have for yourself? Who cares? If someone's cheap with you be sure you got a problem, right? Because real love is always splurging it was the woman so it's a whole year's thing So it's the only thing I have maybe that's valuable. So it's Jesus I was trying to help a pastor in another place whose offerings Are not doing very good and he said I don't know what's wrong because we're doing teaching on stewardship We're doing videos on giving and all of that and I said my dear younger brother Can I give you a little hint of something i've learned you could teach till you're blue in the face If the people aren't in love with Jesus, they ain't gonna give excuse the language They're not gonna give It's like trying to teach prejudiced people to love another race.

You can't teach it. It only comes from the love of God Try to teach a racist white person to love people who are other try to teach a black Militant who hates white people to love people of another race you talk till you're blue in the face. Nothing's changing takes Takes a miracle in your heart takes the love of God.

It's the same way with giving I said to this pastor you ever check out because I knew his church You ever check out the sneakers that all the young people are wearing. I saw all the gadgets iPhones iPads They got every kind of thing and they switch every six nine months when a new one comes in And they don't have money to give to the offering. Of course.

They have the money They don't want to give it because they're not in love with Jesus. That's the way it is You can tell a lot about a person if you just see their checkbook That's how it is. Come on.

Let's tell the truth real talk, okay real talk is What you spend on is what you care about and most of it is for us because we care about ourselves We're in love with me myself and I and that's why we spend and if you love somebody else You're gonna spend on them. That's the way it is You know, I babysat my grandson Levi on Friday along with my wife I went out to Toys R Us and bought two books that we could look at together Why nobody told me go get him a book. Yeah, I love that guy.

I love the little boy I'm gonna get him something why because love always gives for God so loved the world that he what? If you don't give it's because you don't love You know and the biggest deception is no I love but i'm going through our baloney salami and everything else When you love you give come on do I get a witness here? Come on, put your hands together when you love you give She loved him She didn't care what people thought she loved him so that Nothing was too expensive No, if you if you just if you all between now and Tuesday Will think how much how much has Jesus done for me? How much do I love him? Do you think we're not gonna get a great offering and help offset this this content bill? Well, of course, but I can't I can't con you into it. It's all in the end. It's love Love makes the world go around people who love crack.

They're going to do anything for crack That's their girlfriend. They love crack Brothers and sisters am I am I not right or right people who love themselves clothes? They're buying clothes. They're not even going to wear Women have 200 dresses or 200 pairs of shoes They're going to get a 201st pair of shoe.

Why they love their feet. They love someone about themselves they love What you love what you spend on All in favor say aye. Come on.

That's true. She loved Jesus. So it didn't matter what it cost. Did you see a third thing about this? On this point about giving even the disciples weren't where she was. Because if you read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we find out not only Judas.

He doesn't care about the poor people. He was robbing the treasury blind. And he saw this money could have been, you know, cashed in this perfume, and then I could have had a little piece of the action here on the side, right? He didn't care, but the other disciples joined with him. Whoa. What are you doing, woman? Don't you know what this is where you got to be practical, but love is impractical. Love is crazy.

Love is crazy. Some of us need a revival of craziness, craziness of love for Jesus, radical for Jesus. I have a new friend named David Platt. He's a pastor down in Birmingham, Alabama, wrote a great book called *I Think Radical*. He's going to come and preach here this summer and maybe speak at our pastor's conference in the fall.

He wrote this book and I met him and talked to him. He's radical, but he's radical in the right sense. When you're in love with Jesus, you're crazy. Our problem is we've gotten orthodox and go to church and we're so used to what we saw growing up in church. And when we meet someone who really is in love with Jesus, it's like, why what's up with you? Come on, am I right or wrong? What does the Bible say? I have this against you. You've lost your first love. You're working, you got doctrine, you read the Bible, but you're not crazy anymore.

You don't. You don't have that first love. And the Bible warns that the love of most Jesus said will wax cold in the last days. And Paul says somewhere, "The Spirit tells us and warns us that in the last days difficult times will come because men will be lovers of themselves and not lovers of God. Lovers of pleasure, but not lovers of God. Lovers of themselves. And then here's the kicker at the end, having a form of godliness. It's not like those folks are not religious. No, they're in church every Sunday. But pleasure and themselves come way before Jesus. So this woman Jesus had put her in all four books, put her in all four books, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, tell the story about her love that didn't care what people thought and didn't count the cost because love is extravagant.

And did you notice one last beautiful little thought? The disciples had a relationship and I don't think I'm not sure they had the love that she had because they were rebuking her. Imagine the disciples are rebuking her and Jesus has to rebuke them and say, "Leave her alone. She's doing a good thing. You don't understand love, the language of love. But we can get like that because we get sometimes condemned by other people's liberality and fervency. So we go, "Oh, they bother us because they bother us because maybe we one time had that kind of love. And then the Bible says John adds this little note and the smell of what she did, the perfume filled the whole room. When you and I love Jesus, it'll leave an effect on everybody we come in touch with. They might reject it, but it'll leave an effect on them. That's a beautiful analogy, isn't it? It's a little parable. She broke the thing, poured it over his head, and that beautiful, expensive perfume. It was one of the costliest things in the world of that day. It filled the whole room.

Everybody was like, "What is that? What is that smell?" Oh, it's beautiful. That's her love for Jesus. When you and I love Jesus and we praise Jesus, look, I've seen it happen here. I've seen some of you who love Jesus, worshiping him and praising him. It's had an effect on me. Because when you meet someone who's crazy for Jesus, it like stays on you. It's like that time.

I was in the hotel in Lima, Peru, the Lima Sheraton, and I got on on the 20th floor about two women dressed to the nines and the most like the most probably expensive perfume in the world. They had right and the

minute I stepped in the elevator The whole elevator was filled with their perfume I was like wow like just looked at them and they were really dressed well-to-do tourists. It looked like to me They got off on the like the eighth floor And then a guy got on on the seventh floor And he walked in the elevator and there's just me with this smell all throughout the elevator And he like looked at me started edging a little bit toward me and I went no no, I don't know It's not like that. It's not like that at all But did you know the thing got on my clothes the smell of their perfume got on my clothes? That's how when you love jesus it is, you know what the biggest turnoff to the world right now is It's not secular humanism.

It's not some demon The biggest turnoff to christianity and our country is the way christians act liberal democrats who claim to be christians liberal Conservative republicans who claim to be christians the way they yell and scream and fight and fuss That's what people say. That's jesus. That's christian.

I pass obnoxious raucous up in your face And then I wonder do I draw people to jesus? Or do I turn people away from jesus? Not while i'm preaching i'm telling you my real life Is my life attractive? Is it like a perfume that? Leaves a good scent with people. How about you? See our love for jesus will naturally produce a sweetness of tone a sacrificial life An independence of what people think that's not belligerent, but that's firm but loving do you get what i'm talking about? I want more love for jesus I can't talk into it. I can tell you that he died for you That he took upon him the nails that he bore your sins and my sins so we could be forgiven By the way, haven't you found them like me? I was thinking all that.

Jesus means to me last night I was praying for the day today. I was also thinking not only what he's done for me on the cross, which I can't even explain But how many since you've become a christian have found him? He's the best friend you've ever had in your whole life How many have found him the most patient merciful person you've ever dealt with? Come on. Let me see your hand When you were down and and couldn't even look at yourself in the mirror When you messed up as a husband or a father or a grandfather or as a minister or as whatever like I have Did he kick you away and throw you away and go you piece of garbage? Never he lifts Come on, get up Come on, has he ever lifted you up? Come on here.

Am I the only person he ever lifted up? Has he ever lifted you up? Come on, let's put our hands together So I want to love him today we have no ointment but you know what he wants more than the ointment is our hearts I can't convince you to love him, but I can sure tell you that he's the best friend that you could ever have And he's a savior He's a deliverer How many love him today? Come on, just lift up your hand if you flat out love jesus

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