

**Livin' the Life**  
**Extravagant Devotion or Foolish Waste**  
**John 12:1-11**  
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We are looking at the life of Jesus and the life he promises in our series in the Gospel of John, *Livin' the Life*. We are in 12:1-11 today, where we see an act of extravagant devotion by one of Jesus' disciples yet this act is viewed by another disciple as foolish waste. Let's take a look at this 12:1-11 today and see who is right.

**The Setting**

Six days before the Passover, Jesus travels to Bethany where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus live (1). The three are very grateful for Jesus' grace in their lives, especially raising Lazarus from the dead, so they throw a dinner celebrating this and honoring Jesus' resurrection power (2). Martha expresses her gratitude by preparing and serving the dinner while Lazarus is enjoying time with Jesus and others around the table (2).

**An Act of Extravagant Devotion**

Therefore, tells us that Mary is now going to express her gratitude to Jesus. She gets a container with twelve ounces of expensive and fragrant oil. We find out later that it is worth a year's wages, about thirty thousand dollars in today's terms. She retrieves it from a secure place and moving among the dinner guests, and probably is on her knees at Jesus' feet. Then she pours the oil over Jesus' feet and wipes them with her hair as if it was a rag. And as she does this, the house is filled with its fragrance (3). She bent low to get to Jesus' feet. Anyone who kneels before another, is making a statement. Once Peter had fished all night and caught nothing and then Jesus told him to cast his net out. He did so reluctantly and caught so many fish his nets were ripping. His response was to fall to his knees and say, depart from me Lord, for I am a sinful man (Luke 5:4-9)! Mary is expressing her love and gratitude for Jesus with adoration and devotion. Her extravagant devotion matches his infinite worth, you are the resurrection and the life, you are the great I am. Using her own glory (1 Cor 11:15) to clean and anoint his feet to exalt his infinite worth. What is astonishing is that she seems oblivious to everyone else in the room. Like the Old Testament story of David as he danced before the ark of the covenant with only his under garments, not a care about what others think (2 Sam 6:16).

**Judas' Blind Rebuke**

Then Judas, one of the disciples, interrupts the moment with a rebuke, why wasn't this ointment sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor? Not saying this because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and was in charge of the moneybag and helped himself to what he wanted (4-6). Judas is a false disciple who has never come to Jesus for eternal life (6:64, 68-69; 20:30-31). So, we have an example of a true disciple who sees Jesus' glory and loves Jesus and an example of a false disciple who is blind to the glory of Jesus and loves money more than Jesus so he only sees foolish waste. Mary's love leads to eternal life and joy and Judas' love leads to suicide and eternal destruction. So, while Mary expresses extravagant devotion, Judas does not see the beauty of it all but only foolish waste.

**Jesus' Protective Rebuke**

Jesus does not leave Judas' comment alone, leave her alone so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. For the poor you will always have with you but you will not always have me (7-8). Jesus gives three reasons for Judas to leave Mary alone. First, leave her alone Judas so that she may keep it for my burial (7). The commentaries are divided on what this means. But here is what I think. Chapter ten is about Jesus' protecting his sheep. Then in chapter eleven, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead because he is the resurrection and the life. Jesus has life in himself and gives eternal life to those who come to him in faith. So, I think Jesus is saying, leave her alone Judas because she has done a beautiful act of faith and I will not let you rob her of it. She is full of faith and love and gratitude. And she needs that kind of faith when I am in the tomb to believe that I am still the

resurrection and the life. I will not let you infect her so she doubts that I am still the resurrection and the life when I am in the grave. Leave her alone Judas, I will not let you infect her with your satanic unbelief.

Second, leave her alone Judas because you will always have the poor with you (8). If you really care for the poor, you can serve them for the rest of your life. In fact, a heart like Mary's leads to generosity toward the poor. But your concern is just a facade for your greed. You see her act of devotion as foolish waste because you love money and not me (1 Tim 6:10; Mat 6:24). And your love of money has blinded you to my worth. If you cannot see that I am to be desired above all riches you will face eternal torment. Money issues usually arise in our lives because it has a grip on our hearts. Extravagant devotion like generous hearts is the overflow of hearts that love Jesus and are grateful for his grace in their lives. Does money have a grip in your life?

Third, leave her alone Judas because you will not always have me with you (8). Jesus will be with the disciples physically for less than a week. Mary feels the preciousness of Jesus' presence in her life, in Martha's life, and especially in Lazarus' life. She has seen my glory, she has seen me as full of grace and truth, and she wants to be with me and express her devotion to me. Judas you are tragically blind to my glory and grace and truth so have not come to faith in me for eternal life. You do not see my infinite worth and the value my presence in your life. Mary has seen my glory and grace and been transformed by it. But unfortunately, you have not experienced that because you are blind to my glory and worth. Leave her alone Judas because she sees my glory and feels my infinite worth.

Don't let anyone try to moderate your love and affection for Jesus.

Do not let the opinions of others squelch your faith in Jesus.

Do not let the love of money grip your heart, Jesus is an infinitely better treasure.

Do not let stinginess take hold of your heart, Jesus' death is infinitely valuable to you.

Do not let the gospel lose its grip on your heart. Jesus is the resurrection and the life.