

Cultivating Connection

Lent

John 12:1-8

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- * What did you hear?
- * What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- * What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

KEY VERSES

1 Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. **2** There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. **3** Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. **4** But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, **5** "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" **6** (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) **7** Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. **8** You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

REFLECTION

This journey takes Jesus from his home turf near Galilee, to Bethany, drawing him closer to Jerusalem and into the power establishment of those whom he threatens. Having been summoned in the [previous chapter](#) by Mary and Martha with news that their brother was very ill, Jesus waits a few days before making his way to Bethany. Upon seeing the sisters' anger with him for arriving after Lazarus' death, Jesus weeps for their pain – a testament to their friendship. ***Can you relate to Mary and Martha's feelings of being betrayed by Jesus in the time that they needed him most? Can you also relate to Jesus' pain of having let down his friends?***

The contrast between Mary and Judas in this passage seems at first straightforward: Mary, the devoted disciple lovingly anointing Jesus' feet; Judas, the greedy, pious rule-follower. But before quickly dismissing Judas as the bad guy, we should pay attention to this part of him in each of us. ***Why might his comment about selling the perfume to feed the poor not have been necessarily inconsiderate, but rather a practical effort to conform to religious rules? In what areas do you most see this tendency in yourself?***

At its core, Christianity is not about what WE do, but a celebration of what GOD has done. When we can see this as the basis of our faith, our lives might reflect the joy of what God has done, as it did for Mary. ***As we journey through Lent, may we experience wholehearted responses to the joyful story of what God has done – in all areas of our lives.***