

JOHN 12:1-8
THE FRAGRANCE OF WORSHIP!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 12 as we continue our in-depth study of the Gospel of John.

Over the last few weeks we have been looking at John chapter 11. And in this chapter we saw that the friend of Jesus, Lazarus was sick and he died.

By the time that Jesus gets to the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, he has been dead and in the tomb for four days.

And it is here we see Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead!

Can you imagine seeing this man who was dead come walking out of the tomb! What joy, what excitement. I am sure that Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus were jumping up and down and hugging their brother!

The sad thing here is that when the Jewish religious leaders found out what Jesus did, they were not happy!

Can you imagine being upset because this man was raised from the dead? The problem for them is that they felt if Rome got wind of this, they could lose everything!

So instead of rejoicing of seeing someone who was dead come back to life, they are plotting to put to death Jesus.

But that is what religion does, it fights against the truths of God found in the Word of God and they attack believers!

As we will see this morning, we have now come to the final week before Jesus goes to the cross of Calvary to be crucified for the sins of the world!

And, as this chapter opens up, and what we will be focusing on this morning, is Mary anointing Jesus.

We see this spoken of here in John chapter 12, and we also see it in Matthew 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9.

Now some may be wondering about Luke, because Luke also speaks of an anointing of Jesus. And, because of that many become confused because they feel that Luke is speaking of the same event we are reading here in John chapter 12. It is not the same event. (Luke 7:36-50)

Let me show you what I mean.

First of all, we see that in Luke this event take place in Galilee.

Here in John chapter 12, as well as Matthew and Mark we see this take place in Bethany!

We also see that in Luke Jesus is at the house of a Pharisee.

But here in John we see that Jesus is at the house of Simon the ex-leper. (Matthew 26:6)

And yes, the name of the Pharisee is Simon, and the name of the ex-leper is Simon, but that does not mean that they are the same person. Simon was a common name during that period of time.

Another difference that we see in Luke is that here it was a former harlot that anointed the feet of Jesus.

And here in John chapter 12 we see Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus do the anointing.

And from there we will move on looking at the religious leaders plotting to murder Lazarus. And, after that we will be looking at the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem as Messiah the King!

This morning we are going to focus on – ***THE FRAGRANCE OF WORSHIP!***

And I realize that many don't see the importance of worship and that is wrong.

Remember what Jesus said to the Samaritan woman at the well back in John 4:23-24, "**But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.**"

The only way we can worship God is by being saved, having our sins forgiven, paid in full by Jesus and receiving that free gift of faith. We must worship Him in spirit!

Not only that but we are to worship Him in truth. We must worship Him according to the Word of God and not any way that we want.

And we are told that God is seeking us to worship Him, we were created for His good pleasure as Revelation 4:11 tells us, "**Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.**"

And yet, today our worship has become self-centered, it is all about us and what we get out of it. But true worship, as we will see this morning, is all about Jesus.

Let me share this with you and you will see what I mean. We are told,

It's Sunday around noonish. As the congregation files out of the sanctuary heading toward the parking lot, listen closely and you will hear it.

It's a common refrain voiced near the exit doors of churches all across this land.

"I didn't get anything out of that today."

"I didn't get anything out of the sermon."

"I didn't get anything out of that service."

"I guess her song was all right, but I didn't get anything out of it."

Sound familiar? Not only have I heard it countless times over these near-fifty years in the ministry, I probably have said it a few times myself.

This is like dry rot in a congregation. Like a termite infestation in the building. Like an epidemic afflicting the people of the Lord, one which we seem helpless to stop.

- <https://bit.ly/3Q28tRA>

I don't think we have lost all hope here, we just need to get redirected.

Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

My sister bought a new car that was loaded with high-tech options. The first time she drove the car in the rain, she turned a knob she thought would start the windshield wipers.

Instead a message flashed across the dash: "Drive car in 360 degrees."

She had no idea what that meant, and so when she got home she read the car manual.

She learned that while trying to turn on the windshield wipers she had inadvertently turned off the internal compass, and the car had lost its sense of direction.

To correct the problem, the car had to be driven in a full circle, pointed north, and then the compass had to be reset.

Each time we gather to worship, we are resetting our internal compass. We establish "true north" in our soul, remembering who God is and what his truth proclaims.

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In other words, if we are not in line with what God desires, then we need to get refocused in regard to our worship of Him. And think about it. If God desires our worship, then don't you think it is important to find out what He wants from us?

Of course it is and that again is what we will be looking at this morning – ***THE FRAGRANCE OF WORSHIP!***

I have broken down the verses we will be looking at this morning into the following points.

THE HEART OF MARTHA – JOHN 12:1-2

TRUE WORSHIP COSTS – JOHN 12:3

TRUE WORSHIP TAKES ON THE FRAGRANCE OF JESUS – JOHN 12:3

FALSE WORSHIP CRITICIZES – JOHN 12:4-6

TRUE WORSHIP IS CHRIST CENTERED – JOHN 12:7-8

TRUE WORSHIP COMES FROM BROKENNESS – MARK 14:3

THE LEGACY OF TRUE WORSHIP – MATTHEW 26:13

To set the stage for what we will be looking at, let's read John 11:55-57, where we are told, **“And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, ‘What do you think - that He will not come to the feast?’ Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it, that they might seize Him.”**

So word was put out that if anyone sees Jesus coming to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover, they were to let the Jewish religious leaders know and it was not to have dinner with Him. They wanted Him dead!

Which is interesting because they were preparing for this Feast that was to give them life, the Feast of Passover and they wanted to kill. And again, that is what religion does, it kills, it does not give life!

So, with that as our introduction, let's begin reading in John chapter 12, beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us this morning as we study His Word and look at the topic of – ***THE FRAGRANCE OF WORSHIP!***

JOHN 12

VERSES 1-2

Keep in mind that Jesus came from the area of Ephraim, which was about 15 miles to the north of Bethany. And they have a dinner for Jesus, in honor of Him at the home of Simon the ex-leper. Bethany was about two miles from Jerusalem on the eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives.

Now if this was Simon's home, why was Martha serving? Some feel that she was related to Simon, maybe her husband. We don't know for sure, but it can be as simple as this dinner being for the men of the village and Martha and the other women *served*.

Keep in mind it is Passover and many people are traveling to Jerusalem to celebrate this feast.

John gives to us the timeframe here, only six days from the Passover. Keep in mind, as we looked at in our study of Matthew, that the Passover would be on Thursday, not the traditional day of Friday, for those in Judea including the Sadducees.

And, for the Galileans, they celebrated it on Wednesday along with the Pharisees. So Jesus and His men, who were Galileans, would have celebrated Passover on Wednesday, allowing for them to share the Passover meal and yet, Jesus was crucified on Passover!

And I think we can clearly see that the events leading up to the cross, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus are important. You see, almost one-half of John's Gospel is given to this last week of Jesus' earthly ministry. Matthew used more than 33% of his Gospel to cover that week. For Mark, nearly 40% of that last week of Jesus' life. And finally, we see that Luke covers 25% of those last *seven days* of Jesus' life.

So these events are important and especially as we see the things that Jesus was teaching during this period of time. He is preparing His men for the work they were to do, and He is preparing us for the work we are to do!

Now some come down hard on Martha because she was serving. And they go to Luke 10:38-42 to show that Martha was not doing what was right, all that work she was doing.

And remember what I have called these verses – ***THE HEART OF MARTHA!***

Before I expound on that listen to what we are told here in Luke chapter 10, **“Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, ‘Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.’ And Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.’”** Luke 10:38-42.

Make no mistake about it, our worship of God is important but also understand that part of our worship of God is our service to Him!

And here in John we don't see Jesus rebuking Martha for what she was doing because she is now doing it out of a right heart.

You see, before she was upset that her sister Mary was not helping her, but now she is serving, and she is doing it out of love!

Paul said in Colossians 3:23, “**And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men.**”

Whatever we do, we are to do it unto the Lord. That means at home, at work, at the store, on the roads, wherever you are you are serving the Lord and that is our worship unto Him, how we live out our faith!

There is a story that took place years ago about a boy who had to do chores for his mother.

As he did them, he thought that he should get paid for the work he was doing. It was work!

So he made out a bill for the services that he did and put it next to his mother’s breakfast plate.

This is what the bill said,

Washing the car - \$1.00

Taking out garbage - \$.50

Cutting lawn - \$1.50

Total - \$3.00

As his mother picked up this bill and read it, she did not say a word.

When lunchtime came around and the boy came home from school for lunch, he found a note beside his plate!

This is what the note said,

Washing clothes - \$0.00

Ironing shirts - \$0.00

Cooking food - \$0.00

Total - \$0.00

Love, Mother

As the boy read this note he put it down and rushed over to his mother and hugged her very tightly!

And guess what?

There was nothing that was ever said again about a bill!

Make no mistake about it, we serve the Lord out of love and that is part of our worship of Him! All that He has done for us does not even compare, come close to what we do for Him! He gave His life for us!

We also see Lazarus at this meal and for Lazarus, he fellowshiped with Jesus and that too is a form of our worship. Jesus died so we can fellowship with God, and this too is important for us to do!

As we read on, we will see that – ***TRUE WORSHIP COSTS!***

VERSE 3

Here we see Mary's love for the Lord manifested in her actions.

Now we may read what Mary did and not think much about it, but this oil of spikenard was costly.

You see, this oil was a very fragrant oil that was prepared from the roots and stems of an aromatic herb from Northern India. And yes, it was costly, 300 denarii or a year's wages!

And Mary took this flask, broke it and anointed the head of Jesus as Matthew and Mark tell us.

And here in John we are told that Mary also anointed the feet of Jesus.

Keep in mind that this occurred during the meal and thus, they were reclining on the floor and the feet of Jesus were stretched back. That means if Mary poured the oil just on the head of Jesus it would not have run down to His feet. He would have to be standing to do that.

What I see here is that Mary not only anointed the head of Jesus but also His feet. All that fragrant oil was used on Jesus, she held nothing back!

And what a beautiful picture of worship we see here.

What do I mean by that?

What we see here is that Mary is showing us, in regard to worship, that there was nothing that she had that was too valuable to give to Jesus. Her life was a living sacrifice unto Him.

And that should be our passion, to give to the Lord all we have, our entire being. You see, He is worthy of everything we have and everything we are! May we give it to Him, lay it down at His feet to be used for His glory.

Remember what Paul said in Romans 12:1, "**I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.**"

Listen to how The Amplified Bible puts this verse, **“I APPEAL to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship.”**

Paul is calling for us, pleading with us to live a life that is surrendered to God. That we are a living sacrifice given to Him to do as He pleases.

And as we give ourselves to God, Paul tells us that it is our **“reasonable service”** or literally **“spiritual worship”** for the word **“service”** in the Greek is LATREIA (lat-ri’-ah), which speaks of the worship of God!

So not only is a life given to God reasonable service, but it is also our reasonable or spiritual worship unto God!

But there is something else here that many don’t speak of, and that is this word **“reasonable.”** In the Greek it is the word LOGIKOS, (log-ik-os’) and means, ***“of the word.”*** (See I Peter 2:2)

Think about this. Paul is saying that our life of sacrifice unto God speaks of a life of worship that is according to God’s Word! That is something that the church has moved away from and thus, all goes. No doctrine, no true worship, and lives that are headed for disaster! We need to worship God in Spirit and in truth!

And then Paul says, **“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”** Romans 12:2.

We see here the contrast between living a life as you please and living a life as a sacrifice unto God.

This was all that Mary had and she gave it all to Jesus.

Now as many read this, they think that this is a little extreme. In fact, when people see Christians who are serving, they see that as extreme.

It is funny and kind of sad to me when I see Christians who just don't get what I do. They just don't understand how I can spend all my time serving the Lord.

Please understand that the Lord gives me times of refreshing, times to spend with my wife and my family. But my focus is truly the Lord.

If my life that I give to the Lord does not cost me something, then is it truly worship?

I don't think so.

Remember in II Samuel when King David numbered the children of Israel and that was something that God did not tell him to do. And God punished David and the children of Israel for this, and seventy thousand men died in this judgment!

And David was told to set up an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah. And as Araunah saw David he offered David the oxen, all the wood to offer the sacrifice.

And David's response is so beautiful as we are told, "**Then the king said to Araunah, 'No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing.' So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.**"

Here's the thing. David was not going to give to the Lord that which cost him nothing.

Clarke puts it like this, ***“He who has a religion that costs him nothing, has a religion that is worth nothing: nor will any man esteem the ordinances of God, if those ordinances cost him nothing.”***

That should be true in our own lives. Think about it. What we give to the Lord must cost us something or if it didn't, then was it really a sacrifice?

Of course what we give to the Lord must cost us something, that is what the word ***“sacrifice”*** is all about!

I like the way that Meyer put it. He wrote, ***“Where there is true, strong love to Jesus, it will cost us something. Love is the costliest of all undertakings . . . But what shall we mind if we gain Christ? You cannot give up for Him without regaining everything you have renounced, but purified and transfigured.”***

Again, to the world or even to the average Christian her worship seemed extravagant, but when you're talking about worshipping Jesus, can anything be too costly to give to Him in light of what He gave for us?

Of course not!

Worship is a heart transformed that expresses itself regardless of cost. That is what service is, and that is what fellowship is, a choice to invest oneself in order to express the love of a grateful heart.

Let me give you this example.

This story is told by an author of a devotional, and he wrote,

It happened in Munich, Germany. I got out of my warm bed, looked through the window covered with “ice ferns” at the new deep snow. I debated whether I should go to the worship service or stay at home and read the Bible.

I would have to walk half a block in the cold to catch the bus.

Finally I decided to go, but only because I had to lead the singing. While I was riding the bus, I looked through the window and recognized two people trying hard to make their path through the deep snow.

Mr. Trollman was a man in his eighties, who had lost his eyesight. His only guidance was his 78-year-old wife, who was lame in one foot.

Because they could not afford to ride the bus, they walked three miles every Sunday to church.

They were driven by their love for the Lord.

I was not able to do anything but blush, ashamed of myself. I thought of the duty which had motivated me, of the weak faith and love I had shown.

Without their knowledge and without a word, this old couple had taught me that love for God is the true motive for attending worship services.

- Source Unknown

What a heart of worship we see in this couple. You see, worship is costly, requiring sacrifice.

That is what we see here with Mary – ***TRUE WORSHIP COSTS!***

We are also going to see here in John 12:3 that – ***TRUE WORSHIP TAKES ON THE FRAGRANCE OF JESUS!***

Let's look at this verse once again.

VERSE 3

Mary not only poured this fragrant oil upon the head and feet of Jesus. You see, she does not just stop there. Here service, sacrifice, worship of the Lord continues on as she now takes her long hair and wipes the feet of Jesus with her hair.

What was that all about?

Mary was a worshiper and that is what we are seeing here.

A woman's hair was her glory and yet Mary laid her glory down at the feet of Jesus!

And what happens to a person who worships God like this?

They take on the fragrance of Jesus, and, not only that, but the house where she was at also permeated the fragrance of Jesus, wherever she went, the fragrance of Jesus went with her.

That is what Paul tells us of our own lives in II Corinthians 2:14-16, **“Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?”**

Take a sniff of the person you are sitting next to, what do they smell like? No, don't do that! Just kidding.

But as we spend time with Jesus the fragrance of Jesus will permeate our lives. As our homes are filled with Jesus then our homes will permeate the fragrance of Jesus. And it doesn't matter if people like it or not, if they are in your home, if they are around you, the fragrance of Jesus will flow from your life!

Now, the only way your life will smell like Jesus is by spending time at His feet in worship. If you don't, you will smell like something else, and it won't be like Jesus!

I am dating myself here but when I was in school *High Karate* was the aftershave that was popular, and I would pour a bottle on myself before I went to school. I wasn't shaving, no hair on my face at that point, but just wanted to smell good!

You probably remember the commercials. The guy would put this on, and he would have to fight off the women who were coming after him, thus, *High Karate!*

It didn't work, but I will tell you this. Wherever I went, people knew I was coming because of that smell, and it was not a good smell!

Let me ask you a few questions here, give you something to think about.

Why wasn't Mary at the foot of the cross when Jesus was crucified?

She loved the Lord; how could she be like that?

Not only that, but why didn't Mary go to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus after He died?

Again, she loved the Lord; why didn't she go to anoint the body of Jesus with the other women?

Maybe because she already did, and she understood that death would not hold Him.

How did she know that?

Because she spent time at His feet in worship!

What a great lesson for us to follow!

So look at what we have seen about true worship so far.

We have seen that – ***TRUE WORSHIP COSTS!***

And we have seen that – ***TRUE WORSHIP TAKES ON THE FRAGRANCE OF JESUS!***

And whenever there is true worship of the Lord taking place, what happens many times is that – ***FALSE WORSHIP CRITICIZES!***

VERSES 4-6

Here we see the heart of Judas in comparison to Mary and the heart of a true worshiper of God. And the contrast is like comparing night and day.

You see, Judas was not interested in Jesus, but in money.

In fact, we are told that he kept the money bag.

And he not only kept it, but he put his hand in the money bag and took money for himself.

Now the problem. Here goes all this money being poured out! He saw this money just fly out the window instead of entering his pocket!

But keep in mind that evil hearts try to cover their evilness and that is what we see Judas doing.

He tries to hide his darkness with the cause of the poor. He says, **“Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and give to the poor?”**

That sounds so good and yet, he was not interested in the poor, not at all. This was money that was being taken from him, even though it was the Lord’s, he didn’t see it that way.

And as he poured out these heart wrenching words, people were listening!

And guess what happened when Judas said this?

The other disciples of Jesus joined in and agreed with Judas. Do you see how contagious evil can be? Who are you hanging out with because it will determine what fragrance you are emitting from your life!

Now we do know that none of the disciples of Jesus knew that Judas was a traitor, only Jesus knew that. And that can make things difficult at times. It can be difficult at times to tell the difference between the wheat and the tares because they are so deceptive in their actions!

Ryle put it this way as he said, *“That anyone could follow Christ as a disciple for three years, see all His miracles, hear all His teaching, receive at His hand repeated kindnesses, be counted an apostle, and yet prove rotten at heart in the end, all this at first sight appears incredible and impossible! Yet the case of Judas shows plainly that the thing can be. Few things, perhaps, are so little realized as the extent of the fall of man.”*

How true that is. And in the end, people will be able to tell who you are worshipping by the fragrance you are emitting! What do you smell like?

One writer summed it up like this regarding Judas and this attitude of criticizing those who are worshipping the Lord. He wrote,

Judas was the great tragedy of humanity and his life serves as a solemn warning to all who superficially attach themselves to Jesus yet whose hearts are far from Him; hearts that are given over to materialism and selfishness and are lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God who come on Sunday and offer Him a “kiss” yet who betray Him all week long.

The Church is full of selfish religious hypocrites who can never understand the depth of the love and sacrifice involved in true worship to God. The self-abandonment and extravagance so freely poured out to Him by those who truly love Him always incenses the selfish, greedy religious hypocrite who feigns love for Jesus but in actuality loves themselves above all else.

Like Judas so close to Jesus and yet so far away. Can you imagine the remorse and agony he must be experiencing at this moment, it must be beyond belief; living in the light but dying in darkness he is doomed to spend eternity in the blackness and torment of hell forever.

- Source Unknown

Make no mistake about it, Judas was never a true worshiper, but he was sure critical of those who were, like Mary.

Before we read on, imagine the atmosphere at this point.

There is Mary, after she has poured out this oil on Jesus.

There is Judas who rebuked her for doing that and the disciples of Jesus joined in with Judas.

I am sure there was silence, so much so you can hear a pin drop.

What is going to happen next?

As we will see – ***TRUE WORSHIP IS CHRIST CENTERED!***

And, as we truly worship Jesus, He is there interceding for us against those who would criticize our worship of Him!

Let's read on and see on this all plays out!

VERSES 7-8

First of all, let me deal with this.

When others were criticizing Mary for what she did, who comes to her aid?

Jesus does!

Make no mistake about it, our family, our friends, those in the church and those outside the church can criticize us but if we love and worship Jesus, He is not going to criticize us for that.

Can you imagine going to heaven and the Lord says to you, ***“I know you love Me but man, you were just a little fanatical about it! What was wrong with you?”***

No, Jesus won't say that. Yes, the world will but Jesus will never condemn you for worshipping Him!

But Judas, who was not loving the Lord, he was full of criticism for those who loved the Lord. Be careful what flows from your lips!

First of all, Jesus says, **“Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial.”**

How did she know that Jesus was going to die?

Because she was not only a worshiper of Jesus, but she listened to what He was saying.

I wonder all that we miss that Jesus has for us because we don't take the time to worship and listen to what He is showing us through His Word opened up to us by His Spirit!

Then Jesus says some disturbing words, insensitive words it would seem.

He said, **“For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always.”**

Please understand that Jesus was not negating or ignoring the poor, but He was saying that His day was coming, and she was giving the gift of devotion to Him, preparing Him for His burial.

Again, the apostles kept missing this one; they refused to accept His death and were looking to be heads in His Kingdom.

So how did Mary know?

Like I have said, she spent time at the feet of Jesus!

Do you think the Lord is trying to show us something here? You bet He is!

Now in regard to the poor. Taking care of the poor is important but more importantly is God, worshiping Him, spending time with Him, listening to Him so that we can be directed in our actions, not only towards the poor.

You see, if we truly worship and listen to the Lord then we will minister to those in need.

But if we just minister to their human needs, we become just another social agency and we are not truly given them what they need, ***JESUS!***

Out of a relationship with God, we minister to the spiritual and physical needs of others, they go hand-in-hand!

Remember, the Church is not a social institution, it is not an organization, but it is a living organism, the body of Christ on the earth! Never forget that!

What we are seeing today in the church in America is a man-centered approach to the worship of God.

The worship is centered around making me feel good.

The message is short and makes me feel good.

The church has the best coffee.

The church has the best sound system and light show.

And I can go on, but you get the point. Jesus is left out and He is the One we gather together to worship, not ourselves!

Let me show you what I mean about man-centered worship. This is from Victoria Osteen, the wife of Joel Osteen. And as you listen to these words, you tell me if this is Christ-centered or self-centered.

This is what she said,

When we obey God, we're not doing it for God, I mean that's one way of looking at it, we're doing it for our self because God takes pleasure when we're happy. That's the thing that gives Him the greatest joy this morning. So, I want you to know this morning - just do good for your own self. Do good 'cause God wants you to be happy'. When you come to church, when you worship Him, you're not doing it for God really, you're doing it for yourself - because that's what makes God happy . . .

- Victoria Osteen

I hope you see how wrong that is and yet, how often do we hear things like, ***“God wants me to be happy”*** and we justify our sin!

Worship is not about us, never has been and never should be. You see – ***TRUE***

WORSHIP IS CHRIST CENTERED!

What does that mean?

It means that our main responsibility is to worship Jesus and that worship is seen as we preach the Good News to everyone we come in contact with.

This is why the Church exists, this is our mission to go into all the world and preach the Gospel, which alone can save the lost and turn them into true worshippers, which is what the Father is really seeking after!

Yes, you can feed the poor, meet the needs of those who need help, but if you leave out the Lord, if you leave out Jesus, then you are only helping them for a few years, and they will spend eternity apart from the Lord!

And the bottom line is this. The worship of God must be our consuming passion and the motivation for everything we do in our Christian lives.

The next point we will look at is found in Mark 14:3 and it is – ***TRUE WORSHIP COMES FROM BROKENNESS!***

MARK 14:3

“And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman [Mary] came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head.”

This alabaster flask was made of a soft, translucent stone and it would be carved and polished. Many times they were used for glasses to drink from, but here, it was used as a container to hold costly perfume!

Now I did not mention this before, but I do want to bring this up. This spikenard, this costly perfume may have been Mary’s dowry which she would have presented to her husband at the time of her marriage.

If that is the case then what Mary was doing was giving up everything, even marriage to devote herself completely to the Lord.

In saying that, what a beautiful picture of worship we see here.

The love that Mary had for her Lord. She worshiped the Lord from her heart giving that which cost her something.

But, before she could give, she had to break the flask or be broken, humble, and in the end her life took on the fragrance of Jesus!

Now you may be thinking, ***“What in the world does this have to do with me? I am a Christian, why do I need to be broken?”***

First of all, we see that oil in the Scriptures is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. And there is no way we can worship the Lord with a proud, with an arrogant, with a selfish or self-confident spirit!

You see, brokenness speaks of coming to the end of ourselves and surrendering our life totally to the Lord!

Paul put it like this in Ephesians 5:18, **“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.”**

And a life that is broken, surrendered to God will be seen like this, **“speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.”** Ephesians 5:19-21.

That is a life that is surrendered to God, and it is seen in how we treat others! How we speak of others!

And we can have all kinds of excuses why we don't manifest these things in our life, but that is just you being self-centered and doing your own thing. And you will remain in that condition until you are broken of self and surrender to the will of God!

You see, brokenness gives way to humility and humility to surrender. And both humility and surrender provide the only environment in which true worship can grow and flourish.

Let me share this with you. We are told,

The Bible teaches us that brokenness is a prerequisite to blessing and usefulness. No one ever achieves spiritual greatness until he has fully surrendered himself to God.

Victorious living comes only as we abandon ourselves to the Lordship of Christ, becoming His loving bond slave. God's best for our lives is not the result of struggle. Rather, it is simply the acceptance of His perfect will and the recognition of His authority in every area of our lives.

Higher than the highest heaven, Deeper than the deepest sea, Lord, Thy love at last hath conquered:

Grant me now my supplication, None of self and all of Thee.

Judson Van De Venter wrote this text after surrendering his many talents to his all-wise Savior:

“For some time, I had struggled between developing my talents in the field of art and going into full-time evangelistic work. At last the pivotal hour of my life came, and I surrendered all.

A new day was ushered into my life, I became an evangelist and discovered down deep in my soul a talent hitherto unknown to me. God had hidden a song in my heart, and touching a tender chord, He caused me to sing.”

After making his decision to devote his life to Christian service, Van De Venter ministered with much blessing in extensive evangelistic work both at home and abroad. . . .

He went on to write the lyrics to the beautiful hymn *“All to Jesus I Surrender”*

All to Jesus I surrender, all to Him I freely give; I will ever love and trust Him, in His presence daily live.

All to Jesus I surrender, humbly at His feet I bow; worldly pleasures all forsaken, take me, Jesus, take me now.

All to Jesus I surrender, make me, Savior, wholly Thine; let me feel the Holy Spirit - truly know that Thou art mine.

All to Jesus I surrender, Lord, I give myself to Thee; fill me with Thy love and power; let Thy blessings fall on me.

Chorus: I surrender all, I surrender all, all to Thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender

all.

- Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotion

That's what a life of worship is all about, brokenness and surrender.

There is one more we are going to look at and that is – ***THE LEGACY OF TRUE***

WORSHIP!

MATTHEW 26:13

“Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman [Mary] has done will also be told as a memorial to her.”

We have seen the heart of Mary as she worships the Lord.

Mary anointed Him with this oil, this very costly oil because the worship of God will cost us something. If it doesn't, then it truly is not worship.

Not only that, but Mary wiped his feet with her hair and that tells me that the fragrance that was upon Jesus was upon Mary as well. She took on the fragrance of Jesus and I will tell you this. As you spend time with the Lord, as you are in His Word, you will take on the nature of Jesus. If you don't, you will smell like something else and that is not good!

The focus of Mary's worship was upon Jesus. It was not upon some statue, or the lighting of candles, or chanting this or that, or anything else but Jesus.

And we saw that to worship Jesus she had to break this flask and that is true in our own lives. To worship Jesus, we must die to self and in doing so we will focus upon Him and what He has for our lives.

And that brings us to this last point – ***THE LEGACY OF TRUE WORSHIP!***

What do I mean by that?

Listen again to what we are told in Matthew 26:13, "**Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.**"

Mary did not exalt herself. She was not looking for any recognition for what she did. And yet, Jesus tells His men that what she has done will be remembered, she will leave this legacy behind!

And think about this. Everyone who has read the gospels down through the centuries knows about Mary and what she did in that little village 2000 years ago!

Isn't that amazing, it has not been forgotten just like Jesus said!

I think that is important for us to understand. All we do for the Lord, the world may not see it, they may criticize it, they may mock it, make fun of us but the Lord knows, and He remembers!

We see Judas who criticized Mary and his name has become synonymous with treachery, with betrayal. You don't want to call your son Judas!

But Mary worshiped the Lord, gave all she had to Him and her love for Jesus, her worship of Jesus has been remembered and we see people having no problem calling their daughter Mary because of her legacy!

We see this contrast between Mary and Judas spoken of in Proverbs 10:7, which says, **“The memory of the righteous is blessed, But the name of the wicked will rot.”**

The Living Bible hits this just as hard as it says, **“We all have happy memories of good men gone to their reward, but the names of wicked men stink after them.”**

May the Lord work in each of us giving us a heart of true worship like Mary!

So we have seen – ***THE HEART OF MARTHA!***

She served the Lord and there is nothing wrong with that. We worship the Lord in many different ways.

We then looked at Mary and saw that – ***TRUE WORSHIP COSTS!***

How can we serve the Lord with that which costs us nothing? That is not serving the Lord. For Mary, she gave everything to Jesus! Worship is a sacrifice on our part!

We also saw that – ***TRUE WORSHIP TAKES ON THE FRAGRANCE OF JESUS!***

For Mary, she wiped the feet of Jesus after she anointed Him and took on the fragrance of Jesus. Immerse your life in Him and let His fragrance not only emanate from you but let it fill the rooms that you enter!

And make no mistake about it, when you worship the Lord there will be those who come against you because – ***FALSE WORSHIP CRITICIZES!***

We also need to remember that – ***TRUE WORSHIP IS CHRIST CENTERED!***

He alone deserves our worship. No other created thing, no other object is to be worshiped!

We then saw that – ***TRUE WORSHIP COMES FROM BROKENNESS!***

We must be broken of self and surrendered to the Lord. Worship is not about us, it is about Jesus and that is who we bring to others, Jesus!

I will close with this – ***THE LEGACY OF TRUE WORSHIP!***

What kind of legacy are you leaving behind?

Mary left this one, “**Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.**” Matthew 26:13.