



His Final Steps... Led to a Dinner Celebration

Text: Selections from John 12:1-11 NAS 1995

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: During these Wednesdays of Lent, we are on a journey with Jesus as He takes His final steps:

- To live as our perfect substitute.
- To complete His teaching and miracle ministry.
- To lay down His life to open the way to the Father.

In this sermon, we are less than one week before Good Friday and Jesus' steps have led Him to a dinner celebration at the home of His friends – Lazarus, Mary, and Martha.

1. **The Setting:** ¹ **Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ² So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining *at the table* with Him.**

- a. The day: It's the Saturday before the first Palm Sunday, when Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey.
- b. The location: Bethany, about two miles southeast of Jerusalem and the home of Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha.

- c. The relationship: Jesus was already friends with Lazarus and his sisters, *but they certainly became much closer when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.*
 - d. The meal preparation: They rested on the Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11); then, *at sunset, as the Jewish Saturday rolled over into Sunday*, they prepared a supper for Jesus.
 - e. The meal server: Like the earlier occasion when Jesus was in their home (Luke 10:38-42), *Martha did the serving.*
2. **The Anointing**:³ **Mary then took a pound of very costly perfume 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 perfume.** ⁴ **But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said,** ⁵ **“Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to poor people?”** ⁶ **Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it.**
- a. The perfume: It was a **“very precious nard made from myrrh, the juice of the Arabian myrtle.”**¹
 - b. The anointing: As Samuel anointed David with oil and the Father anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit, so Mary anointed Jesus by pouring the perfume on His feet, then drying the perfume with her hair.
 - c. The smell: After reading Dr. Kretzmann, and consulting with Kathy on normal perfume use: Mary may have poured upon Jesus an amount equal to **300**

¹ <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/kpc/john-12.html>

applications of perfume – *resulting in a very strong and beautiful fragrance filling the house!*

- d. The value: A denarius was a day's wage. Today, a day's wage could easily be \$150. So, the perfume today could easily be worth \$45,000 (150 x 300).
 - e. The disciples' response: Matthew wrote, "...the disciples were indignant when they saw this, and said, 'Why this waste?'" (Mt. 26:8). Now, it's good to be frugal, *especially for those with little means*, but it's also good to be **overly generous** when it comes **our Savior**, *who gave up EVERYTHING for US*.
 - f. The hypocritical complaint: Judas Iscariot acted as if he cared about the poor, but John helps us to understand the true intention of his heart – *to get more money into the money box, so that he could further enrich himself*. A thought from Dr. Kretzmann: "[Judas] undoubtedly had been a simple believer in Christ when first he was called to join the little band of disciples. But the temptations connected with the office which was entrusted to him proved too much for his endurance. His love of money, his covetousness, came to the front; he began to steal, and faith fled from his heart."
 - g. Recap: There is a difference of opinion between Mary, the disciples, and Judas. Who is right and who is wrong?
3. **The Proper Perspective:** ⁷ Therefore Jesus said, "Let her alone, so that she may keep [this perfume] for the day of My burial. ⁸ For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have Me." // Jesus' time to live was short. Mary understood, so she prepared His body for burial, *even as she and Martha had prepared the body of*

*Lazarus, their brother, for burial. Jesus' disciples did not understand what was coming soon, but Mary did and took very **appropriate** and **loving** action. As our lives ebb toward death or the return of Jesus, what SIGNIFICANT THING is God calling you to do to bring Him glory?*

4. **The Spectacle:** ⁹ **The large crowd of the Jews then learned that [Jesus] was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead.** // Think about Lazarus: ♦Alive and well, ♦then sick, ♦then dead, ♦then entombed, and ♦then alive and healthy – **AMAZING!** Therefore, people wanted to see this *living and walking miracle*. Unfortunately, they wanted to see the *miracle recipient* more than the *miracle worker*. Let us keep trusting in and focusing on JESUS!

5. **The Plan to Murder:** ¹⁰ **But the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also; ¹¹ because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus.** // Kretzmann: “This living witness was a powerful testimony for the almighty power of Jesus – and might thus become the reason why many people might come to faith in Christ. This must be prevented at all costs. And so, the chief priests consulted about the matter and made the monstrous proposal, the cold-blooded resolution, to commit murder... to put the innocent Lazarus to death...”

Let Us Pray: Dearest Jesus, even though many hated You, *You still did EVERYTHING necessary for EVERY PERSON to pay the full sin penalty and open heaven.* Please lead many to repent!

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