



SEQUIM COMMUNITY CHURCH
WOMEN OF THE BIBLE
January 17, 2017

Mary of Bethany

FAITH IN ACTION

The Bible tells us Mary was part of a family Jesus loved. He raised her brother Lazarus from the dead, and her sister Martha was known for her diligent work and hospitality. Mary took every opportunity to sit at the feet of Jesus because she longed to be in His presence and hear His life-giving teaching. On one occasion, Mary took one of her most valuable and costly possessions, a jar of pure nard (a perfume, worth a year's wages), broke it open and poured the perfume over His head. What a profound and personal expression of worship!

Read Mark 14:1-9

Small Group Opener:

Which need that is facing our world makes you say, "I wish I could do something to help"?

MAIN BIBLE STUDY:

Please read the verses and answer the following questions.

1. In our key passage, Mark 14:1-9 Mary pours expensive perfume of the head of Jesus. What do you think Jesus is getting at when He affirms this reckless act of generosity towards Him...and His rebuke of those who are critical of her? _____

- What are some of the needs and problems you have encountered that seem overwhelming to you? _____
Why? _____

2. To what is Jesus referring in His statement in verse 7, "But you will not always have me"?

- How does this inform us about what Jesus states in verse 8? _____

3. In verse 1, Mark states that the season of Jesus' encounter with Mary was "two days before Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread."

- To better understand the Passover and Festival of Unleavened Bread, read Exodus 12:1-18 and Leviticus 23:5-6

There is a key connection between the sacrifice of a lamb the Old Testament and Jesus' death in the New Testament. What do we learn about this important connection in the following passages:

- John 1:29 & 36 _____

- John 13:1 _____

- Romans 3:25 _____

- Hebrews 7:27 _____

- Hebrews 10:10 _____

- I Peter 2:5 _____

4. Read Luke 10:42. As one authors states, Mary's actions and attitude, "...establishes worship as the highest of all priorities for every Christian. Nothing, including the service of her sister Martha, rendered to Christ is more important than listening to Him and honoring Him with our hearts."

Would you agree? Why or why not? _____

Going Further – Additional Study

Mary was a worshipper of Jesus. Worship is the way that we should be. Jesus makes that clear in John 8:29-30:

"The One who sent Me stays with Me. He doesn't abandon Me. He sees how much joy I take in pleasing Him." When He put it in these terms, many people decided to believe." (The Message).

So, what are the attitudes and actions that would be genuine expressions of our worship?

One is to align our plans with His. For some, this may mean *aligning* our plans with God's, but for others it means *replacing* our plans with God's. We see this demonstrated in the life of Christ in Matthew 26:39,

"My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will but as You will."

This was Jesus' prayer to God in the Garden of Gethsemane, right before He was going to go through an unbearable thing - the Cross. Jesus made it clear He was not seeking His own comfort, but seeking the will of His Father. As we pray in the Lord's Prayer, "Your Kingdom come, your will be done." (Matthew 6:10) A life of worship is committed to doing God's will daily, consistently.

Often this means we need a little "attitude adjustment." King David expressed this truth well in Psalm 51:16-17:

"Going through the motions doesn't please you. A flawless performance is nothing for You. I learned God-worship when my pride was shattered. Heart-shattered lives, ready for love, don't for a moment escape God's notice." (The Message)

Notice that it says worship is not a performance. It's an attitude adjustment. We begin to get to that place where we can sacrifice our plans for God's plans when we exchange the language of pride, which is "I know better," for the language of worship, "You know better."

• Read Mark 8:35. What spiritual truth is Jesus' highlighting? _____

• What do we learn about pride and our "fellowship of God" from Philippians 2:6-7?

• And in Ecclesiastes 5:2? _____

• What do we learn about a worshipful attitude from John 4:49-53? _____

A second attitude of worship is trusting God's opinions over human opinions. Let's read how Jesus lived out this truth in front of His critics.

"Teacher, we know you are a man of integrity. You aren't swayed by men because You pay no attention to who they are but You teach the way of God in accordance with the truth."
(Mark 12:14).

What does integrity mean? It means you're undivided between what you believe and how you live and think in front of people. Jesus could have been swayed by people, but He chose "to live for an audience of one." Worshiping God means, at times, going against the culture of this world

whenever it doesn't line up with God's Truth and God's ways. We have to choose who we trust: others, ourselves, or God.

- Read John 2:23-25. Where didn't Jesus place His trust? _____

- Look up Galatians 1:10. What choice is Paul saying a believer must make? _____

Finally, a worshipper values knowing God above all else. Jesus huddling with His guys before He left earth gave them the prize pearl of their time together in John 17:3:

"And this is the real and eternal life: That they know you, the one and only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you sent." (Message)

What was most important to Jesus for His disciples as He was leaving earth, and for us? He desired that we know God. The word "know" here is a special word. Relationally, it points to intimacy, knowledge, vulnerability and transparency with someone else - a deep and dramatic personal connection. Is this how we would describe our "knowledge" of God?

- Read Philippians 3:8-9. What did Paul value about all else? _____

- What we value often reveals itself in our emotions. What emotion did Jesus express in John 2:16-17? _____

Something to ponder...

How is *your* passion for Jesus Christ doing?