

## **“A Pause... Before the Cause”**

**April 6, 2025**

**Scripture Text: John 12:1-8 NKJV** **1.** Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus, who had been dead, was, whom He had raised from the dead. **2** There they made Him a supper, and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. **3** Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

**4** But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, who would betray Him, said, **5** “Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” **6** This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief and had the money box, and he used to take what was put in it.

**7** But Jesus said, “Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. **8** For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always.”

Jesus takes time to have a final meal with His cherished friends Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. It was the last week before He lay down His life for His friends and the world. Some writers have surmised that Jesus joined Lazarus and his sisters for dinner to celebrate his life. For some individuals awaiting the certainty of death, socializing may not be on their agenda if they are uncertain about eternity.

How overjoyed they must have been to have the Way, the Truth, and the Life sitting at their table and recalling Jesus’ commanding Lazarus to come back from the dead. Can you imagine sitting in the presence of **Yeshua** (“Salvation” or “God Saves”)? In Hebrew, the name of Jesus means **Yehoshua** – **“Yahweh is salvation”** or **“Yahweh saves.”** It was a home filled with the Goodness and peace of God throughout the rooms.

According to **Matthew 26:6** and **Mark 14:3**, the dinner was held at Simon the leper’s home, where both of their miracles had a profound impact on people in Simon’s and Lazarus’ communities. On their day of festivity, the women served while the men sat conversing with one another. While Martha was delighted to serve Jesus and the others with unique dishes and unique table settings, Mary was moved in her spirit to retrieve a pound of costly Spikenard oil. The aroma filled the house as Mary opened the bottle to anoint Jesus’ feet and used her hair to wipe them. **Spikenard oil was used to treat several medical conditions and medicinal purposes.** Mary had earned a year’s worth of money, 300 denarii (approximately \$1,086.20 in current US currency), to procure the two-pound container of spikenard oil for use on the day of the burial.

For a Jewish lady to let down her hair in public was frowned upon by society. Mary did not consider public opinion when she acted out of love and devotion to Jesus. Her heart and motivation were devoted to pleasing the Lord. In **Verses 4, 5, and 6, Judas Iscariot** voices his concern about the cost and waste of the oil on Jesus’ feet that should

have been sold and given to the poor. It was as if he wanted to shame Mary and get a consensus among the people to agree with him. He wanted it to appear that he was deeply concerned and compassionate about people experiencing poverty, when, in fact, greed and betrayal were at the heart of his actions.

The Scriptures paint a picture of Mary's commitment to Jesus:

1. **Luke 10:39:** Mary **sat at Jesus' feet and learned.**
2. **John 11:32:** Mary **fell at Jesus' feet and surrendered.**
3. **John 12:3:** Mary **anointed Jesus' feet and honored Jesus.**

Whenever people have ulterior motives to put you down and throw you to the wolves, Jesus will have your back! Mary did not have to give an explanation or define her motivation; her humble gift to Christ spoke volumes. Jesus silenced all those who may have been tempted to consider agreeing with Judas' opinion. **VERSE 7 But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial."**

When a person seems a little extreme in their love for Jesus (in your Opinion), He will not criticize you; that is what Judas did. It is much better to be like Mary (extreme in our love for Jesus) than to be like Judas (**criticizing others who show such great love for Jesus**). It may not be your way of expressing gratitude for the work of Jesus in your life, but be happy for others who have been set free by the blood of Jesus!

The people at the dinner did not have a clue that Jesus's words would ring true in a week. Many will mourn His death and feel hopeless because of the One who defied the law of nature, sickness, and death—those who witnessed the cruelty of His death upon the cross and his unrecognizable body.

**VERSE 8 For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."**

Jesus makes it clear that the poor they will always have among them, and they will have opportunities to show their care and concern. He is letting him and all who are concerned know that this is the only time they will have to honor Him this way.

### **Applications:**

People may be impressed by our actions, but the Lord knows our hearts.

Greed doesn't allow you to live in appreciation for others.