

That You May Believe & Respond

John 12

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, September 9, 2018

I want to start our sermon time this morning by inviting you to open your Bibles to the Gospel of John. Open your Bibles with me and turn to the Gospel of John. And as you're doing that, Henry Morehouse is a name that you might not be familiar with. He's not very well known today, but he was a pastor in the 1800s who worked with the poor in the slums of London. He spent his life working with some of the people in some of the worst conditions. He was actually himself, he was saved at a circus of all places. He was walking by the circus one night on his way to live a wild, debaucherous evening, and he heard a tent preacher preaching the Gospel and he believed and he was converted on the spot. And he spent his life giving back to the people that he was most familiar with.

He used to tell a story of the time he came across a little girl in the slums who was carrying some milk home to her mother when she tripped and fell and broke the pitcher she was carrying. It just shattered everywhere. Milk just spilled all over the ground. And when she did that, Henry Morehouse came up to her and he said, "Don't cry little girl. Don't cry, it's going to be okay." And he tried to put it back together again. With her help, he turned it this way and that. He tried to move the pieces here and there, but every time he tried to put the pitcher back together again, it broke. And the little girl burst out into tears all over again, breaking his heart. And she kept saying, "My mommy's going to whip me, my mommy's going to whip me."

So, finally, Henry Morehouse got the idea that he would pick the little girl up in his arms and carry her to a cutlery shop and buy her a brand-new pitcher, because she couldn't afford one herself. She didn't have any money. Then, he went to the dairy man and he bought her some milk to go in the new pitcher. Again, out of his own pocket because she was poor. Finally, he carried her to her mother. And as he was dropping her off, he asked the little girl, "Do you think your mother will whip you now? Do you think she's going to be upset?" And the little girl replied and said, "No, this is better than anything I ever had before."

Henry Morehouse went on to say, that's a great illustration of salvation because when God saves us, He doesn't put us back together again. He doesn't fix our lives with glue and tape. He gives us a brand-new life, and it's better than anything we ever had before. He gives us a brand-new soul. And the Scriptures say He does it through the Lord, Jesus Christ. That's the message of the Gospel of John.

If you're joining us for the first time this morning, we're in the middle of a series on the Gospel of John called the "That You May Believe" series. Because John says he wrote this book so that you may believe in Jesus. Let me just read this to you, but John 20:30-31 says, "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that by believing you may have life in His name." That's why John wrote, that's why he gave us this book of the Bible, so you may believe and have a new heart. So, that you would trust in Jesus and get a brand-new pitcher of milk.

The little girl did not earn that pitcher. She didn't have any money. It was all a gift. It's the same way with salvation. Salvation is a gift. You don't earn it. Jesus does it all and you have to believe. That's the message of this Gospel.

To help with this, John gives us several stories from the life of Jesus. He gives us several snapshots of His life. And the one we're going to look at today tells you how several people responded to Him. That's the story we're looking at this morning in John chapter 12, if you want to turn over there. It tells you how several people received or responded to this free gift of salvation.

Just to set some background for this, John 12 occurs in the last week of Jesus' life. This is His final days on earth. I told you before that the Gospel of John, it's not spread out chronologically, and what I mean is that the first half covers a period of three years and the second half, covers one week. So, that's the breakdown of the Gospel of John chronologically. The first 10 chapters, 11 chapters cover a huge block of time and the last half, doesn't. The last half just talks about everything leading up to the cross. The cross was very important to the life of Jesus, it was everything. And so, John spends half his book laying the backdrop for the cross.

In chapter 12:1, if you want to look, it actually gives us a specific timeline for this. When it says, "Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was."

The Passover feast was held on a Friday because the Jews rested on Saturday. So, six days before the Passover is what? It's the previous Saturday, right? So, that's the timeline of this event. This is the Saturday before the Passover. Verse 2 says, it's the Sabbath meal, which means it was a very special time, very sacred. And it would have been especially sacred for Jesus because this is the last Sabbath meal He will have on earth before He dies. He only has one week to live at this point in time. So, He wanted to share it with some friends. He wanted to spend it with those who were closest to Him.

As a matter of fact, later on in chapter 12, Jesus goes into Jerusalem and from that point on, everything else in His life is just conflict until He dies. It's all clouded in conflict. This is the last peaceful event He's going to have. And He has it with the family of Mary and Martha and Lazarus.

If you remember from last time in John 11, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, do you remember that? He brought him back to life. And the Scriptures tell us, chapter 11:3 says that Jesus loved Lazarus like a brother. The word for "love" there is the "love of a brother". In chapter 11:35, it says that He wept over him. If some of you are curious about this, that's the shortest verse in the Bible. So, if you have to memorize something for Sunday school, memorize John 11:35. It says, "Jesus wept." We can all remember that. But that's because Lazarus meant that much to Him. And now that he's back, Jesus wants to share a meal with Lazarus and His friend.

We could say it this way, He's eating with the former dead man here. He's eating with a man who had just walked out of a tomb. Now, I don't know about you guys, but if I was sitting at a dinner like that, I would probably be doing something like this. I'd want to poke Lazarus to see if he's

like not a ghost, right? I would want to stare at him and see if the food went down, right? You can say it this way, what would you do if you were Lazarus sitting at that event? You just came back from the dead and you're going to eat with Jesus, what would you do? What would you say if He raised you from the grave? What would you do if you were Mary and Martha, his sisters, right? What would you do if your brother just came back from the dead, and this is the man who did it? What would you do if you were the disciples looking on?

See, that's what this passage is talking about here. That's the backdrop for this event. And I think it's important to talk about this because I meet a lot of people who misunderstand the relationship between faith and works. Maybe you guys do as well, but they misunderstand the relationship between trusting in Jesus and responding to salvation. Because they think you have to do something to be saved. They think you have to earn your way into heaven. It's like the bumper sticker that says, "I owe I owe, it's off to work I go." You guys seen that? That's why they go to church because they owe God something. They read their Bible and pray and give because they have a debt and they want to pay God back.

That's not the way it works. We do good works out of gratitude, not out of payment. We do good deeds as an act of worship, not to pay God back. You can't pay God back. You guys understand that? I mean if He called you out of the grave, what are you going to pay Him back with? What do you have that God would want? We do good deeds as a way of saying thanks. That's what these people did here. Jesus just did a miracle, He did something they'd never seen, He raised a man from the dead, they didn't earn it, they didn't do anything to deserve it – it was all of grace. And in response, they're going to say thanks. That's what this chapter's about. In response, they're going to show their gratitude.

Martin Luther said, "Isn't it wonderful to know that salvation lies entirely outside of ourselves?" Isn't that wonderful to know? We don't contribute to it in any way. Another author said, "It's not your hold upon Christ that saves you, it is Christ's hold upon you." Lazarus was saved by Christ's hold upon him. He walked out of that tomb by the power of Christ. All he did was die. All he did was just go the normal course of this world, and he was saved entirely through Christ. We're saved the same way and our good works are a response to that.

That's what you see at this dinner. If you're taking notes this morning in John 4, we're going to see four responses to Jesus at this supper. So, if you're taking notes in John 12, we're going to look at four responses to what Jesus did at this dinner.

It's been said that I didn't find Jesus, He found me. He wasn't the one who was lost, I was lost, and He found me and He brought me back from the dead, which is incredible to think about. But how do you respond to that? What do you do when the Lord saves you that way? What do you do when He picks you up and carries you to the store and buys you a brand-new pitcher of milk? What do you do when He gives you your life back? I mean, this passage shows you how these people responded to that in the first century. And it gives us four responses to Jesus.

The first one is this; it's the response of Simon and Lazarus. The first response we see here is the response of Simon and Lazarus. They're the two people who were healed at this event. The two people who were brought back to life. One of them is mentioned in the Gospel of John, the other

one isn't, and I'll talk about that. But, if you read in verses 1 through 2, it says, "Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. And so, they made Him a supper there."

Just a few comments about this, but chapter 11:54, which we read this morning, says that after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, "Therefore He no longer continued to walk publicly among the Jews, but went away from there to the country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim". Ephraim was located 12 miles from Jerusalem on the edge of the wilderness of Judea. It was right on the cuff of the desert.

Well, we don't know how long Jesus was there. We know why He was there, because Ephraim was far enough away from Jerusalem to avoid the Pharisees and it was close enough to get back in time for the Passover. It was a perfect spot to relax for just a moment. But when the Passover had begun, Jesus goes from Ephraim, about 10 miles to Bethany, which was close to Jerusalem. The Passover, Jewish feast, usually lasted an entire week. So, you had to get there a week in advance, Jesus does that here.

John doesn't say whose house He came to, only that He came to Bethany where Lazarus was. But just to fill this out a little bit in a greater scope, Matthew 26 and Mark 14 say that this meal takes place at the home of Simon the leper, who also lived in Bethany. Matthew 26:6 says, "Now when Jesus was in Bethany, at the home of Simon the leper". They had a Sabbath meal there.

Bethany was a very small village. It only had a couple of hundred people there, so one miracle would have been enough to have the town talking forever. As a matter of fact, I think I told you guys last time, the Arabic name for Bethany today is the name Lazarus. Because this miracle of Lazarus being raised from the dead, was the biggest thing that ever happened in this village. But you also have another man who was healed named Simon, who had leprosy. Some of you have heard of leprosy. It was a terrible disease that killed all the nerves in your body, so you didn't feel pain anymore.

There's a big talk today about living a pain-free life. Well, if you want to live a pain-free life, pray for leprosy, because that's literally what it was. And because you couldn't feel anything, you would hurt yourself without even knowing it. You would stay outside in the sun all day and get a terrible sunburn and never even realize it. And it would just start decaying and rotting your skin - a big problem in a desert climate. Or you would break a bone or you cut your skin and you wouldn't feel that and disease would set in and huge, ugly sores would appear on your body. They used to think the disease caused the sores. The disease didn't cause the sores, the disease caused the numbness. That's what caused the sores on your body.

It was a horrible way to die. There was no cure, no stop for it, and Jesus healed this man of this. He literally gave him his life back too. And in response to that, Simon holds a dinner at his house. Now, if you think of the perspective of this, the Jews excommunicated lepers. They had nothing to do with them. So, you couldn't go into their home, you couldn't work with them, talk to them, eat with them, and Simon has a meal, invites Jesus and the disciples and they come. It's an interesting story. Which means, by the way, that Simon paid for all the expenses of this dinner. That was his gift to Jesus. He foot the bill. Just like it is today, meals could be expensive

back then because food was scarce. You didn't have a grocery store and Tim Horton's around the corner. Now, they didn't have refrigerators to store the food away. So, you had to buy it all the day of. And you could add to this, that there were about 20 people at this event. You had Mary, Martha, Lazarus, Simon, and his family. You had the 12 disciples. So, it would cost a lot of money. And you could add to that, that as a leper, Simon would have been out of work for a while.

If Lazarus helped him pay for this, which he probably did, Lazarus would've been out of work as well. In fact, think of the irony of this, Lazarus had just paid for his own funeral. You guys know how expensive funerals are? Lazarus just paid for his own grave site. And now, here they are doing this for Jesus, because they wanted to do something. They wanted to say thanks. It wasn't necessary, Jesus would have healed him anyway. He would have done all of this without that, but they wanted to do it because they wanted to do something for the Lord.

Which leads me to ask you guys, do you feel this way today? Do you want to do something for the Lord? Not out of payment, but out of gratitude? Not out of debt, but just because you just want to? Jesus would've saved you anyway, you know that. He would have healed you anyway, but you just want to show Him thanks. That's what's going on here. Let me ask it this way, because this is helpful, if the Lord healed you of leprosy, wouldn't you want to do something, right? If He just raised you from the dead, wouldn't you at least throw a dinner for Him? Ephesians 2 says, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sin, in which you formerly walked, but God being rich in mercy ... made you alive together with Christ." God did that for you. He raised you from the dead, and so you have to show gratitude.

A pastor was once talking to a farmer who went to his church and he asked him, he said, "Bill, if you had 100 cows, would you give half of them to the Lord?" The farmer said, "Yes, pastor, I would. I would do that." Then he said, "Bill, if you had 50 chickens, would you give half of them to the Lord?" And the farmer said, "Yeah, I would do that." The pastor said, "Well, Bill, if you had 10 pigs ..." and the farmer cut him off, and he said, "No, no, no pastor, you know I only have 10 pigs." See, the point is you need to be grateful. Not just talk about being grateful, but you need to be grateful for what the Lord has done for you. You give out of gratitude. You guys do a wonderful job of this, by the way. You're a very giving church, but we could always excel still more, out of what the Lord has done for us.

John Piper says, the idea here is simple, when you give to the Lord, whatever you give (money, possessions, time), when you give, you let go of it and it falls on the poor or it falls on those who need it. You release your hold on it, you give it to God and it trickles down to the people that you can bless with it. And that's what you're seeing here.

So that's the first response to Jesus here; the response of Simon and Lazarus. We don't know what their physical condition was like at this point. If the Lord healed them immediately, maybe they couldn't do more than throw a dinner. But they did what they could.

That leads to another response to Jesus here in John 12, and that's the response of Martha. So, we've seen the response of Simon and Lazarus, who gave generously to the Lord. They gave probably over and above their means, threw a dinner party for 20 people. It brings us to the

response of Martha. If you remember from last week, Martha is the only one who believed Jesus could raise Lazarus from the dead. Do you remember that? Jesus said in John 11:25, He said, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?” And Martha said, ‘Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God.’” She's the only one who talked that way. Everybody else was doubting whether this could happen. They thought Lazarus was as good as gone, but not Martha.

And as a result, here's what she does at the supper. If you look in verses 1 through 2, it says, “Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. And so, they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving.” That was the response of Martha. She was serving the Lord, serving the people that were at the dinner. The word “serving” there is the Greek word from which we get *deacon*. It means she served or ministered to others, she came alongside and met their needs.

And to explain this a little bit, the Jewish meals were typically a big affair that lasted most of the day. In fact, I heard one Eastern Christian say that in the west, the meal is part of the event, but in the east, the meal is the event. It's the highlight of the day. It's not the highlight of the day for us because we eat three meals a day and snack in between, right? Back then, sometimes you only had one sizable meal the whole day, and you might only eat meat maybe once, twice a week. So, this was a big deal. There would have been several courses, there would have probably been decorations. If you go to Jerusalem today, one thing that really jumps out at you is you smell stuff all the time; perfumes, ointments, things like that. They call it smells and bells when you're in Jerusalem. Everything rings or everything smells. There'd be music, servants attending the guests.

And the word for “supper” here actually draws that out, because it's the Greek word *deipnon* which refers to the main meal of the day or the meal that took top priority. Where the guests would recline at a low, U-shaped table. The table would be about that far off the ground, and they would eat in that position. Horrible for your acid reflux by the way, to be eating lying down. But maybe, they didn't have that back then. They had no chairs. They may have pillows or cushions, that kind of thing. But they would actually half lie on the ground, prop themselves up on their elbow and just kind of stay in that position during the meal. And because they were in that position, they couldn't get up to serve themselves. There were no buffets back then. Some of you wouldn't make it back then. I wouldn't make it back then. You got to have buffets and potlucks.

But because they were in that position, someone had to bring things to them, and that's what Martha did. She wasn't paid for this. At least there's no indication that that was even on the radar. She just did it out of love for Jesus. She wouldn't be the only one, there'd be other servants there. There'd be people preparing the food, bringing it out. But this was her act of gratitude. That was a job, by the way. If you were in a very wealthy household, that would be the job of a slave or some type of servant. But this is what she did for Jesus. As a woman in the first century, it would be hard to find a high paying job, so she couldn't pay for the meal probably. Plus again, Lazarus had just died. They had to pay for all the expenses of that. But she did what she could. She gave of herself. To serve at something like this, she would have had to get up early, stay up late. She

would have gotten dirty, messy, sweaty, all that kind of stuff. She would have also had to break a lot of Sabbath rules. Not biblical rules, the Bible never says not to serve food on the Sabbath - but the Jews had rules about that. But Martha did all of this out of love for Jesus.

I mention that because some of you see the example of Simon and Lazarus and you say, "I'm in a bad spot financially. I can't give a lot of money to the church," and I understand that. But if that's the case, you can do what Martha did, right? You can give yourself. You can give your time and energy. You can find a need in the church, in the community and meet it. Find someone who's suffering and sit with them and pray with them and listen to them. Evangelize your neighbour, watch someone's kids, shovel snow this winter, because it does snow in Chilliwack. I'm going to go ahead and warn you guys, despite what some may tell you. I left my snowblower in Indiana. But you can do something for the Lord, anything.

D. L. Moody once wrote on a page of his Bible, he said, "I'm only one, but I am one." He said, "I cannot do everything, but I can do something and what I can do, I ought to do. And what I ought to do by the grace of God, I will do." That should be the attitude of all of us. "What I ought to do by the grace of God, I will do." It's as simple as that. It was said when the missionary, Amy Carmichael was asked what she did at an orphanage, she said, "I cut the toenails of a thousand orphans, and I'm privileged to do it." Let me tell you something, I don't know what you can and can't do for the Lord, but you can cut toenails, amen? You can sweep floors, you can do something.

Some of you have seen the movie "Chariots of Fire". By the way, we often get these really dramatic views of what missionary life is like. Let me tell you something, missionaries cut toenails, right? We've seen the movie, "Chariots of Fire" (some of you might've seen that). You heard of the Olympic runner, Eric Liddell, the guy who wouldn't run on Sundays, remember that guy? What you may not know about him, is that he actually died on a mission field. He was martyred. He was in China during the Boxer Rebellion when all the foreigners and particularly missionaries were put in prison camps. And while he was there, he contracted a brain tumour in the camp and he died. But when his friends were released, they said that every morning when they got up, the fire on the downstairs stove was lit, and they didn't know who it did until he passed away. When Eric Liddell died, they noticed that the fire was gone. Every morning while he was dying of a brain tumour, he got up and he went downstairs to build a fire, so his fellow missionaries could keep warm.

Let me tell you something, you can build a fire, right? You can serve some way. And the point is, you can do something for the Lord. It's your way of saying thanks. If you can't give dollars, give time. If you can't give possessions, give service. But whatever you give, give something, out of gratitude like Martha did. You can imagine this dinner was coming up, they were preparing for it probably all week. She's looking around thinking, "What can I do? What can I do? What can I do?" And she says, "You know what? I can pick a plate of food and bring it to Jesus."

That leads to another response to the Lord here, and this is the most interesting one, I think, because it's so lavish. This is just so over the top, and that's the response of Mary. We've seen the response of Simon and Lazarus and the responsive Martha who served at the supper, but that brings us to the response of Mary.

Some of you can relate to Simon and Lazarus and what they did. We'll talk about that in a moment. Some of you probably relate more to Martha. But for those of you who are maybe a little more emotional and like a dramatic flair to stuff, you would probably relate well to what Mary does. If you looking in verse 1, we'll read through verse 3. "Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him." Again, very interesting setting there - eating with the former dead man. "And 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."

As you go through this list of responses, you can see they get bigger and bigger as we go. What I mean is they get more and more costly. You start off with Simon and Lazarus, paying for the meal. Then you get to Martha giving her time and serving. And when you come to Mary, this lady just gave everything; time, money. One commentator said this doesn't seem to be a premeditated act because it was too extravagant.

But to explain what she does here, in the first century, people walked everywhere they went and they didn't have closed toed shoes. They wore sandals. So, they would often wash their feet before going into a house or sitting down for a meal. In fact, if I understand this correctly, the Passover meal in the springtime in Israel occurred during the rainy season. And so, you'd have some really nasty feet going into the house.

Canada's very interesting to me because everybody takes their shoes off before going into a house. I have never paid so much attention to my socks before. Every time an American comes in here, I have to rebuke them for their barbaric ways of just walking on in with their shoes. Richard Caldwell and I had a long conversation about that. "I don't know what you do in Texas, but here in Canada ..."

But here, they would actually literally wash your feet and at the supper, if you remember, they're lying down at the U-shaped table, which means your feet are close to your neighbour's face while they're eating. So, you don't want them to stink. You don't want them to smell or have mud on them. So, they would wash your feet and they would actually put a perfume on them, which was very expensive. In most homes at that time, it would be one of the most expensive things in the house.

You would use it for all kinds of things. You would use it for meals, you would use it if you had fancy guests coming over to honour them, and you would use it for funerals. So, you would probably have one jar like this that would have been used to probably anoint Lazarus' corpse at his death. So, the same jar that was used to anoint her brother, she's now bringing to Jesus. It's an interesting setting there.

The idea here is that as Mary started to anoint Jesus' feet, she started using the perfume. That way, she would have used just a little bit of it. She became overcome with emotion and John doesn't say this because the idea is John wrote later than the other Gospels, and he believed His readers understood this. But Matthew says that she just dumped the whole thing on Jesus' head.

He's lying down on His elbow, which means His head would have been close to His feet. She's anointing His feet, she just goes over and pours the whole thing on His head. Mark 14 says she broke the vial as she did that. And she probably broke the neck of it, so she could just pour it out quicker. And then she looks around and she doesn't have a towel because she wasn't expecting to do this. And she wipes His feet with her hair. She was probably embarrassed maybe from the outburst. So, she just uses whatever is available, which was her hair.

To show you how big of a deal of this really was, Judas says in verse 5, that the perfume could have been sold for 300 denarii. That's how expensive this jar was. A denarius was a day's worth of work. So, 300 denarii would have been close to a years' labour. It would be what? \$50,000 in our modern economy or \$60,000, something like that. It was a tremendous amount of money.

Verse 3 says it was a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard. Nard is a plant that grows in the highlands of China and India and puts out a sweet smell. It's also called spikenard or muskroot. And because it comes from so far away, because you had to go all the way to China or India or it had to be brought that far to Israel, it would have cost a fortune. And Mary dumps the whole thing out on Jesus' head. This would be the equivalent of dumping two cars, worth of money on His head, brand-new cars. And can I just say, this would have killed the party. I mean, this would be so outlandish that it would have stopped everything immediately, everybody'd be in shock. No one would know what to say.

If you notice (maybe one of the most interesting things about this), is Jesus doesn't rebuke her for this. In fact, He actually defends her. I'll talk about Judas' response in a moment, but if you look in verse 7, it says, "Therefore Jesus said, 'Let her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial.'" That phrase "keep it" could mean "preserve it" or "watch over it". It's a little vague. But Jesus says, "Even though Mary didn't realize that she was watching over Me for death, she was anointing My body, or preparing Me, for My crucifixion that's coming up in a week." Verse 8 says, "For you always have the poor with you, but you did not always have Me." But the point here is that Jesus approves of outlandish gifts. He approves of extravagant acts of worship. He doesn't say, "What are you doing? Why are you wasting this on Me?" Because he approves of that kind of thing. He agreed with what Simon gave and Lazarus gave. He appreciated what Martha gave, and He also appreciated this gift of Mary's.

Let me ask this again, if Jesus brought your brother back from the dead, wouldn't you dump the whole thing out on His head? If He'd saved your family member or saved you from the dead, wouldn't you be overcome with emotion?

When I was in Illinois, I got to minister to several college students who had just gotten saved. And it was very encouraging to me because they were on fire for the Lord. I mean, these young people would stay up till 4:00 in the morning, talking theology and then get up and go to class. At least, I think they got up and went to class, I'm not really sure. And they didn't have any money. They were just starting out in life, but they wanted to give everything they had. They wanted to go into the ministry, go into the mission field, they wanted to lay it all out on the line, and I always encouraged them in that. I never discouraged them. I dissuaded some of them from going into the ministry because it wasn't the best fit for them and they agreed. But you always want to encourage someone's fire for the Lord. You never want to snuff out someone's

enthusiasm. You notice, Jesus doesn't snuff out the enthusiasm here, He doesn't quench the fire. If those college students had \$50,000, they would have given it. It's what Mary does here.

Listen, the idea is simple, God didn't hold back when He saved you, and now, you shouldn't hold back on God when you express gratitude. God didn't hold back when He raised you from the dead, when He put His Son on the cross. And now, you shouldn't hold back in return. Jesus says, "If anyone will come after Me, he must take up his cross daily and follow Me." That's the idea, you give everything you have.

That leads to a final response to Jesus that we see here in John 12. The dinner has been interesting so far. It's been very pleasant. Things have gone well. It's been kind of strange. I think dumping a pound of perfume on someone's head is a little bit strange. So, it's kind of become awkward, but Jesus doesn't rebuke anything so far. Everything's been positive until you get to verse 4. Because in verse 4, Judas Iscariot enters the scene, and that's our final response to Jesus here. And this is the turn of the dinner party – the response of Judas. The story ends by giving us the only negative response in the whole event.

And if you look in verses 4 through 6, it says,

4 But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him said, 5 "Why was this perfume not sold for 300 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.

This is a one of the first times we read about Judas in the Gospel of John. But every time you read about it, read his name, there's a little bit of a stench to it. As a matter of fact, every time you read the name Judas in the Gospel, it mentions the betrayal. So, you've seen it in verse 4, "But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him." Every time you see Judas' name in the Gospel, it mentioned something about that event happening. He always cast a gloom on the story.

He was mentioned earlier in John 6 where Jesus says, "Did I myself not choose you the 12? And yet one of you is a devil." So, that's one title he has in Scripture. He's called "the devil" or "a devil". He's called a traitor here. John 17:12, calls him the "son of perdition" or the "son of hell".

Here, we also read that he was a thief. He didn't approve of Mary's gift, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief and as he had the money box ... Some of your translations say a money pouch or purse. And the idea was, he was the treasurer, he was the most trusted one of the disciples, because he had that role. He just wanted the money so he could steal it.

Now, this is kind of interesting because to show you how ridiculous this is, Matthew 26:15 says, Judas sold Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. You guys remember that story? 30 pieces of silver was the price of a slave in the ancient world. It was 120 denarii. It was three times less than Mary's gift here. So, the money wasn't the issue, the issue was he hated Jesus. He stole because for some

reason, he couldn't stand Him. And when other people gave gifts to Jesus., he criticized it, he scoffed at it, and he laughed at the whole thing.

Which leads me to this, as you look at these responses to Jesus, which one are you? We've covered four of these so far. We've looked at how four people responded to Jesus, but which one of these do you identify with? Do you identify with Simon and Lazarus who gave money, gave their silver and gold? Or are you Martha, who gave of her time? She gave herself to Jesus. Are you like Mary who gave everything or are you like Judas who laughed at the whole thing?

I've met people, young and old, and you have too, who couldn't say one thing about Christianity without being sarcastic? You guys know what I'm talking about? They can't say one thing about religion without scoffing at it. Is that you this morning? Do you snicker and sneer when people give to the Lord? Do you complain that the money wasn't used for something else? Because if you do, let me show you, this is terrible company here. This is a terrible place to be. That's what Judas did.

As a matter of fact, we go on and read that Jesus rebuked him in verses 7 through 8. He says, "Let her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial." And the other Gospels tell us that at that moment in time, Judas went out and sold Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. This is the one thing that set him over the edge. It's the first time he talks in the Bible, the first time we read of Jesus rebuking something that he said, and he goes off and sells his soul to the devil, essentially.

Don't let that be you. You don't want to come to church and scoff. You don't want to come and put down other people's gifts.

Going back to the rest of this, I think it's good to point out the majority of these people responded well to the Lord. They did the right thing here. Jesus did a miracle for them, He brought Lazarus back from the dead and this is what they did. Not to earn salvation, but to say thank you for it.

May we learn from this example today. Friends, Jesus has saved you. If you're in Christ, He has brought you back from the dead. You didn't find Him, He found you. And He picked you up and He carried you to the store and He bought you a brand-new pitcher of milk. He bought you a brand-new life essentially; better than what you had before, better than you deserve. And in response, you should be grateful.

I think we have a church full of grateful people this morning. You guys do a wonderful job of all this, but may our gratefulness grow as our grace increases in Christ. Let's pray together. Let's close in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank you, Lord, for what You've done for us in Christ. Lord, we thank you for the marvellous gift of salvation and the gift of Your Son. Lord, we were once dead in sin, like Lazarus was dead in the grave, and yet You have raised us through Him. May we go out and show gratefulness and kindness.

Thank you for this example of these people. I think we can all identify with one of them. From the appearances anyway, it looks like some of them didn't have much, but they gave everything they had, just to show thanks. May we go out and do the same Lord, we want to be grateful people. We thank you Lord for this time this morning, and may Christ be honoured in what we've said. We pray this in Jesus' name, amen.