



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

The Gospel of John Sermon Series
Supports Session 1: Why Wasn't This Sold?
Sermon Title: "Broken and Spilled Out" (John 12:1-11)

Connection to Session 1

While in Bethany a short time after the resurrection of Lazarus and six days before the Passover, Jesus encountered people who responded to Him in different ways.

Introduction/Opening

Several different responses to Jesus's conception and birth are noted in the New Testament. Mary responded to the announcement of His conception in faith and worship. John the Baptist, while still in the womb of His mother, Elizabeth, leaped for joy when He came near. Joseph faithfully protected and cared for Mary and Jesus. The shepherds honored Him on the night of His birth. The Magi came after His birth and gave Him gifts worthy of a king. Herod violently reacted to His presence.

These various responses continued throughout Jesus's earthly ministry. In John 12, John identified three responses to Jesus and one reply from Him. Four relevant words give direction to understanding this passage: devotion, deceit, declaration, and dissension.

Outline

1. Devotion (vv. 1-3)

- a. The setting: It was six days before the highlight feast of the Jewish calendar, the Passover. Jesus was in Bethany at a meal with Lazarus, who had recently been resurrected. Lazarus's two sisters were hosting Jesus and the disciples. Martha was busy serving the meal. Mary was busy serving the Lord.
- b. The sacrifice: Mary brought in a pound of perfume made from expensive nard – the weight for today would be close to twelve ounces.¹
- c. The service: Both Martha and Mary ministered to the Lord. One was focused on action and the other on adoration. Martha was not wrong in her action, because service is necessary in one's walk with the Lord. But service without worship is an empty gesture. True worship moves one to service.

2. Deceit (vv. 4-6)

1. Gerald L. Borchert, *John 12-21*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, vol. 25B, The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 35.

- a. The person named: Judas Iscariot, one of the disciples, had been watching the scene unfold and did not care for what Mary did. John revealed his character when he wrote, “who was about to betray Him” (v. 4).
- b. The proposal declared: Judas questioned why the perfume wasn’t sold and the money given to the poor. Three hundred denarii amounted to three hundred days wages, a large amount of money. As Thomas L. Constable noted, “Real worship always costs the worshipper; it always involves a sacrifice.”²
- c. The purpose examined: Judas did not raise this question out of a desire to care for the poor. Rather, he was the treasurer and pilfered from the money bag. He was a thief.

3. Declaration (vv. 7-8)

- a. Jesus made a prophetic comment: “Leave her alone; she has kept it for the day of my burial” (v. 7). Jesus highlights this in Mark 14:8, “She has done what she could; she has anointed my body in advance for burial.”
- b. Jesus made a practical comment: Jesus reminded the disciples that ministries to the poor would always be available. The care of the poor has always been the responsibility and privilege of the church. Jesus would not always be with them, and Mary, by her lavish gift and worship, pointed to the most significant event in history—His death for sinners.

4. Dissension (vv. 9-11)

- a. The crowd: A large crowd of Jews had come to see Jesus and Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead. These were not the religious leaders, whose animosity toward Jesus was clear.
- b. The conspiracy: The religious leaders’ motives are on display in verse 10. They sought to kill both Jesus and Lazarus. Lazarus, who had been dead, was now walking and talking with people. It was evidence of Jesus’s power.
- c. The cause: Many Jews were deserting the religious leaders and believing in Jesus because of Lazarus.

Conclusion

What will be our response to the Master? Will we move to follow Him with wholehearted devotion or be like Judas with a selfish heart of deceit? The hymn writer, Howard B. Grose in 1902, stated it this way:

Give of your best to the Master;
 Give of the strength of your youth;
 Throw your soul’s fresh, glowing ardor
 Into the battle for truth.
 Jesus has set the example,
 Dauntless was He, young and brave;
 Give Him your loyal devotion;
 Give Him the best that you have.³

2. Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on John: 2022 Edition,” www.planobiblechapel.org, 2022, <https://www.planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/html/nt/john/john.htm>.

3. Howard B. Grose, “Give of Your Best to the Master,” Hymnary.org, 2022, https://hymnary.org/text/give_of_your_best_to_the_master_give_of.

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