

THE GOSPEL OF

JOHN

GIVING MY
ALL TO
THE KING

INTRODUCTION

John 12:1-11

I remember flipping through the channels many years ago and coming across the classic "The Twilight Zone" television show. I always enjoyed watching those shows growing up. This episode aired April 21, 1961, and was titled "The Rip Van Winkle Caper." The drama is about a group of three thieves that steal a large amount of gold in the 1960s and hide in a remote cave in the desert. With the help of a fourth person who is a scientist, they figure out how to put themselves in a state of hibernation for about 100 years. The goal was to wake up, knowing that everyone would have forgotten about them, turn in the gold for cash, and enjoy their lives. However, several things go wrong. During their hibernation, one of the glass tubes they were sleeping in cracked and killed one of the thieves. While they are preparing to head into town, the group leader crashes the only transportation that they have into a second thief, killing him. In that process, it destroyed the truck and left only two men (the leader and the scientist) to carry the gold and water.

The scientist and thief start their 20-mile trek into town. However, they underestimate the weight of the gold and the extra energy it takes them to carry so much. Eventually, the scientist runs out of water, asking the other for a drink. The thief begins charging one bar of gold for each drink until he takes almost all of the gold from the other person. Eventually, he gets down to his last bar of gold, and that's when the scientist decides to take the life of the thief.

As the show comes to an end, the scientist is begging for a man standing over him to give him a ride into town. He hands him a bar of gold and says that he can keep it if he gives him a ride to get some water. Then, he dies too. The man and his wife, driving a futuristic car, mourn over his death. The wife and her husband have an exchange with one another, "Who is it, George? What's the matter with him? *Some old tramp. That's what he was. He's dead. What's that? Gold... that's what he said it was. He wanted to give it to me in exchange for a lift into town. Gold? Now, what in the world would he be doing with this gold? I don't know, he was probably off his rocker. Anybody walking in the desert this time of day would be off his rocker. Can you imagine that? He offered this to me as if it was really worth something. You know, wasn't it worth something once, George? I mean, didn't people use gold for money? Sure, about 100 years or so ago, before they found a way of manufacturing it.*"¹

We find our treasure in so many different ways in our lives without realizing that nothing material in this life is worth anything. Whether that is gold, rare perfume, houses, or cars. "Only one life, 'twill soon be past,

Only what's done for Christ will last."²

¹ Serling, R. (n.d.). *02x24 - the rip van winkle caper - the twilight zone (1959) transcripts - forever dreaming*. The Rip Van Winkle Caper - The Twilight Zone (1959) Transcripts - Forever Dreaming. Retrieved January 25, 2022, from <https://transcripts.foreverdreaming.org/viewtopic.php?f=1019&t=42993>

² Studd, C. T. (2021, December 30). *Only one life, 'twill soon be past - by C.T. Studd (1860 - 1931)*. Reasons for Hope* Jesus. Retrieved January 28, 2022, from <https://reasonsforhopejesus.com/only-one-life-twill-soon-be-past-by-c-t-studd-1860-1931/>

OPEN IT

1. What is something that you have held onto that you felt was extremely valuable? It could be something special that your grandparents gave you, a rare baseball card or coin, or maybe even an old car.

READ IT

John 12:1-11

EXPLORE IT

2. How many days did this event occur before Jesus died on the cross? (v.1)
3. Who was Jesus with at this house in Bethany? (vv.1-4) (There were more than were listed in John, see the other Gospels for a more thorough answer.)
4. What did Martha do during Jesus' visit? (v.2)
5. What did Mary do during His visit? (v.3)
6. Why was Judas Iscariot upset about Mary's actions? (vv.4-5)

APPLY IT

John 9 provides us with a picture of the evening meal that Jesus enjoyed on the Saturday before His crucifixion. However, we need to read from the other Gospels to get the complete picture.

Read Matthew 26:6-11 & Mark 14:3-8

Once you have read these passages, let's put all the details together.

7. Whose house were they meeting at?

Who was in attendance at this meal?

What part of Jesus' body did Mary anoint?

What did Mary do with the alabaster flask?

How much could they have sold the ointment for?

In John 12:3, it tells us that "Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair."³ This ointment was costly and would have been worth nearly a year's wages. This might have been an inheritance that a family member passed down, or it was something Mary had been saving for either the one she was going to marry or to be used upon her own death. No matter how Mary acquired the ointment and its intended purpose, it was something precious.

The Bible has dozens of verses that remind us to sacrifice for our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Look up: Matthew 16:24, Luke 14:33, Luke 18:22, Matthew 6:20, Mark 12:41-44, and Matthew 10:37-39

8. What does scripture teach us about giving to God and one another?

9. What are you holding onto that needs to be released to King Jesus?

Mark 14:3 says, "And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head."⁴

10. How does breaking the alabaster flask demonstrate Mary's whole-hearted devotion to Jesus? What is something that needs to be "broken" in your life?

³ The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

⁴ Ibid

Darkness is frequently put as the opposite of Light. In John 8:12, Jesus states that “Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”⁵ We see light and darkness in this scenario as well.

John 11:57 says, “Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.”⁶ Understanding all of scripture, once again, we look to Mark 14 and we gain a little more information. Verses 1b-2 says, “And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him, for they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people.”⁷

As we read through John 12:1-11 we can identify many wonderful things going on. However, there are several things that are happening in front of Jesus and behind the scenes.

11. What are some of the things that are seen as wonderful and that we can celebrate?

12. In contrast, there are many things happening that are evil. What are some of those things?

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

As Mary broke her alabaster flask and allowed the oil to pour over the head of Jesus (Matthew 26:7), down His clothes and His legs, and onto His feet (John 12:3), the disciples, especially Judas Iscariot, looked on with disgust and anger (Matthew 26:8). However, this was not the first time that the disciples witnessed someone anointing Jesus.

About one year before John 12, Jesus was invited over to Simon the Pharisee's home (not to be confused with Simon the leper's house). While there, a sinful woman came into the home and anointed Jesus' feet, first washing them with her tears.

Luke 7:36-39 says, "One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner."⁸ After sharing a parable, Jesus continued in Luke 7:44-47a, "Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much."⁹

The disciples, who had spent multiple years in the presence of Jesus, watching Him perform miracles, continued to miss opportunities to honor and serve Jesus. Even though the disciples "dropped their nets" to follow Jesus, they were often bothered by certain people that wanted to serve their Rabbi.

13. Besides the missed opportunity to sell the rare oils, why do you think some of the disciples (Matthew 26:8) were angered by Mary's actions in John 12?

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

I wonder if Jesus was thinking about Psalm 23:5 while Mary was anointing him. "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows."¹⁰

Matthew focuses on the anointing of Jesus as a teaching episode for the disciples, who react with anger because of the woman's wasteful extravagance. But Jesus defends her, saying, "She has done a beautiful thing to me" (Matthew 26:10). Christ explains that the anointing is to prepare His body for burial and that the woman's act of love will forever be remembered wherever the good news is preached.

Mark tells the same story in similar terms, with an anonymous woman with an alabaster box interrupting a meal in Simon the leper's home to anoint the head of Jesus with expensive perfume. Again, the woman's critics describe her gift as excessive, complaining that the ointment could have sold for more than a year's wages (Mark 14:5). But Jesus receives the woman's gift as a selfless act of love and devotion—an appropriate way to honor the Messiah. Jesus reveals that He will not be with them much longer, referencing His impending death and burial.

Both Matthew's and Mark's accounts emphasize the prophetic significance of the anointing of Jesus, alluding to His death and burial. There may also be an implication of Jesus' kingship since, in the Old Testament, the anointing of the head was often associated with the dedication of kings (1 Samuel 9:15–10:1; 16:12–13; 1 Kings 1:38–40).¹¹

Jesus knew that He would die at the end of the week. As far as we know, Mary did not know precisely when Jesus was going to die, but perhaps she sensed that this was the last time that she would ever see her Savior. If she did not provide the gift of the ointment at this moment in time, she would have never had had a chance to.

14. Has there been a time when you sensed from the Holy Spirit that you needed to do something, and you did not heed Him? Now, do you need to follow through with what He has called you to do?

15. What was a time that you heeded the calling of the Holy Spirit?

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ "What happens after death?" (n.d.). Retrieved January 20, 2021, from <https://www.gotquestions.org/https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-anointed.html>.

Mark 14:9 says, “And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.”¹²

And here we are in the United States of America (or wherever we find ourselves reading through this passage) in the 21st century, still reading about a single act carried out by a faithful follower of Jesus.

Now that I'm a grandpa, I have thought more times than I can count of what I can pass on to my children's children. I'm happy to hand down some finances to my children and grandchildren, but that is not the end goal. Instead, I'm thinking of the long-term, or should I say everlasting legacy. One that does not remember me but remembers Jesus.

16. If you passed away right now, what kind of legacy would you leave behind?

17. How are you intentionally celebrating the next generation in order to demonstrate the love of Christ?

18. How are you personally sharing the Gospel with the next generation?

¹² The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

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