

Date: **January 1, 2017**
Title: **The One Who is Memorable**
Series: **Matthew 26:6-13**
Speaker: **Scott Williams**



Summary

Each of the four gospels describes an event where Jesus is visited during a dinner by a woman who anoints him with precious and expensive ointment. Three of the stories are typically recognized as being of the same event. Jesus and his disciples are staying at Bethany during His last Sabbath prior to His crucifixion. They are invited to a celebratory dinner at the house of Simon the Leper where Lazarus is a featured guest and Martha is serving. Then, in comes a woman, John tells us it is Mary, who breaks open an alabaster flask of expensive ointment to anoint Jesus. First his head and then also his feet which she washed with her hair as the house is filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

Judas as the one most vocal and influential with his criticism asked, "Why wasn't this sold for 300 denarii and given to the poor?" Jesus defends the woman with, "Why do you trouble her, leave her alone. She has done a beautiful thing. You will always have the poor, but you will not always have me. By pouring this ointment on me, she is preparing my body for burial." Then He adds, "Wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her." This is the third time it is recorded in the gospels that Mary is at the feet of Jesus. First as an adoring listener of His words, second at the death of Lazarus, and here anointing Jesus from head to toe as a worshipper.

Often when I pray, I am at a negotiating table, making my requests, promises of change, or trying to include adequate amounts of praise and thanksgiving, so as not to appear too selfish. I intercede for a cause, for a person, for myself. They're not bad prayers. But they are not the adoring love and costly prayers of the one who Jesus said would be remembered wherever good news is proclaimed. I need to listen and contemplate the good news more. Now an opportunity has been given to me, to us, for just that. Every night this month, from 7 pm to 8 pm, we can gather in this room and sit at the feet of Jesus. Listen to Him, adore Him. As an old song says, "I will come and bow down at your feet, Lord Jesus. In your presence is fullness of joy. There is nothing, there is no one to compare with you. I take pleasure in worshipping you Lord."

Before we criticize the disciples for their lack of discernment to accuse Mary of wasting valuable resources on Jesus, we should recognize our own tendency to be miserly toward God, and I don't just mean with our money. When I heard Phil wanted us to wait on the Lord in quiet contemplation, I felt some inner pushback. Are we really going to "waste" an hour of prayer in contemplation and listening, without interceding for all our needs? Can I "waste" an hour an evening for an entire month just waiting in adoration at the feet of Jesus, without focusing on making requests regarding endless needs? I may even be risking it becoming habitual.

The One who is memorable is recognized for doing a beautiful thing and recognizes the significance of Jesus' death. She not only sacrificed the price of the ointment, but also her honor and pride as she anointed Jesus. Worship is always accompanied by humility. What He did for us is so beyond extravagant, so costly, so loving, so beautiful in every aspect, our reasonable response can only be humble acceptance and presenting our entire selves to Him in grateful adoration. Romans 12:1 calls it our spiritual worship.

The memory of most of us will be short lived. A generation or two at best. But Jesus declares that this woman, Mary, will be remembered as long as the gospel is proclaimed to the whole world. She will be remembered for her extravagant, humble, beautiful service and worship to Jesus.

Some here, I believe, may be used of God in supernatural ways, talents and skills that will bring wonderful increase to the Kingdom of God. Others have a gift of leadership that will show itself as

you continue serving and seeking God. But all of us can enter into this memorial for Mary. What is the purpose of remembering Mary, if it is not to enter into her posture at the feet of Jesus, to waste our lives adoring Him and ministering unto Him in the beauty of holiness, to resist the critics, and to be overcome with a gratitude that exceeds our honor or pride?

Discussion Questions:

1. How often are you at the feet of Jesus? What is your response to the story of Mary pouring out the expensive oils on Jesus? Do you identify with the disciples or Mary? Why?
2. Can you think of a time when you postured yourself at the feet of Jesus with expensive worship to humbly waste your time or resources on worshipping Him?
3. Have you ever taken time out to sit at Jesus' feet as the contemplative prayer time offers? If so, what have you gained in the past during such times of worship. If not, what keeps you from throwing yourself at the feet of Jesus to listen and wait in such a way?