

The Fragrance Filled the Place

Prelude: Creative Story Reading (5 readers)

Opening: On St. Patrick's Day – Everyone is Irish

Text: [John 12:1-7](#) Read

As we re-read and study the text – I want you to be conscious of the writer John (who writes under the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit) but the personality and signature of John is distinct.

I want you to see the notations – hints that John leaves for those

This passage in John occurs six days before the Passover or what Christianity refers to as the Last Supper (Michelangelo's Last Supper)

What going on: Jesus is the guest of honor at the home of his closest friends – Lazarus (who Jesus had already raised from the dead) his sisters, Mary and Martha, the 12 apostles are there.

As usual Martha is doing what Martha does – organize and serve (camp director) Lazarus is there “*who ate with Him*” word *ate* in the Greek means “**reclined**” at a table about 2 ½ft high

Then there's Mary – who becomes the focus of this passage

Mary captivates and stuns everyone at that dinner - except Jesus
Everything she did went against cultural & religious conventions of that time.

- The use of precious nard to anoint feet
- it was taboo for a woman to touch a man other than husband in public
- a woman did not display her hair in public it remained covered – Mary let it hang down using as a towel to dry Jesus' feet!

* Chuck Missler once said of this act of Mary – is the purest example worship in scripture!
John writes ... “and the place was filled with its fragrance”

Nard is a sweet-scented ointment imported from the mountains of India, extremely expensive worth an entire year's wages.

Having it was an investment –that would gain in value as years passed.

I suggest to you that that phrase “the house was filled with the fragrance, has more than one meaning.

Read [Ashes to Fire](#) Devotional - Year C - Sunday Week 5

When our daily routine includes time spent with God in prayer, and reading – His presence begins to permeate us even when we are no longer praying. Where ever you go that presence – scent of God goes with you - becomes part of you

The Fragrance filled the place -

When prayer regularly goes up to God in your house, people who enter that house feel at peace. They don't know what it is ... but they enjoy being there

Our home over the year has been blessed with the prayers of my family – and guests sense it!

Conversely when you enter a place where violence and hatred were regular occupants, or where occultist activity was entertained, there is also a lingering affect.

When I taught in the Longwood School district one student told me that my class was different from her other classes.

I asked – What do you mean different? What's different?

She answered, its safe ... we feel safe in this class.

Think about Mary's actions ... What was so special about what she did?

- She gave up perhaps her most valuable possession (imagine saving every penny you worked so hard for and saved for 12 months and then just gave it away.
- It may have been a gift from her family – for her future dowry - her security for the future
- She gave all of this up when she opened poured out that perfume on Jesus feet, to honor him.

→ This body of believers is beginning to experience the fragrance of God's presence filling this place It comes with you because you have been dedicating time alone with Him.

Read Daily Bread March 10, 2013 by Bill Crowder "Extravagant Gifts"

Part of our devotion and service to God is the management of our personal finances.

God asks us to honor Him with a tithe – a tenth or 10% of what we earn.

You keep the 90% and return 10% to Him ...and let's be clear – He doesn't need our money!

Surrendering control of your money to God is an act of obedience and devotion.

It is one of the hardest things for us to turn over to God

But Listen to the words of Jesus in [Luke 16:38](#) *NLT*

"Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back."

When it comes to fiancés it's a pretty simple question, who's in charge of them you or God?

Tithing is at first sacrificial at first, because it's act of faith to trust God. But it soon jumps from sacrifice to blessing

Personal experience since our church started out three building projects
Jen and I have been so blessed financially that we laughed this week at God's abundance saying we can't give it away fast enough!

Malachi 3:10 “ Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do,” says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, ‘I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test!’”

Contrast the actions and attitude of Mary and Judas.

- Mary took the position of the house servants that wash the feet of guests (humility)
- She used her most treasured resource – holding nothing back using all of it
- She lovingly used her own hair to dry Jesus' feet
- Absolute expression of love and worship

Judas on the other hand was dripping with contempt in his open criticism of Mary's actions
See John's notes about Judas – a thief who had often stolen from Jesus and his companions

Mary's actions are so important that the gospel of John pivots on her story
John's gospel is divided into two parts

1. The life and ministry of Jesus
2. The last six days of Jesus life leading to His death on the cross

Mary's story is the last depicted event before Jesus enters Jerusalem on the day we call Palm Sunday.

Her act of worship is the link between what had happened and what will happen.

What have your actions meant to others, to your family to yourself?

Where have you been in your walk with Jesus? Where do you want to go now?

The house was filled with the fragrance

But it wasn't just from the aroma of the precious nard – it was from the act of love and worship that moved everyone except Judas.

There will always be people like Judas to tell you how you could be putting your money and time
To far better use ... **but your heart knows better**

Giving your best to God will be the pivotal turning point from where you've been to where God wants to take you

Let's Pray

Celtic Prayer

God be in my head and in my understanding: God be in mine eyes, and in my looking:
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking: God be in my heart , and in my thinking :
God be at mine end m and at my departing. Through Christ, my Lord, I pray. Amen