

# A Beautiful Gift to Jesus

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[ 0 : 00 ] Please be seated. They're not trick candles. So, I came across a story this week as I was preparing about a famous writer who sent Christmas cards one year.

And all that he wrote on the Christmas cards were 25 letters of the alphabet. Now, in our alphabet, there's 26, right?

So, he just wrote 25. So, he got responses like, what was that? I don't get it. He said, did you see which letter is missing?

No L. No L! No L. Which in Hebrew means comfort of God.

No L. Christmas. Christmas. Here we are, right? Is it feeling a bit like Christmas yet?

[ 1 : 17 ] No, I know, right? I know. I'm not there. I'm with you. We celebrate the coming of Jesus in the flesh. And what is it that we remember at Christmas?

What is it we focus on? What has God done for us? This is the Sunday before Christmas, so it's supposed to be a Christmas message, right? Well, I don't do that. I'll do that Christmas Eve.

You know, 14 years. This will be my 14th Christmas here at Little Log. And how do you come up with 14 different ways of saying what Christmas is? Yeah, see?

See? That's what I got to do. No, I'm just teasing. So what do we remember? Well, we remember a gift. For God so loved the world that he gave to the world his son, right?

That whosoever believes will not perish but have eternal life. We remember a gift. We've been remembering each week from the different gospel passage with the candles.

[ 2 : 28 ] So we remember from Luke 1, a white candle represents his holiness because the angel said he will be a holy child. Born of a virgin, protected from inheriting the sin nature so that he might truly be an innocent, pure Lamb of God.

Matthew 1, we remember with a red candle that the angel said you should call his name Jesus, Joshua, Yehoshua, for he is a savior.

He shall save his people from their sins. Not their enemies, from their sins. We remember the pink candle, how the shepherds came and saw the angel and the host proclaiming goodness of great joy.

And then this week we lit a gold candle, which reminds us of the gold that the wise men brought, who distinctively said we came to do what?

To worship. To worship him. To worship him. Well, these first 11 verses of Mark 14 have all of those elements.

[ 3 : 53 ] This is a Christmas text. It speaks of a gift that is given. It, of course, includes the holy Son of God.

It reminds us why Jesus came. She did this to anoint my body for... There. I came to die.

Which results in good news of great joy. And we see one who, like the Magi, came to worship him. So all the themes are there. It's a Christmas text. Even though it's really an Easter time. That's all right. Christmas really happened at Easter time anyway. You know that, right? Shepherds were in the...

You know, they're out in the fields. Wasn't in December. Anyway. Doesn't matter. So we come to the passion narrative. The cross is near just days away.

[ 4 : 57 ] These are the final days of Jesus that lead to his death. And what we see in Mark is a sandwich. Remember the Mark sandwich? No?

Yes? Some of you? Mark does sandwiches. You're saying, what? He goes to Subway? What does he do? No, it's Jerusalem Deli. No, I'm sorry.

He has an outer story called the bread. And then he has an inner story. He's done that before. He started a story. Interrupted it with another story.

Remember, he's going to heal somebody. And then suddenly a woman comes. And she's bleeding and interrupts him. And then he finishes the other story. So there's an outer story and an inner story. So see here in the first two verses, we have the outer story.

The plot to kill Jesus. And then verses three to nine, we have the inner story of the woman with the jar. And then he ends in verses 10 and 11 with the outer story back to the plot.

[ 5 : 58 ] That's just one of Mark's writing styles that cause us to pay attention to the inner story. And the outer story sets up a contrast.

As we see the outer story, people wanting to get something. People wanting to get rid. People who are hostile. People who are enemies of Christ. So it begins and ends with the plot to kill.

And the inner story, complete contrast. Someone who doesn't hate Jesus, but someone who loves Jesus. Someone who's not coming to get something, but someone who's coming to give.

Right? Someone not who's about money like Judas, but somebody who takes something extremely valuable and gives it to Jesus.

Which brings criticism. People who love Jesus will do extravagant things that will bring criticism and misunderstanding from others.

[ 6 : 56 ] Okay? And Jesus defends the woman. It's beautiful. All right. Let's take just a moment to look at the outer story because it's not the big point.

You see the plot to kill Jesus. Part 1, verses 1 and 2. We're told Passover is just two days away.

And the feast, which is seven days long, starts with the first day where Passover is.

And the chief priests and scribes are not preparing for Passover. They're preparing for how to get rid of Jesus. They're plotting. They're scheming.

And notice it says, they were seeking how to arrest him by stealth. They don't want to do this out in the open. They want to do it secretly. They want to do it by deceit.

They want to lay a trap. Because they say, verse 2, not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people. See, Jesus is popular with the people. He just, remember, just days ago, even though it seems like months ago, because we were there in Mark 11.

[ 7 : 56 ] And months ago, but remember, it was really only days ago, he enters Jerusalem, right? And he accepts the worship, and he comes proclaiming king.

The next day after that, he cleanses, not cleanses, but clears the temple, declares it a den of thieves. He has laid down a gauntlet. And they are not going to let that rest.

He has challenged them, humbled them, confronted them. He's making sure he will die. They've been planning, actually, from Mark 3, when he broke the Sabbath, to kill him.

Because he broke the Sabbath, that means breaking one of the ten, and actually, technically, the most important of the ten, because it was the sign of the covenant. He broke the Sabbath. They've intended to kill him ever since.

But now he's really stirred things up. So, they don't want to do that out in public, though. They're not going to arrest him in public. They're going to arrest him at night. They're going to have a trial which is illegal at night.

[ 9 : 10 ] They don't want to do this in public. God flips it on him, though, because Jesus ends up dying publicly. In the middle of the day.

Then God turns the lights out. God gets his way. So, this is at Passover. So, that's significant as well. We'll talk about that more later, because later in chapter 14, Jesus is going to change the whole covenant thing.

He's going to start the new covenant with the last supper meal. But Passover brought the large crowds. And remember what Passover is.

The first Passover was celebrated back in Egypt. Remember? So, they remember that every year.

They were told to remember to eat this meal. It was a meal that was made in haste, because remember they were supposed to tie up their girdles, gird their loins.

They didn't wear girdles, I'm sorry. Gird their loins. Be ready to move. Because as soon as the death cry came out, where the firstborn dies in Egypt, they are to go.

[ 10 : 22 ] Leave in haste. So, they're in Egypt. They have to kill a lamb and take the blood of the lamb and spread it over the doorway, remember? And then that night, when the death angel came, he would see the blood and pass over.

That's where we get the term. Pass over that house. Save that house, because the blood was applied to the house. And the people within would be safe. The firstborn would be safe.

And so, a lamb is killed in order to save the people and set them free from bondage. See any symbolism that leads to what Christ will do?

As John the Baptist says, Jesus is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Whose blood will be also shed. Whose blood will protect them.

Right? And set them free, not from physical bondage, but from sin bondage. So, God is going to make sure that Jesus' death happens the same moment the lambs are killed.

[11:35] Jesus will die on the cross. It is no coincidence. So, this is happening then. That's the setting. Then we come to the end of this passage, verses 10 and 11.

And again, we see the outer story, the plot. Now we see where the inside man comes from. How are these scribes and Pharisees, how are they going to kill Jesus?

They're trying to plot it out, trying to figure out how they're going to do it. They don't go to Judas. Judas comes to them. He's taking the initiative.

He's motivated. They're surprised. Whoa. He's one of the 12. He'll know where Jesus is staying. He'll know where we can go.

And of course, we know how the story turns out, and we'll look at it more later. Judas seeks to betray them. He initiates it. Matthew tells us in the same event, he went to them and said, what will you give me to betray him to you?

[12:41] So, he's asking for money. They promise him money. He makes a deal. The startling part is, as Mark lists it, that it's Judas, who was one of the 12.

One of the 12. Who was with Jesus from the beginning. Who was chosen by Jesus to be an apostle. Who was given authority by Jesus to preach and to heal and to cast out demons.

He did all that. He did all that. He heard everything Jesus said. He saw everything Jesus did. And now he's going to betray him.

We're not given a motive. People for centuries have been scratching their heads. Why would he do this? Was it just for money? Was he a zealot who was disappointed in Jesus, not taking Rome by storm?

Not using his power to overthrow the government? The gospels tell us nothing. Except that he asked for money.

[13:53] Which we know afterwards he regretted. So we don't know. It just shows us you can be super close to Jesus.

You can be super religious. You can be a follower. You can be devoted. You can be one of the inner circle. And end up being one who falls away.

It will always surprise us when someone we thought was so faithful walks away.

Or turns away. It happens. But that's not the point Mark wants us to see. Here's the inner story where he wants us to grasp.

Here's this woman's gift which is preparing, Jesus says, for his burial. Oh. Not what anyone expected.

[14:53] She does a shocking thing because it does upset the men. You know? So here's Jesus.

And it's so much Jesus, isn't it? Here's somebody doing something. Someone maybe who's a bit of an outsider. Someone who's usually maybe not noticed. Does something bold and...

Jesus says, leave her alone. You don't know. So let's look at this. Jesus describes everything for us.

We're just told in verse 3, she comes in, she does this. She doesn't say anything. She says what she does. The men criticize and then Jesus stands up and defends her.

So what he describes are two characteristics about her. He says several things, but I think we can kind of put it into two parts here.

[15:56] In verses 3 to 7, he calls it a beautiful act. It's a beautiful act. And then in verses 8 and 9, it's also an act of faith.

Because she's doing it for his burial, which is very mysterious. It's like she's the only one who sees it. It's like the guys are going around, you know. I know he's talking about dying.

I'm not buying it. They're in Jerusalem where he said he would be arrested, betrayed, killed. It's like they're not even thinking about it.

Here's somebody else who is. Somebody was paying attention. Somebody was listening really close. And putting the dots together.

So let's look at the first characteristic. He says it's a beautiful thing. It's a beautiful and extravagant act done for Jesus.

[17:01] Not for anyone else. It was done for Jesus. She did a beautiful thing to me. It was only about me. So look at its lavishness.

First of all, in verse 3, here's the woman who comes. She's unnamed. She's unnamed. While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper. Who's Simon the leper?

I don't know, but he's in a house. And he has a house. And apparently he's healed. Perhaps maybe even the leper that Jesus healed back early in the Gospel of Mark. He's certainly a healed leper because people with leprosy aren't allowed to be in community with others.

He was reclining at table. So he's sitting around the table. They're not sitting. They're reclining. They lay down. They lean. And they're eating off the table. They're in a circle. He's reclining. They're eating. They're having fellowship. And a woman comes in. She comes with an alabaster jar.

[18:12] Alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard. Very costly. She broke the flask and poured it over his head. This nard is an import.

It's not something local. It's something rare. It's found from a root in a plant in India. So that's part of what makes it super expensive. It's also described as pure.

So it's not watered down. It's not mixed with anything. It's pure. So it's rare and expensive. In fact, we're told the next verses, the accountants in the men's group are already working on that.

That's like a year's wages. 300 denarii. Remember? Remember? One denarius. One day's wage. That's 300 days work. Almost a year.

Even if you take one day off. That's pretty expensive. That's pretty costly. Imagine a year's wages and one act.

[19:19] It says that she broke the flask. It's just a jar.

It's got a very thin neck. And so the purpose of the thin neck is so that it pours out slowly. It's a thick ointment. Okay?

So it's not like olive oil. It's not going to pour out quickly. It's going to, it's thicker so it's going to pour out slowly anyway. She doesn't want to pour it slow. She breaks it.

which means she ruins it. She has to use it all. But that was her intention. She breaks it.

Choke, choke, choke, choke, choke, choke. So she can pour it out. All of it. And that's why they're upset. She's not just dabbing a little bit. She breaks it.

[20:17] And by the way, the only time you break a flask like this is when you're preparing someone for burial because you're going to use it all. You're going to pour it over the whole body and you're just going to leave the flask in there.

So she did intend to do that. She's thinking of burial. So she received some criticism.

Verse 4 and 5. Some, Mark doesn't tell us who they are. Matthew tells us Judas was the lead spokesman, surprisingly. There were some who said to themselves indignantly, why was the ointment wasted like that?

How could you pour it all on Jesus' head? Jesus' head. It's just Jesus. That's a waste, right?

I'm sure they regretted that statement later. Is it a waste on Jesus? In the moment, they're indignant. That's a waste.

[21:26] They have different values than this woman. This ointment could have been sold for more than 300 denarius and given to the poor, so they scolded her. This is excessive.

It's irresponsible. She should be a good steward of her, of her, what she has and, you know, give it out accordingly or at least give it to the poor.

Poor or needy. Jesus doesn't need this. The poor need it, right? You can understand a little bit of what they're saying, right? It's a waste. They're judging by what?

What they see? Appearance. It appears to be a waste. But this woman has a devotion that will not be restrained.

She does not care what they think. She has come with one intention to pour it out on Jesus. To give it all.

[22:29] She has a whole different value system than they do. For some reason, she has determined not just to honor him and prepare him, but she just wants to extravagantly love him.

I mean, you can imagine, what thinking goes into that? What do I have? What can I give him? What can I give him? Jesus defends its loveliness.

He says, why do you trouble her? Why are you hard on her? Why are you wearying her? See, they're mumbling and grumbling and complaining and he picks it up. Leave her alone. What she has done is beautiful. beautiful. The word he uses is the word typically for good works. We see that all through the New Testament doing good works or created for good works, etc. But here, I think it's fitting to translate the word as beautiful. Because the word good means good in the ultimate sense of it's a beautiful thing, it's a lovely thing, it's an honorable thing, it has great value.

[ 23 : 48 ] value. And what makes it beautiful is that he says she has done a beautiful thing to me.

To me. In other words, guys, not about you. What she has done is not about you. Not for you to criticize.

She did that for me. All she's thinking of is me. You can give her rip what you think.

Now, she might be hurt by what you said. But I'm going to defend. She's coming with a very personal affection.

A very personal worship, and that's what makes it beautiful. Jesus judges not how it looks, he judges her motive.

[ 24 : 50 ] He knows her heart. He knows why, he knows what. They don't see that, of course. You know what? God always sees it.

When you give, when you serve, when you act, other people may misunderstand him, other people might criticize him, other people might misunderstand it. God won't.

God won't. He'll know what your heart is. Now, it's hard, though, isn't it? Especially if what you do might be a little extravagant. Especially if you do, it might seem like it's a little overdone, a little out of the ordinary.

people who love Jesus will do out of the ordinary thing because they love Jesus. Jesus clarifies one more thing.

It's timeliness. They say, they complain, it could have been given to the poor. The poor need it. The poor need it. Jesus is not going to dismiss the poor by any means.

[ 25 : 59 ] We know that. We know that he set up ways to give to them all the time. He's always caring about the poor. But here's a moment where he says, poor, you always have the poor.

You can give to the poor any time you want. No one's stopping you. Give it to them. you always have them, but you don't always have me.

You don't always have me. Mark has just reminded us, two days, two days. Of course, these guys, I don't think it's sunk in because even when he dies, they're still shocked.

Right? Even though he's told them chapter 8, chapter 9, chapter 10, he's told them three times, we're going to Jerusalem, going to be betrayed, going to be arrested, going to be killed, going to raise on the third day.

And I'm convinced that they think that's a parable because they're shocked. And then when he raises, what? What?

[ 27 : 17 ] They're shocked. It's not that they didn't have the information, it's that they have to process, thought it through. Here's somebody that did. Here's somebody that got it.

You don't always have me. This is Jesus' hour. The time is short. And she gets it. She's preoccupied with Jesus alone.

That's all she sees. When she comes in that room, she just sees Jesus. And she's already thought about this because you try to put yourself in her place. What would bring this?

There's something she's so grateful for. There's something she's so got that she wants to give everything she has. Or something huge. She wants to make a gesture.

She wants to do something to give back to him. So she's just preoccupied with him. it's a beautiful work.

[ 28 : 23 ] It's a work that shows value and honor to Jesus. Well, we're all called to do beautiful works. Or as we more typically call them, good works.

Good works which are by their essence beautiful, valuable, advantageous to others, useful. This word good has all of those senses in it.

God saved us to do good works. He created us for good works. He calls us to do beautiful works that have honor and value.

Listen to how Paul urges Titus in Titus 2. He says to Titus, show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works or beautiful works.

And in your teaching show integrity, dignity, sound speech that cannot be condemned so that an opponent may be put to shame having nothing evil to say about us.

[ 29 : 26 ] Bond servants, teach the bond servants, teach the employees. They are to be submissive to their masters in everything. They are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith.

Why? Watch this. So that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. That's a fascinating way to say it.

That they may adorn. What's adorn? Well, we adorn Christmas trees. If you have a Christmas tree tradition in your house, we make it pretty, right?

We make it attractive. We put lights up. We put, you know, we're adorning. We're making things look better. Make it look attractive. So, in other words, do works so that they make the doctrine of God attractive.

Make God look beautiful. Why? For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people. Why has grace appeared to us?

[ 30 : 32 ] Training us. Grace trains us to renounce ungodliness and worldly desires and trains us to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age while we're waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior.

We're waiting for Jesus to come back. Who, by the way, gave himself for us. Why? To redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify him for himself, a people for his own possession, who are what? Who are zealous for good work. People who love Jesus are zealous to do beautiful things. They are eager, not because of duty, not because of obligation, not because you want to be noticed.

They're zealous to do good things for Jesus. Why do good things? Why do you do good things? notice I'm not going to say, do you do good things?

You love Jesus, I assume you do. Of course you do. It's part of who you are. Sometimes you don't even know you're doing them. But why do you do them?

[ 31 : 49 ] To be noticed? Jesus talked about doing things to be noticed by men. Well, that's your reward if you get noticed. That's your reward. You'll get no future reward. That's your reward. to fulfill a sense of duty.

No. People who love Jesus do good things in order to honor Jesus. To show that they're grateful to serve him in whatever way they can. Because it's not about us.

Good works are not about us. It's about adorning the doctrine of God, showing the beauty of Jesus Christ who deserves everything I have. it's a personal act of worship.

Serving others worships Jesus. Remember, he talks about who are the sheep and who are the goats. Remember later, Matthew 25?

How does he separate them? He distinguishes them by how they serve other people, which he equates with serving him. When did we bring food to the hungry?

[ 32 : 56 ] When did we clothe the naked? When did we visit the sick? And Jesus says, you did it to me. When do we do it to you? When you did it to one of my brothers, one of my sisters, because they're my body.

So how you treat the church, how you treat your brothers and sisters in Christ, is how you treat Jesus. That's another way to look at it, isn't it? That's another one.

They don't look as good as Jesus though. They're not as attractive as Jesus. They're not okay, all right. So Jesus is not done.

He's still going to defend her more. He has a second quality in verses eight and nine. Second characteristic about her that makes what she does a memorable thing.

it's an act of faith that foreshadows the gospel. Look at how he says it. Just a moment. Verse eight.

[ 34 : 05 ] She. He keeps saying she by the way. End of verse six. She has done a beautiful thing for me. Verse eight. She has done what she could.

She has anointed my body beforehand for burial. 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.

See this whole thing is about her and me Jesus says. She. Me. What she did. She did it for me. It was my body she's anointing for burial.

What she did will be remembered everywhere the gospel is preached. How many people does you say that about? Everywhere the gospel gets preached.

What story gets told? This one. Now lots of stories get told. The gospel is preached. But this story is always told.

[ 35 : 08 ] Why? Because it's an act of faith that foreshadows the gospel. First of all notice it's faith. He says in verse 8. She anointed my body beforehand for burial.

How did she know? She intended to anoint me for burial beforehand.

Before I died. She knows somehow she's got to do it now. She knows there won't be time later. And we know from the life of Jesus how he died that he's immediately put in a tomb.

And then it's a Sabbath day. Remember when the ladies come the next time to anoint the body? Remember they come on Sunday morning, the first day of the week. They arise as the sun is just starting to come up and they go to the tomb and what happened?

He ain't there. They bring a hundred pounds of spices and stuff and they're going to anoint the body and he ain't there. This Mary knew that.

[ 36 : 20 ] And she might have been the only one. Because everybody else thought the body would still be there. She knew I got to do it ahead because he said he's going to die but third day he's going to come back.

So I got to do it now. How did she know? How come the other guys didn't know? Peter, what you thinking?

Pass the bread. John, James, little matzo over here. Who is this woman?

John wrote his gospel about 30 years after Mark, maybe 40 years later. He fills in a whole bunch of gaps that the other gospels didn't write about. The gospel of John is so unique because it fills in lots of Jesus' teaching that we hadn't got.

It fills in how Jesus spoke very openly to his disciples about who he really was. I am. I am. Right?

And in John chapter 12 he records that Jesus was in Bethany in the house of Lazarus, Martha, Martha, and who's Martha's sister?

[ 37 : 47 ] Mary. Mary. Mary, Mary, Mary, Mary, Mary. Remember who Mary is? Remember they're in the house one time and they're Jesus is teaching and Martha, sister Martha, bless her heart, fixing, preparing, getting everything, doing, oh, those men don't think, I'll get it all done.

And then she comes to Jesus, Mary's not helping. What did Jesus do then? He defended her.

Oh, Martha, busy about so many things? Bless your heart. He might have said that. Bless your heart, your servant, I like that. But leave her alone.

She's doing the one thing that matters. she's sitting at Jesus' feet. See, this is a woman that when he taught, give it to me.

Give it to me. She's a woman that when her brother died in John 11, Martha came to Jesus and said, why weren't you there?

[ 39 : 02 ] Why? I believe you, though. Mary comes and says, Jesus, if you'd have been there, if you'd have been there.

She weeps. What does Jesus do with Mary? Shortest verse in the Bible. Jesus wept. Why?

Because it was Mary. Mary, Mary, probably one of the closest people to Jesus.

who adored him, loved him, took care of him, followed him, listened to him, listened carefully to him. She recognized that the time was urgent.

And Jesus says, at the beginning of verse eight, he says, sorry, I can't read the word. She has done what she could. Literally, Jesus said, what she had, she did.

[ 40 : 03 ] what she had, she had a jar, very expensive perfume in it. And what she had, she did. She gave.

Paul talked about giving, he says, how do you give? Well, he talked about the people he raved about were people that gave according to their means. he says, as I can testify, 2 Corinthians 8, and they gave beyond their means and of their own accord.

And then later he says, if the readiness is there, it's acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what a person does not have. You don't give by credit, by the way. There are churches that will accept credit cards now, so you can give on credit.

Don't give like that. You don't give what you don't have. it's right to give according to what you do have. Jesus said, she had something, and she gave.

What she had, she did. So, those who love Jesus, what they have, they do. They do. Not to earn anything, not to get any points.

[ 41 : 19 ] It's because they love Jesus. What you also see is foreshadowing. He says another amazing thing in verse 9. She not only saw my burial by faith, but she, what she does, wherever the God, what she did, wherever the gospel is proclaiming the whole world, will be told in memory of her.

What she did is tied to the gospel. Wherever the gospel is preached, this story is going to come because it illustrates the gospel. How is that?

Well, what did she do? She poured out all. And by the way, the other picture that John 12 gives us about Mary of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, she poured out, Mark tells us she pours out the ointment on his head.

John 12 tells us that she also poured the ointment out on his feet. And it's not just pouring, but she anointed, so anoint means to rub, and so she's rubbing his dirty feet, rubbing his dirty feet, just taking off, just rubbing it in.

And then her hair, she wipes it with her hair. We were talking about that downstairs going, why'd she do that? What's that about? I don't know.

[ 42 : 46 ] But it's intimate, isn't it? Maybe it's just what she had. Maybe she forgot a towel. Oh, my hair. She's got long hair, obviously. That's a picture of Mary.

On her knees, over Jesus' head and his feet. What she does, she pours out. She poured out excessively and costly. Well, that illustrates what Jesus did.

Jesus also poured himself out. That's what the good news is all about. He was born to die. He came to save. And the only way he could save was by death, which required a burial, which preceded a resurrection, which means this wasn't a tragedy.

This is good news. This isn't a waste. How ridiculous now when we think from Mary's perspective to pour this out on Jesus for all that he's going to do.

And remember, John 12 comes after John 11. Did you make that connection? Just helping you connect the dots. John 12 comes after John 11.

[ 44 : 03 ] John 12 is where she anoints his feet. John 11 is where Lazarus died and was raised. Mary does what?

Do you think she's grateful? You brought Lassie back. Imagine that's what she called him. You brought Lassie back. You brought Lassie back.

What can I give you? But that wasn't all she saw. She saw he was going to die for her. And she had to do something to honor him.

And so Jesus says, he clarifies that this whole function of what she did will be a memorial. It will remind us why Jesus came. That his death is what gives us life.

That he had to be buried in order to take away our sins. He had to die the just for the unjust. To bear our sins in his body on the cross so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

[ 45 : 15 ] It was an act of faith that truly honored Jesus because I'm convinced all she saw when she walked in that room was Jesus. All the men laying around the table, reclining around, she spots Jesus, she just goes up there, kneels down over the feet, over the head, wiping with her hair.

Very vulnerable act. She sees only him who would suffer, who would pour out his own life. And Jesus said, she's done a beautiful thing for me.

She's anointed my body for burial. And what she's done will be remembered wherever the gospel is preached. She will be remembered.

Which is ironic because both Mark and Matthew then they tell the story, leave her unnamed. Only John reveals who it was years, years later.

Because by then it got around, who was she? Who was it? Peter tells John, would you tell it was Mary? Which means, by the way, if it's Mary of Mary and Martha and Lazarus, Mark tells us it's in the house of Simon the leper, it means their dad was the leper.

[ 46 : 44 ] Simon was the father of Lazarus, Mary and Martha. Mary does a beautiful work.

Let me encourage you. It's like, could I ever do that? Yeah, you do it all the time, beloved. It might not stand out there where it's going to be preached everywhere in the world.

And even if it was, it'd be anonymous. It's anonymous. But God doesn't just remember Mary's work, he remembers the good work of all his people.

In Psalm 112, this almost gives a contrast between the righteous and the wicked and how they both have different values, just like in this story. He says of the righteous people, he says, light dawns in the darkness for the upright.

So even when the upright are in the dark, light dawns. The righteous person is gracious, merciful, and righteous. It is well with the man who deals generously and lends, who conducts his affairs with justice.

[ 47 : 53 ] For the righteous person, in other words, the one who's right with God, will never be moved. He will be remembered forever. See? He will be remembered.

Everyone who is right with God will be remembered. Because since they love God, they deal generously with people. They do justice. He's not afraid of bad news. His heart is firm because he trusts in the Lord.

His heart is steady. He will not be afraid until he looks in triumph on his adversaries. He has distributed freely. He has given to the poor. He's a giver.

His righteousness endures forever. His horn is exalted in honor. every person right with God who loves Jesus and does beautiful things will be remembered.

They will not be forgotten. They might be forgotten here. God will never forget. And then he contrasts the wicked man. The wicked man sees it.

[ 48 : 55 ] Sees what? He sees the generosity of the good man and he is angry. Sounds kind of like the scene where the woman pours out and the guys are angry.

That could have been Judas' thinking. Fine. Could have done a lot with that. He gnashes his teeth and melts away.

The desire of the wicked will perish. Why is the wicked man like that? Because he's selfish. He's greedy. He's covetous. And everything's about him.

The righteous person's not like that. It's not all about him. He's generous. He's a giver. So what makes a good deed beautiful?

Well, it's Christ-like. Because it's costly. It gives. It pours out lavishly. And it might look excessive to others and they might criticize us for it.

[ 49 : 58 ] But it's beautiful to God. Because it's not about self. A good deed that is beautiful is a deed that sees only Jesus and what he has given and simply seeks to give back.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you that you kept the story of this woman who's so extraordinary.

But she didn't set out to be extraordinary. She simply set out to love Jesus. She just wanted to do something for him. And Father, you've put in our hearts the same desire.

We want to do things for you. We may not be as bold as this woman, but we want to do things for you that are appropriate to us and honoring to you.

And if we need a little bit of courage to do something that might spark a little rumbling, then grant us the courage to do that too because it's only about you.

[ 51 : 14 ] Help us to worship that way. Help us to serve that way. Help us to share that way. We ask in Christ's name. Amen.