

Reality Carpinteria - Pastor Britt Merrick

Mark 14:1-11

Worship That Is Worthy

(05 JUNE 2005)

Please go online and download or listen to a message given June 27, 2004 called The Heart of Worship. It will give you a good basis as you begin to think about the act of congregational praise. This and other messages can be found at www.jesusisreality.com

Mark 14 ¹ Now the Passover and Unleavened Bread were two days away; and the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to seize Him by stealth and kill Him; ² for they were saying, "Not during the festival, otherwise there might be a riot of the people." ³ While Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper, and reclining at the table, there came a woman with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume of pure nard; and she broke the vial and poured it over His head. ⁴ But some were indignantly remarking to one another, "Why has this perfume been wasted? ⁵ "For this perfume might have been sold for over three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor." And they were scolding her. ⁶ But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you bother her? She has done a good deed to Me. ⁷ "For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you wish you can do good to them; but you do not always have Me. ⁸ "She has done what she could; she has anointed My body beforehand for the burial. ⁹ "Truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, that also what this woman has done shall be spoken of in memory of her." ¹⁰ Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went off to the chief priests in order to betray Him to them. ¹¹ They were glad when they heard this, and promised to give him money. And he began seeking how to betray Him at an opportune time.

Pastor Britt's Opening Prayer:

Father, we ask that You would speak to us in Your Word as a congregation about this thing called worship; and the attitude that we ought to have as we come here and praise You with one another; to give to You honor and glory with our lips, our lives and every fiber of our being. Teach us now, cause us to be a self-sacrificing people. Even as we saw Mary sacrifice something so costly in an act of adoration toward You. Lord, remove us from the place of being self-service, from wanting to put ourselves first, from being overly concerned with our own needs. Today, open up the gates of heaven. Show us what is important to you. Get us on Your agenda. Align our hearts with Yours, Lord. I ask that You would do this now. Holy Spirit, I ask that every word from my lips would be directly from You and not from me. And, I ask that as these syllables fall from my lips You would anoint them to change the hearts of men and women. For Your glory and the furtherance of Your kingdom, in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Mark 14 ¹ Now the Passover and Unleavened Bread were two days away;

The Time of This Passage:

- Two days before the feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread.
- Trying to discern the days of the Passion Week (the last week of Jesus' life) is difficult to do.
- The gospel writers used both Jewish and Roman methods of calculating time.
 - For the Jews, the day began at sundown.
 - For the Romans (and us), a day begins at midnight.
 - All this makes it difficult to know the actual time it is when we read the gospels.
- "Two days before the Passover" could have meant Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday.
 - We will assume the day is Wednesday of the Passion Week.

Note: Starting with chapter 14, we will be moving along very quickly. Midway through this chapter, Mark begins his account of the Last Supper, the night before Jesus is crucified.

Days of Stealth and Betrayal (verses 1-2)

- The chief priests and the scribes were looking to take the life of Jesus Christ.
- Many people believed Jesus to be the Messiah or at least a great teacher who was to be respected.
- Many people had gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of Passover.
 - The chief priests and the scribes did not want to arrest Jesus at this time.
 - They wanted to do it slyly and secretly. Without a doubt, they wanted to murder Him.

A Ray of Light on a Canvas of Darkness (verses 3-9)

- Mark presents us with a beautiful picture of *light* amidst all the darkness.
- Mark gives us a narrative of Mary at Bethany worshiping Jesus Christ.
 - It is in contrast to the darkness being devised by the chief priests and scribes.
- Mark is not presenting a chronological event. A parallel account is also presented in John 12, in which John states that this actually took place six days before the Passover.
- The religious powers wanted to murder Jesus Christ, but there were also those who adored Jesus with every fiber of their being.
 - Same Jesus, two different attitudes about Him.
 - There exists the same mind-set today.
 - Some people want to curse the name of Jesus.
 - Others adore the name and speak the name of Jesus Christ in love.

Verse 3 "While Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper . . ."

- NOBODY went to a home of a leper - - - EXCEPT Jesus!
- In that day, leprosy was a deadly and communicable disease.
- Contact anywhere with a leper, much less in his house, was cause to believe that you would also catch leprosy.
- Anyone with leprosy was an outcast of society with no right to a religious, political and family life.

- This leper named Simon most likely lived by himself. A leper had an obligation to warn anyone remotely near him by yelling out, "Unclean! Unclean!"
 - Crowds would part before him.
 - No one would talk to him or spend time with him.
 - No one dared touch him.
 - No one loved the leper.
- As this account states, Jesus Christ is found in the home of the leper.
- Leprosy in the Bible is a picture of sin.
 - Spiritually speaking, before we were forgiven, we were considered by God to be lepers - - - sinners!
- It is recorded in the Bible that Jesus Christ touched lepers.
 - They came to Him seeking healing.
 - Jesus did not heal them from afar. He reached out and touched them.
- Jesus is at the home of a leper and has brought others with Him. He has restored the leper and brought him to a place of fellowship that he hadn't known for years.
- Like Simon the Leper, we were once lepers and sinful before Jesus.
 - We were lepers, hopeless, and lost.
 - God in Christ Jesus reached down into humanity and touched us, entering into our hearts and homes.
 - He's put us into a brand new family.

Jesus is worthy of our worship.

Worthy of Worship

- We worship Him because of who He is and what He has done.
 - Who is Jesus?
 - He is the God who touches lepers, sinful humanity.
 - What has Jesus done?
 - He is God who is able to heal the leper, the sinner, and restore us to fellowship with God and others.
 - Jesus is worthy of our worship because of who He is and what He has done.
- The primary place to know about God is in the Word of God.
If you want to know who God is, open the Bible!
- Many people look for God *within* themselves.
 - Stop it now! If you were God, you would disappoint yourself as God. You are not God.

If you want to discover God, open up the Word of God!

What has God Done For You?

- The Bible declares that we are all sinners. Every one of us was on our way to eternity without God.
- God pursued us and found us.
- He willingly laid down His life for us and paid for our sins.
- Jesus rose from the dead to conquer death.
- He brought us into a relationship with God when we repented.
- He has given us eternal life.

Given everything He's done for us, if God had only saved us from hell,
It would be more than enough reason to worship Him!

Reciprocity – Loving the Lord Your God

The thrust of the Bible is not what can you do for God but what God has done for each one of us. Upon this premise exists the idea of reciprocity.

- Reciprocity - to respond with and return love to God.
- Jesus said in John 15 ¹³ "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."
 - This is exactly what Jesus did. He laid down His life for us. God has extended His friendship and demonstrated His love by giving us Christ Jesus and paying for our sins.
- Jesus illustrated how we should respond in John 13 ¹⁴ "You are My friends if you do what I command you."
 - God gives us the opportunity to respond.
- In John 14:15 Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will obey My commandments."
- In case we are not sure how to respond, Jesus makes it very clear.

"If you are my friends, you will obey Me."
"If you love Me, you will obey my commandments."

- The greatest commandment is, "You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, soul, mind and strength."
 - You should be expressing love for God with every fiber of your being.
 - Within that expression of love is **worship**.
 - Within the expression of worship is **corporate worship**.
 - It is one way of expressing love to God.
 - We also express love in our obedience.
 - We express love for God by serving others.
 - Jesus said explicitly, "You express your love for God by serving others self-sacrificially."
- You can always tell how in love with Jesus a Christian is,
By the way he or she serves, gives and loves others.

Mary of Bethany: A Picture of Corporate Worship

Mark 14³ While Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper, and reclining at the table, there came a woman . . . “

- This woman is Mary of Bethany.
 - Not Mary, the earthly mother of Jesus.
 - Not Mary Magdalene.
 - Her brother was Lazarus. Her sister's name was Martha.
 - The first time we read of her is presented in Luke 10. ³⁸ Now as they (the disciples and Jesus) were traveling along, He entered a certain village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me."
 - Martha erred in saying "Lord" and then "don't you care" in the same sentence.
 - By the fact that we call Him Lord, we acknowledge that He is our loving Lord Jesus Christ and by that very fact: He cares.
 - Luke 10⁴¹ But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; ⁴² but only one thing is necessary, really only one,
 - Jesus breaks down the totality of spirituality for Martha.
 - Only one thing is important: communing and fellowshiping with the Lord.
 - The one thing that Mary had chosen for herself.
 - Like Martha, we are bothered by many superfluous things; things that do not matter.
 - Luke 10:42b " . . . for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."
 - Mary was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word.
 - Mary was not working or engaging in anything else. She just chose to sit at the Lord's feet listening to what Jesus said.
 - Jesus said that this is the ONE THING that is necessary. Other things may come and go but this is a non-negotiable for our spirituality.
- As a Christian you need to open your Bible,
sit at the feet of the Lord, and listen to His word.
- It is "the good part."
 - It has value for this life and for the life to come.
 - It will "not be taken away from her."
 - It will have a lasting effect in her life.
 - It will bear fruit in her life.

NOTE: Before the work, comes the Word!

"There is so much work to do? How do I order my day? Where should I start?"

START WITH THE WORD OF GOD

"Lord, I want to honor You today. I'm not sure what to do? How do I witness to people at work?

How can I do this? How do I serve the church? How can I love this guy/girl?"

IT STARTS WITH THE WORD OF GOD.

It is the only thing that is necessary. It is a non-negotiable.

- The second time we read of Mary of Bethany is in John 11.
 - Mary and Martha's brother Lazarus is sick. Mary and Martha send a letter of faith to Jesus.
 - They expected Jesus to come and heal him. Jesus wanted to give them more.
 - A few days after Lazarus died, Jesus showed up in town.
 - They wanted from Jesus a healing. Jesus wanted to give them a resurrection!
 - "God is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think." (Ephesians 3:20)
 - In verse 32, Mary goes immediately to His feet and says, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."
 - This is not a rebuke but a statement of her faith concerning the power over death that Jesus possessed.
 - This was statement of her faith was possible because she had spent time listening to His Word.
 - Romans 10:17 "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God."
 - Mary was seated at the feet of Jesus Christ, hearing His every word.
 - When the tragedies of life hit, when the bad things happen in life, when there was death, confusion and disappointment, she was able to say, "Lord, I know that You can raise this situation to new life."
 - Jesus responded by saying, "Lazarus, come forth!"
 - Jesus had to call him by name or every dead person would have risen from the dead!
 - Mary started out by listening to Jesus' word. Then, in a difficult time of life she was able to make a great expression of faith as to who Jesus was.
 - Greater fruit is evident as we see before us her amazing expression of adoration.
 - In John 11, she exalted Him because of who He was.
 - In Mark 14, she adored Him because of what He had done. And so she begins to worship Him.

NOTE: Just as the Word of God precedes faith in God, the Word of God precedes the worship of God.

If you want a heart of worship and adoration, spend time in the word of God. That is where we see His attributes, His character, His love, His ways, His plans and all that is wonderful about God. It is all to be found in the Word.

Cultivating a life in the Word, is cultivating a life of worship.

What Should Worship Look Like?

Mark 13:3 "There came a woman with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume of pure nard; and she broke the vial and poured it over His head."

- The ancients considered alabaster to be the best material in which to preserve their ointments. The Oriental alabaster (referred to in the Bible) is a translucent carbonate of lime. Made from a variety of gypsum or sulphate of lime and used in its finer forms for vases.
- The perfume was made of spikenard, which was imported from India. In the Middle East, it was the most costly of all perfumes. Never used for common purposes; mostly used by royalty and the very rich. It could have been Mary's dowry or inheritance.
 - The perfume was valued at 300 denari, which today would equate to eleven months wages.
- In an amazing act of adoration, Mary breaks the jar open and pours the contents over Jesus' head.
 - In the parallel account in John 12, Mary poured the perfume over Jesus head and His feet and began to wipe His feet with her hair.
 - In the Jewish culture, a woman's hair was her glory. It was considered as the beauty of her humanity. Mary anointed and wiped His feet with everything on earth that was of any value to her.
 - Mary brought the most valuable thing she owned and broke it before Jesus.

Things we highly value that distract us from service to God, or from spending time with God
May need to be broken at God's altar and surrendered to Him.

- It was costly. It was her best. It was extravagant. It was a sacrifice.
 - Mary offered her very best to the Lord. It wasn't leftovers, or the last of what she had.
 - Mary offered worship worthy of God.

A Note to the Christian:

Are you willing to make a sacrifice to Jesus Christ either in giving to Him directly or giving to someone self-sacrificially? When was the last time you gave like that?

The Bible clearly states that when you give to someone in the name of Jesus, you are giving it to the Lord.

When was the last time you worshiped and left the entirety of your being at the altar?

Worship that is Worthy

- There is a precedent in the Old Testament that without sacrifice there is no worship. People would ascend to the Temple to worship God, but if they did not offer first a sacrifice they could not worship.
- What is true about sacrifice in the OT is true in the NT: *there is no worship of God without sacrifice.*
- When we come to worship God we need to come on the basis of sacrifice. In the OT, they offered animals. We come on the basis of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
 - He is the only sacrifice that satisfied the wrath of God.
 - He is the only sacrifice that satisfied the righteous standard of God.
 - Because the wrath and the righteousness of God are satisfied through Jesus Christ, God is satisfied with you.
 - This is the theological idea of Propitiation: Jesus Christ is the sacrifice that satisfies the debt for our sins.
 - God is satisfied with us. We can approach Him because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. But we need to approach God *with* sacrifices.
 - I Peter 2: 5 "... you also as living stones ([speaking of Christians](#)), are being built up as a Spiritual house for a Holy Priesthood to offer up Spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Christ Jesus."
 - As Christians, we have a holy priesthood.
 - Not like the concept of priests that other churches have, for example Catholics.
 - God has entrusted us as His servants and we represent Him.
 - In the Old Testament it was goats, lambs, bulls and other animals. But, in the New Testament we are to bring to God the sacrifice of praise.
 - Hebrews 13:15-16 "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased."
 - Worshiping God: praising Him with our lips.
 - Worshiping God: doing good to others.
 - In Philippians, Paul tells us to consider others as more important than ourselves.

- Anytime you do this in the name of a Jesus He accepts this as worship unto Him.
 - Hebrews 6: 10 For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love, which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.
 - Matthew 5:40 "If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also."

Worship: Praise With Our Lips

- In our daily life we should have private moments of praise with God as well as congregational praise.
- Praise means "speaking highly of." And so, we should be speaking highly of our Lord.
 - Privately between you and the Lord
 - "God, You're wonderful."
 - "Lord, You're great."
 - "Thank You for Your mercy. You are so good to me."
 - Corporate worship
 - We come together as the ecclesia, the gathering, the Church.
 - We lift our voices as one voices to exalt Jesus Christ. To praise Him. To Worship Him.
- Praise is very important to God.
 - Mark 14: 6 concerning the act that Mary did and people began to complain against her Jesus says "Let her alone. Why do you bother her? She has done a good deed to Me."
 - Jesus did not consider it a waste when she came and poured out everything she had at His head and feet.
 - He did not consider it an unproductive use of time.
 - Some Bibles translate that word "good" in the Greek to mean "beautiful." Beauty as harmonious completeness.
 - You were created to worship God. And because of this, you have a special capacity to do this.
 - The angels in heaven worship God. And, at the coming of Jesus to establish His Millennial Kingdom, even the trees will clap and all of creation will declare His praises!
 - But, human beings have a special capacity to worship God that has not been entrusted to any other living being. It is beautiful, harmonious and complete.
 - You were formed in your mother's womb to worship God.
 - Jesus says, "She has done a good deed **to Me**."

Congregational worship should be for and unto the Lord.
It should be directed to Him.
It is for Him and not for you.
- The time of worship when we sing, praise, meditate and commune with God is for and unto the Lord and not for you.
 - As Americans we are fixated on entertainment.
 - It is not entertainment.
 - It is not for you.
- Worship is not participating only if you like it (the song, the volume, the temperature of the room, or worship leader) nor should it be done only if you feel in the mood to worship.
 - Call it then a sing-a-long or entertainment, but don't call it worship!
Worship is for and unto the Lord!
- The time allotted to worship should be respected and honored. Nothing should take the place of worship or disrupt it.
 - It is strictly the Lord's time.
 - No one should cheat **others** of their time and quality of worship as they commune with God.
 - No one should cheat the Lord of **His** worship time.
 - It is **not** a buffer time until the preacher comes to the pulpit and "church" begins.
 - It is **not** a warm-up time to get the crowd in the mood before the preacher delivers the sermon.

Worship is the act of adoration, of which God is worthy.
Corporate worship is the most serious thing in our lives.
- Psalm 22:3 "Yet Thou art Holy, O thou who art enthroned upon the Praises of Israel."
 - When we come before the Lord in corporate worship and begin to give adoration to Him, He is here in our midst. He is enthroned upon, and glorified and inhabits our praises.
 - When we engage in corporate worship, the Lord is here.

Worship: a Sacrifice of Praise

- At the time of praise and worship, we should be ready to come and make a sacrifice to God.
 - A sacrifice means you might not always feel like giving/doing it.
 - If you felt like giving/doing it, it wouldn't be called a sacrifice.
 - A sacrifice means, "forgoing something of value for the sake of something having a more pressing claim."

- Mary gave up the most costly thing she had on the face of the earth for the more pressing claim of the glory of Jesus Christ.
 - She considered Him being honored more precious than anything she had, any time schedule she had to keep, anything anyone else thought, and any worldly possession.
- Hebrews 13:15-16 "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise"
 - This might mean that you might not always feel like doing it.
- Before you embark on corporate worship: prepare your heart.
 - Before your day begins, you prepare your face and attire. Prepare your heart. Prepare your inner man. Reciprocity. Adoration. Sacrifice. When you actually don't feel like it but nevertheless you worship and praise because He is worthy, your sacrifice has more value. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow no matter how we feel. He is always worthy of all praise, adoration, and everything you can give Him no matter how you feel.
 - Praising God even when you don't feel like it may be of greater worth because **you** got off the throne and put **Him** on it. You devalued self and assigned value to God.
 - God has told us: when we gather as a church, He will meet us to receive the praises due Him.
- Mark 14: 9 "Truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, that also what this woman has done shall be spoken of in memory of her."
 - A truly unbelievable statement!
 - The Bible never said anything like this about Abraham, the friend of God and Father of the Jews. It never said that his name would go forth along with the gospel.
 - It never said anything like this about David, Peter, James, John the apostle or John the Baptist.
 - The only thing Mary ever did to elicit this acclamation was to pour out everything she had in an act of adoration.
 - God says in His word, "Wherever the story of the Gospel goes forth, the story of this woman will go forth."
 - Having read these verses today, we are a fulfillment of that prophecy.
 - It shows that God assigns tremendous value to our expression of adoration for Him.
 - Yet, we don't always assign that same value to our worship.
 - We may belittle our time of worship and think God doesn't need it.
 - All this woman did was worship Him!

Worship: Turning towards the Father to Kiss Him

- The New Testament word for worship is a Greek word called *proskuneo*. Pros meaning to turn toward. Kuneo meaning to kiss.
 - When God the word that describes what worship means to Him, He chose *proskuneo* in the New Testament.
 - In the heart of a father, there is nothing more wonderful.
 - When the disciples came to Jesus, He taught them to pray by addressing God as "Father" and setting up that relationship with God as a Father.
 - God the Father loves the kisses of His children.
 - Don't confuse your earthly father with your Heavenly Father.
 - Some of us may have had an earthly father, who may have abused, abandoned or betrayed us.
 - Allow your Heavenly Father to heal the wounds that may have been inflicted in your heart. Allow Him to heal it today.
 - God loves like the perfect Father that He is.
 - Because of the blood of Jesus Christ, God is able to see you as a perfect child - - - undefiled.
 - Some babies take awhile before they can actually turn towards their mothers and fathers and deliberately kiss them.
 - Like the perfect Father, God will wait for His children to turn towards Him and deliberately kiss Him.
 - Most Christians have the seed of worship in their hearts, but they haven't fully realized that He sees them as perfect, pure and undefiled children and that they need to turn toward God with the entirety of their being and deliberately kiss Him, the perfect Father.
 - Every hour of every day, our Heavenly Father longs for us to connect with Him and worship, *proskuneo*.
 - Jesus told the woman at the well that the Father is seeking those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth.
 - The Father in heaven is looking for someone who will adore Him, who will *proskuneo* Him, worship Him in spirit and in truth; with sincerity and with the wholeness of their being.

God is looking for those times when we come together in sincerity. Don't miss it!

- Psalm 69:30-31 "I will praise the name of God with song, and shall magnify Him with Thanksgiving. And it will please the Lord better than an ox or a young bull with horns and hoofs."
 - Just singing to the Lord, enlarging Him in our heart and in our midst, pleases the Lord more than anything else you can ever give to Him.
 - The psalmist who wrote this declaration was going through a very tough time. Verse 29 reads: "But I am afflicted and in pain; May Your salvation, O God, set me securely on high."

- The psalmist may have been afflicted and insecure; downcast, downtrodden, and oppressed; confused, upset and frustrated. But, the biblical remedy for all that was "I will praise the name of God with song. I will enlarge Him and decrease myself. I will magnify Him with thanksgiving and it will please the Lord more than anything else I can ever bring to Him!"

God is looking for those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth.

NOTE: It may be that you feel far from God. Maybe you've had trouble connecting with Him.
 If you are looking for God or seeking His righteousness in a certain situation, **STOP EVERYTHING!**
 Worship God with the entirety of your being, the best you know how.
 He knows you; He knows you are just a child.
 Worship Him with every fiber in your being in a way that sacrifices **you** and enthrones **Him!**
 The Father will find you. You won't have to find Him. **He will find you!**

Mary: A Heart of Worship; A Heart of Sacrifice

- Contrast the heart of Mary with that of those who mocked her.
 - Some saw better ways for the use of the perfume.
 - Judas Iscariot himself suggested that it could have been sold and the money given to the poor.
 - Judas did not say this because of he had a heart for the poor, but because he was a thief who pilfered the moneybox.
 - John 12: 4 But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said, 5 "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to poor people?" 6 Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the moneybox, he used to pilfer what was put into it.
 - Judas had a self-serving attitude.
 - Mark 14:11 states that Judas went out and looked for an opportunity to betray Jesus.

If you have a self-serving attitude within you,
 Your flesh will look for an opportunity to betray Jesus,
 To get away with something,
 To betray your God.

The attitude in your heart will be: what can I get away with and still be OK with God?

- Mary's attitude was;
 - How much can I give to God?
 - How much can I pour out at His feet?
 - I'm going to give Him everything!
- Mary left that place with the same fragrance upon her that Jesus had.
 - There was a fragrance of Christ upon her and so it ought to be for the Christian.
 - It can be like that when you spend time in His presence, adoring Him self-sacrificially.
- Judas left that place, and then betrayed Jesus. A day later he hung himself. He would smell like death before Jesus had even risen from the grave.

There is the aroma of LIFE and the aroma of DEATH.
 Which one we smell like depends upon our attitude of adoration for Christ Jesus. Amen!

Pastor Britt's Closing Prayer:

Lord, we thank You that You adore us and that we love You because You first loved us. We declare today together that Jesus, You are worthy of all of our time, all of our praise, everything within our being. You are worthy of the lifting of our hands. You are worthy for us to bow down to. You are worthy for us to lie down on our faces before You. You are worthy of our clapping and of our singing. And, You are worthy of our obedience.

We ask as a congregation that You would forgive us for our lax view of worship. That you would forgive us, God, for thinking that it was *our* time. That You would forgive us for thinking that we could just come and go, and do as we pleased. We realize that it's not our time; it's Your time. Thank you for forgiving us.

We ask now that You would help us to worship You in Spirit and in Truth. Teach us to do that, Lord, we're not sure what that means corporately and individually. We want to be like Mary. We want to pour everything at Your feet and upon Your head in adoration of You. We're going to try the best we know how. Make us a Church that worships! Be enthroned upon our praises. Be high and exalted on this coastline! Christ Jesus, we lift You up!

Study Questions:

1. Scripture says that those who witnessed her adoration of Jesus scolded Mary, but she never stopped worshipping. She didn't care what anyone said. What would you suggest to someone who is being pressured to stifle their praise or worship of God?

2. Why do you think that no one reacted when Jesus said that Mary was anointing His body beforehand “for the **burial**” but focused on the use of the perfume instead? Are there moments in your life when you wished you had reacted and responded to God’s word instead of the way things appeared?
3. Why do you think that the simplest things will be used against us to distract us from sincere worship? Who or what do you think is behind that?
4. Knowing the importance and sanctity of worship, how can you prepare your heart and your schedule to properly worship God?
5. God is always looking for those will worship Him in spirit and in truth. This often means putting our agenda aside and giving God our full and sincere attention. What can you do differently to give God the worship He deserves?
6. Mary worshiped God with her best and most valuable assets. Do you sacrifice your best to God or do you find it easier to give Him your leftovers?