

He Loved Me...

He Loves Me Lots

The Gospel of John

Text

John 11:45 - 12:11

Topic

Mary anoints Jesus with
costly ointment, wiping His feet with her hair

Title

"Glad Hair Day"

**Aggressive Inline Skating... All-Terrain Boarding... Banzai Skydiving... BMX...
Bungee Jumping... Canyoning... Cliff Diving... Cluster Ballooning... Deep Water
Soloing...**

They are a partial list of Extreme Sports. We admire athletes who give it their all.

There are two 'extremes' in our text.

1. Mary was extreme in her worship. She "took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard [worth a year's wages] anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair" (12:3).
 2. The Jewish ruling council was dominated by extremists who "plotted to put [Jesus] to death" (11:53).
- Mary's **belief** in Jesus led her to wash Jesus' feet with ointment and her hair.
 - **Unbelief** drove the Jewish rulers to murder.

I'll organize my comments around two points, **#1 You Are Oppressed By Unbelief,**
and **#2 You Press On By Believing.**

#1 - You Are Surrounded By Unbelief (11:45-57)

Seattle police arrested street preacher Matthew Meinecke on charges of being a risk to public safety. He was reading his Bible aloud at a public park near a pride event. "SPD has enough resources to send ten police officers to arrest a preacher reading his Bible in a public park," Meinecke wrote on [twitter](#), posting a video showing his arrest.

That is our culture. According to Gallup, "A record-low 20% of Americans now say the Bible is the literal word of God... a new high of 29% say the Bible is a collection of 'fables, legends, history and moral precepts recorded by man.' "

Our study in the literal Word of God finds us in John 11:45.

Joh 11:45 Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him.

"Many... Jews" gathered to mourn the death of Lazarus. Jesus ruined the funeral when He commanded Lazarus to come out of the tomb.

Have you 'ruined' a family celebration or two by representing Jesus?

"Many" of them "believed." John wrote this Gospel "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (20:31).

- Nonbelievers are commanded to believe and be born-again.
- Believers are encouraged to continue in the Spirit, believing God's Word is His enabling to obey.

Joh 11:46 But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did.

Why do some believe and others remain in their unbelief? As The Beach Boys sang, *God only knows*.

There are Christians who claim that *they* know. They propose that, before Creation, God chose certain human beings to save by irresistible grace. He simultaneously passed over the majority of humans, consigning them to eternal punishment simply because **He did not choose to chose them.**

Thankfully, there are other ways, biblical ways, scholarly ways, of approaching the issue, that preserve both God's Sovereignty and our free-will. In the end, why some and not others are saved is a matter of grace and faith between the Savior and each individual.

What we know for certain is that Jesus draws all men to Himself, and that He is Savior of all men - especially those who believe; and whosoever believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.

Joh 11:47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs.

Joh 11:48 If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."

The "council" is the 70 man Supreme Court of Israel known as the Sanhedrin. They were Israel's authority, subject to Rome's final authority.

The Sanhedrin could not deny the "many signs" Jesus did. The blind received sight, the lame walked, those who had leprosy were cured, the deaf heard, the dead were raised, and the good news was preached to the poor.

Some of you should know where to find the world's oldest, still in use, street sign. It is a yield sign dating to 1686 along Salvador Street in the Alfama district of Lisbon, Portugal.

Old signs remain accurate. The signs 'posted' by Jesus during His three and one-half years on Earth still point to Him. They are no less real, no less demanding of a response. The ensuing centuries have added credibility, seeing the effect of Jesus on the world.

The Sanhedrin was concerned that the people would try to make Jesus king. They were right. Should Rome get wind of it, history might repeat itself:

- Other empires had defiled and destroyed their "place," i.e., the Temple.
- Other empires had crushed and dispersed Israel.

Joh 11:49 And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all,

Joh 11:50 nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish."

He told the Sanhedrin they didn't know what they were talking about. He saw this as an opportunity to enlist Rome's help eliminating Jesus.

Joh 11:51 Now this he did not say on his own *authority*; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation,

Joh 11:52 and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says, "Caiaphas pointed to the last sacrificial Lamb in a prophecy he did not even know he made. Caiaphas meant Jesus had to be killed [to save the nation from Rome], but God intended the priest's words as a reference to Jesus' substitutionary atonement."

Jesus would die for the nation. Not to preserve the status quo, as Caiaphas reckoned, but as the last sacrifice Israel would ever need, the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the nation, and the world.

"Those scattered abroad" refers to Jews living outside the Holy Land. Jesus is the Savior of the whole world, including us Gentiles. We are not yet in view. God first had business with Israel.

Joh 11:53 Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.

Your top religious guys, starting with the long-time high priest, were Murder, Inc. It's *Godfather III*.

These were religious men who thought they pleased God by being self-righteous. Dr. J. Vernon McGee said, *"There are only two kinds of religion in the world... One says, "Do, do, do." Only Christianity says, "Done." Christ has done it all."*

When you trust in good works to earn your salvation, you become capable of the worst works imaginable.

Religion kills and destroys. So does philosophy, psychology, and every other man-made substitute for salvation in Jesus Christ. You can only be transformed, become a new creation, and receive a new heart, when you believe Jesus.

- Religion, et al., can lead to *reformation*. It is better to be a reformed drunk than remain a drunk, but you're still an unsaved sinner. You're not transformed.
- Religion, et al., can lead to *deformation*. Certain beliefs distort, twist, and warp their adherents into doing truly heinous things.

Nicodemus was a member of the council. So was Joseph of Arimathea, who will come forth to claim Jesus' body after the Crucifixion. Two godly men among the seventy. Maybe a few more. What must that have been like?

During WW2, German Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer was known for his resistance to the Nazi dictatorship, including vocal opposition to Hitler's euthanasia program and genocidal persecution of the Jews. He was arrested in April 1943 by the Gestapo, accused of being associated with the plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler. He was hanged April 9, 1945.

If it hasn't happened already, or isn't happening right now, one day you are going to find yourself before, or on, some council or board or other organization that is in opposition to what you believe about Jesus Christ. God the Holy Spirit will give you the humility and boldness to act accordingly. Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for *such* a time?

Joh 11:54 Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples.

Not out of fear did Jesus "no longer" walk "openly." He was the one person who did not fear. His public ministry was ending. His attention was upon His passion. We might have a lot of Gospel left, but it mostly covers the last week of Jesus on Earth.

Joh 11:55 And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves.

This is the third Passover in the Gospel of John, and the last one for Jesus. He will be sacrificed as the once-for-all Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world. The apostle Paul would rightly say, "For indeed Christ, **our Passover**, was sacrificed for us" (First Corinthians 5:7).

Joh 11:56 Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, "What do you think - that He will not come to the feast?"

Joh 11:57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report *it*, that they might seize Him.

They should have called it, the Feast of Fear.

The populace knew that the rulers had excommunicated the man born blind on account of Jesus. Now that they issued their BOLO, everyone was in similar danger.

Many infirm individuals undoubtedly were hoping to encounter Jesus at the Passover in order to receive a much yearned for healing. The spiritual leaders of Israel had zero compassion for them. They ought to have been working with Jesus, providing Him with whatever He needed, so that He could minister to as many people as possible. They were murdering the hopes of their people. Baahd, baahd shepherds.

The apostle Paul announced the eventual consequences of unbelief. He wrote, "even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting" (Romans 1:28). He then listed the "things which are not fitting." Read Romans chapter one; it reads like today's news.

Debased is translated *depraved* or *reprobate*. We should recognize that a great many of the influencers in our nation, and in the world, are debased, depraved reprobates. Christians are oppressed by a culture of unbelief.

Karl Barth said, "Belief cannot argue with unbelief, it can only preach to it." Just before he described the depraved mind, Paul said, "For [the Gospel] is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek" (1:18). It is our greatest weapon.

#2 - You Press On By Believing (12:1-11)

One thousand years from now archaeologists discover the ruins of our building. What conclusions might they come to about all churches in the 21st century? They'd probably assume no one dressed in their Sunday best, and that every worship center put a priority on serving good coffee.

The first century customs regarding the head covering of women is like that. The experts disagree. We cannot say with certainty that Mary acted inappropriately by letting down her hair. It is instructive that *no one at the table suggested letting her hair down was wrong*.

Joh 12:1 Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead.

The countdown to the Lamb of God's last Passover had started. "The fullness of the time had come, and God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons" (Galatians 4:4-5).

Joh 12:2 There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him.

Jesus was guest of honor at Lazarus' 'coming out' party. They undoubtedly had a ton of food left over from the funeral. Why have it go to waste?

It was Saturday, the Sabbath, the eve of Palm Sunday. The fact Martha served lets us know it was at their home.

Joh 12:3 Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

The diners would be reclining on pillows around a low table. Their bare feet extended away from the table, making them accessible.

D.A. Carson writes, *"Its purity, quantity and origin account for its appalling cost: when John labels it an expensive perfume, he is thinking on a scale far larger than what we might mean by the words."*

Kings were anointed, usually by pouring oil over their heads. Historians cite that it was not unheard of to anoint the feet, although it was rare.

Mary treated Jesus as her King. The appropriate posture was kneeling face down at His feet, anointing Him with luxurious and sweet-smelling perfume.

I am guessing that there were towels available to her. Thus her behavior has a symbolic meaning.

You didn't see Mary using a towel; she was the towel.

Believers are compared to, among other things, vessels in a great house. It should be no surprise we are towels.

If using her hair suggests intimacy, it is the pure, godly intimacy of love for Jesus. I am my Beloved's, and He is mine.

Joh 12:4 But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said,

Joh 12:5 "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?"

Joh 12:6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

Judas had no accountability. Apparently the disciples had never read Larry Burkett or Dave Ramsey.

John was drawing an obvious contrast between the *material* worth of the ointment versus the *spiritual* worth of the anointing. Charles Spurgeon said, "*It is our duty and our privilege to exhaust our lives for Jesus. We are not to be living specimens of men in fine preservation, but living sacrifices, whose lot is to be consumed.*"

Joh 12:7 But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial.

Mary had kept the ointment for a special occasion. She did not know that in a week's time, Jesus would be dead. Nevertheless, it is accurate to say that this was the occasion.

Joh 12:8 For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

There would be plenty of time to minister to the poor. The Lord would provide funding; no use hoarding.

The use of money ought to follow biblical principles, but with the understanding there are times when God overrules for His glory and your growth.

Joh 12:9 Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.

Step right up and see the man who rose from the dead!

It's not often that you see a deadman come to life. If you are a believer, **you** are a deadman who has come to eternal life. Put yourself on display.

Joh 12:10 But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also,

Joh 12:11 because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

Lazarus was evidence that a formidable sign had been performed. Eliminate him, and they could sell the lie that it was a hoax.

John will tell us nine times in his Gospel, "many believed." "He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:26-27).

You've heard the expression, Let your hair down. Linguists trace it back to ladies in the 1600s with big, stacked hair, letting it down to be more natural. It has come to mean relax... chill.

We should reintroduce it in its biblical sense by jumping at opportunities to serve the Lord

Extrême Worship ought to be the norm for all believers. What does that look like? Mary's anointing of Jesus reveals one important aspect of extreme worship. It is in John's use of the word, "costly."

It doesn't necessarily mean financially costly, although it can. The Rich Young Ruler, for example, was hindered from worshipping the Lord by his much wealth.

There are other things that are costly. We only have time for one example. A Christian who falls in love with, and desires to marry, a nonbeliever, **must not**, because they love the Lord, and obey Him. It's costly, but your body is the Lord's Temple.

In the Old Testament, King David once described costly by saying, "I can't offer the Lord my God a sacrifice that cost me nothing" (Second Samuel 24:24).

Think on this quote from Adrian Rogers: "Discipline says, 'I need to.' Duty says, 'I ought to.' Devotion says, 'I want to.'"

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of Earth will grow strangely dim, In the light of His glory and grace*