

**Lent 5C 2010**  
**John 12:1-8**  
**Sermon for Advent LC**  
**March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010**

**“You are Blessed...What you Doing about it?”**

Dear sisters and brothers, grace to you and peace from God the Father and our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

I invite you to travel with me to Bethany– to the home of Martha and Mary, and their brother Lazarus. Now Bethany is about a mile and a half outside of Jerusalem, and the home we are going to visit is pretty nice, as this family has a little bit of money– we know this because Lazarus before he was raised was buried in a tomb on the property with a large crowd around–he was valuable. So are you there– this big house in Bethany, six days before the Passover. And Jesus comes to the door with his followers and Martha immediately does what she does best– she serves. She gets some stew ready and Jesus sits down at the table. The aroma of a fresh meal lingers in the air and helps to get rid of that stench that Lazarus still had on his body, only being raised from the dead a few days ago– and the smell of death takes a while to get rid of. Dinner is good, Jesus feels satisfied, but there’s something up with him– we can see it on his face– he knows that the end is near for him.

This raising Lazarus from the dead was quite the deal and Pilate found out and he can’t hide much longer. People are out to get him and he knows it, so he sits, contemplating what to do next, and we can see it– we can feel it– the nervousness of the disciples and the heavy heart of Jesus– who already has led on to the disciples and others that he will die. It’s hard to be there, to see this– to think that our God our Lord, our King will be killed– no he should be anointed with accolades and praises. Interrupting our thoughts of what if...Mary enters the room again–she always seems to be off doing something, rather than working like Martha. She has a large jug in her arms– it’s a pound of perfume that comes from the Himalayan mountains and is made from spikenard. Wow– this stuff is worth some money– about 50,000 dollars today in Michigan– but she has a plan. She breaks open the bottle– and dumps it upon the feet of Jesus. Wow...you smell that– pure, extravagance, an aromatic splendor that fills the room as Mary anoints our Lord’s feet right there– with the best perfume possible. Then she wipes it with her hair, taking on the personal charge to complete the act of anointing. Work only fit for a servant in the first place– but she, she doesn’t care as she wipes his feet clean and serves him as a willing disciple. Judas is there, and well he’s not happy– he argues that the money from that could have helped the poor...he’s right...but that’s not the point– Jesus gets it– he knows what Mary is doing– she’s sending him off to his death, he’s a dead man walking–he’s ready to finish his journey now– and will have blessed feet to walk on as he carries the weight of the sin that you and I possess to the cross. Mary knows Jesus is going...and she loves him– and her action though maybe absurd to some is perfect– it’s a sacrifice but it is what she has to do– she loves him, she serves him she makes a sacrifice and she gives all she can at that point because tomorrow may be too late.

It's quite a story isn't it friends- this act of amazing anointing in John's Gospel- the way that Mary so freely throws around 50,000 dollars worth of perfume- the way that Judas is upset. It really is beautiful - I hope you see the beauty and I hope too that you are able to wonder with me how it relates to us. You see, I think its clear the challenge here is what are you doing that is extravagant in your faith? What are you doing that shows the Lord you love him and that helps usher his death and resurrection to reality? She was a prophet in many ways- showing those around her that Jesus was going- she was a prophet in telling us the time was near for Jesus to go. And guess what...you too are called to be prophets... to tell people what Jesus is up to. To show people the love of this savior...so what are you doing these days that is sacrificial and faithful- that makes a difference that matters for your faith? For if we know anything, we know that God's love is extravagant- that it does not even compare with 50,000 dollars worth of perfume- it's so much better than that - that it abounds, that it is amazing, that it does not end. And we know finally that God's love and the sacrifice of Jesus' life is a sacrifice that calls us to a transformed existence. Mary was doing what we need to be doing...saying thank you to our God...saying thank you to our Lord...allowing ourselves to be a blessing by living out our response to the Gospel. Jesus...is on his way to death...for you...for your sins...and for your salvation...what do you got in response to that?

Dear friends we now enter the last week of Lent- next week we celebrate Palm Sunday and quickly make our way to the cross of Passion Sunday...we hear the story of Jesus' love given freely for you. Use this week as a final week of preparation- use this week as a chance to look at where you are at, to think about the fact that Jesus loves you and died for you, and to ponder how you live out your own faith...what are you doing that serves Christ? What are you doing that glorifies your God in heaven? You are blessed dear friends, you are Christ's dear friends- live out that blessing, live out that life that shines for the kingdom.

God loves you and so do I. Amen.