

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

A Deep Love for Christ
Mark 14:1-9



SYNOPSIS

This sermon explores the concept of a deep love for Christ, using the biblical account of a woman anointing Jesus with expensive perfume as a central illustration. It outlines five key hallmarks of this profound love: worship, extravagance, disregard for worldly opinion, resulting spiritual insight, and divine approval.

QUESTIONS

1. What was the context surrounding the woman anointing Jesus with expensive perfume in Bethany?

2. What are the five hallmarks of a deep love for Christ, as highlighted in the source?

3. How does the story of Mary highlight the idea that a deep love for Christ is not worried about the opinions of others?

4. Why did Jesus say that Mary's act would be remembered wherever the gospel is preached?

5. How might the world misunderstand a deep love and devotion to Christ, according to the source?

FURTHER STUDY

John 12:1-5

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ANSWER KEY

1. The events described occurred in Bethany, six days before the Passover, which was during the final week of Jesus' earthly ministry, specifically the Saturday before Palm Sunday. Jesus was reclining at a dinner in the home of Simon the Leper, who had previously been healed by Jesus. This meal was likely given in honor of Jesus and the recent resurrection of Lazarus. Amidst this setting, a woman, identified in John's Gospel as Mary, performed a significant act of anointing Jesus.
2. The source identifies five key characteristics of a profound love for Jesus Christ:
 - a. **Worships:** A deep love expresses itself through worship, demonstrated by Mary's act of pouring expensive perfume on Jesus. This worship is characterized as reckless and authentic, prioritizing devotion over personal comfort or societal expectations.
 - b. **Is Extravagant:** A genuine love for Christ is not measured or limited but is extravagant, willing to give one's most valuable possessions. Mary's use of an entire jar of pure, expensive nard, worth approximately a year's wages, exemplifies this principle.
 - c. **Is Not Worried About What Others Think:** Those who deeply love Christ are unconcerned with the opinions or judgments of others. Mary's actions, such as letting down her hair in public to wipe Jesus' feet (an act considered improper for women at the time), illustrate this disregard for social norms in favor of expressing devotion.
 - d. **Results in Spiritual Insight:** A close, loving relationship with Jesus fosters spiritual understanding and insight. Mary seemed to grasp the significance of her act as preparing Jesus for burial, even when others, including His disciples, did not fully comprehend His impending death. This suggests that deep love enables a supernatural awareness of God's purposes.
 - e. **Is Applauded By God:** God values and remembers acts of deep devotion. Jesus' statement that Mary's act would be spoken of wherever the gospel is preached highlights the eternal significance and divine approval of such heartfelt expressions of love.
3. Mary's actions were unconventional and likely drew criticism. Pouring expensive perfume on someone's feet and wiping them with her hair, especially in public, would have been seen as improper. Letting her hair down was something typically associated with disreputable women. However, Mary's focus was on expressing her love for Jesus, and she disregarded what others might think or say about her behavior. This illustrates that a deep love for Christ prioritizes pleasing Him over seeking the approval of the world.
4. Jesus declared that Mary's act would be recounted wherever the gospel is proclaimed because it serves as a powerful example of the kind of devoted heart He desires from His followers. Her extravagant, selfless, and worshipful act encapsulates a deep love for Christ. By ensuring her story was shared, Jesus highlights the eternal value and importance of such wholehearted devotion.
5. The source suggests that the world's value system and priorities are often at odds with those driven by a deep love for Christ. Actions motivated by this love, such as extravagant giving, prioritizing church and spiritual growth, and disregarding worldly approval, may seem illogical or excessive to those who don't share the same devotion. The world might view such actions with skepticism or fail to understand the profound motivation behind them, seeing devoted followers as "peculiar" or different.