



## EXTRAVAGANT WORSHIP

If someone is able to share their *Story of Faith*, invite them to do so. Take a few minutes to share *Evidences of God's Grace* together (how you have seen God's lovingkindness in your life and the lives of those around you). If someone shared their faith story, conclude by praying for them as a group. If you shared evidences of God's grace, close the time of sharing in grateful prayer to God for His faithfulness.

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### OPENING COMMENT

In this week's text in the Gospel of John a stark contrast exists between a woman named Mary and a man named Judas. Mary's response to Jesus is one of extravagant worship. Whereas Judas finds such a response to be unreasonable. Sunday's sermon and this week's Study Guide explore why.

What stood out to you from Sunday's text and sermon?

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### READ THE TEXT: John 12.1-8

<sup>1</sup>Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup>So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. <sup>3</sup>Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. <sup>4</sup>But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, <sup>5</sup>"Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" <sup>6</sup>He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. <sup>7</sup>Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup>For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."



## I: CHRISTIAN WORSHIP IS THE OFFERING OF OUR ENTIRE SELVES TO GOD IN RESPONSE TO THE GIVING OF HIMSELF TO US IN JESUS

1. When you hear the word *worship* what comes to mind?
2. We often sell the definition of *worship* short. When someone is smitten with a prospective partner it's said that "*he worships the ground she walks on.*" In the church we haven't done much better. We have handed exclusive rights to the meaning of *worship* as the time the church sings together.

Read Romans 12:1. Notice two things: first, the appeal Paul makes is that we *present our bodies as a living sacrifice* and second, it is in response to *the mercies of God* (the saving grace of God). With this full and robust definition of Christian worship, share with each other what worship looks like in a number of different areas of life.

## II: EXTRAVAGANT WORSHIP IS THE NATURAL RESPONSE OF THOSE WHO RECEIVE THE GOSPEL

1. If others observed your life, in what area(s) would they conclude that you are extravagant?
2. Mary's act of worship was costly. In what ways is your devotion to Jesus costly?

## III: EXTRAVAGANT WORSHIP IS UNNATURAL TO THOSE WHO REJECT THE GOSPEL

1. Mary was an extravagant worshipper of Jesus. Judas was not and was a critic of her devotion. Hard question: *Who do you relate to more in this passage, Mary or Judas?*
2. Judas literally betrayed Jesus by handing Him over to be killed. His god was money and he betrayed Jesus for money. But do we not betray Jesus when we call ourselves Christians but find more joy, identity, and meaning in devotion to lesser things? Do we not betray Jesus when our lives are characterized by extravagant devotion to other things? Share the areas of your life that have been, are, or you're constantly tempted to make your god.

## CONCLUSION

Those who have something or someone else as their god (idolatry) find extravagant devotion to Christ unnatural and even absurd. It's only those who have received the extravagant gospel — who have heard it, believed it, and are being sanctified through



it — that find it natural to worship Jesus extravagantly. In fact, it is one of the primary ingredients of the normal Christian life.

This line from *And Can It Be* captures something of the marvelling we do in response to such grace received:

*And can it be that I should gain  
An interest in the Savior's blood  
Died He for me who caused His pain  
For me who Him to death pursued  
Amazing love how can it be  
That Thou my God shouldst die for me*

## **SHARE & PRAY**

- Share how you can pray for each other in light of what this text has impressed upon you.
- Thank God for the extraordinary measures He went to in order to restore your relationship with Him.
- Conclude by spending some time praying for one another, for the areas of growth and grace you are seeking, and the needs among you.

