

Date : 7 March 2021
Theme : The Cost of following Jesus
Topic : What is Jesus' worth to you?
Passage : Matthew 26:6-17
Key verse : *When she poured this perfume on My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial. I tell you the truth, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her. Matthew 26:12,13*

Introduction

How much is Jesus worth to you? Putting a value to a thing, say, a car or a house is straightforward indeed. We put a value to them in terms of money. But putting a price to a person, specially on Jesus will be a bit more complex. Nevertheless, today we will try to assign a value to the question: What is Jesus worth to me? We can learn from the way others have done so.

① A woman expressed her value of Jesus by giving her most expensive gift. *Matthew 26:12*

- She gave to Jesus the greatest value of the precious anointment.
How expensive was the jar of pure, unmixed spikenard? *Matthew 26:9*
(do not offer to Jesus something that cost you nothing *2 Samuel 24:24*)
- She honoured Jesus with the highest respect, the honorific anointing with perfume. By pouring anointment upon His head, she anointed Jesus in preparation for His death.
- She did something of lasting remembrance; anointing Him for His burial. And so she became the first of Christ's disciples to acknowledge His impending death, an event the twelve were slow to grasp.
- Jesus considered her sacrifice so integral to the gospel that He prophesied it would always be mentioned in conjunction with the good news. What does that tell you about the significance of your sacrifice for Jesus?
- She displayed exceptional gesture of pure worship before a contrary and complaining people, under the disapproving eyes of the disciples. That was her expression of gratitude for Jesus' impending sacrifice.
No price was too high a price for her to pay in appreciation of Jesus' high value.
(Barna research: only 9% of Jesus' followers give sacrificially)
- She offered this with perfect precision. Jesus' sacrifice was about to begin; beyond this point, it would be too late to offer anything of value to Him. A timely sacrifice of true value brings fragrance to every one present.

② How did Judas show his value of Jesus?

He measured Jesus below 30 pieces of silver. Why? This is the price of a slave.

- How much had Judas receive from Jesus?
(He had 3 years of being with Jesus 24/7, a divinely-bestowed privilege few had)
- Did he believe in Jesus?
- Did he know Jesus?
- Did he love Jesus?
- How much did he value Jesus?
...What are you willing to give me, if I deliver Him to you? Matthew 26:15
...the one I kiss is the man, arrest Him... Matthew 26:48

③ How did the disciples show their value of Jesus?

- Why did the disciples label devotion to Jesus as *waste*? *Matthew 26:8*
- What do they consider as *high price*? *Matthew 26:9*
Was a \$50,000 fragrance too much to offer to Jesus? Is Jesus worth much less today?
- Every one of the 12 enjoyed the fragrance but the price was too high for each of them to pay
(Seems like the poor deserved better, in their perspective)
- Why did Jesus say *this very night all of you will be offended because of Me*? *Matthew 26:31*

- Did Peter understand the weight of his declaration?
Even if I have to die with you, I will not deny you. Matthew 26:33, 35
Is suffering for Jesus too high a price to pay?
- Why was praying for an hour with Jesus too high a price for the disciples to pay? *Matthew 26:40*
(He found them asleep. Sleep is more valuable than Jesus? *Matthew 26:43*)
(Result under stress: The disciples forsook Jesus and fled from Him *Matthew 26:50*)

Application

Q. If Jesus is deserving, worthy of our highest affection and greatest gratitude and honour, why then do you think, the disciples fail when tested?

1. Why was the woman's offering able to demonstrate the high value she regarded Jesus?

- She seems to be the only one who discerned that the time had come for Jesus' sacrificial death for our sins and was willing to give a material expression of her esteem for Him. She anointed Him with the best fragrance recognising that only His sinless life could provide sufficient sacrifice as our substitute.
- She did not offer something that costs little or nothing, and made her offering at the right time, two days before Jesus' sacrifice of suffering and death.
(example, David paid the full price for the land to build the house of God)
- Her action of lavish love and respect for Jesus provides the contrast between faith and unbelief, between a true disciple (the woman) and one of the Twelve (Judas, whose privilege of position is no substitute for faith and obedience)
- Do you consider the woman's dramatic and controversial action rather showy?
- If you were present, would her display of affection make you uncomfortable?
If so, how would you deal with the discomfort?
- Do you agree that the woman's anointing of Jesus ended up changing the entire atmosphere with the scent of her sacrifice? Have you been impacted by someone's humble and selfless sacrifice? Were you the direct recipient or a silent observer? How has it changed how you think or act now?

2. Why did Peter fail the test? (even though he had declared his unfailing love for Jesus)

- Because, although he had intention to remain faithful, he underestimated the intensity of Satan's attack.
- He never realised he was capable of cursing and swearing when subject to pressure; even though the Lord had warned him, *Satan intends to sift you as wheat. Luke 22:31*
- However, he was restored in his love for Jesus and did not fall a victim of despair because he was recommissioned by Jesus to feed His sheep. *John 21:15-17*

3. Why did Judas fail the test?

(even though he was one of the 12 and destined for great honour in eternity in heaven)

- He had sat through all of Jesus' teachings about the torment of hell, yet would he end there?
- Why? His great love for money. The price he set on Jesus was below 30 pieces of silver. He paid the heaviest price when he set the lowest price on Jesus
- Do you think Judas' interest in the poor was real or a façade?
- Do you sense his inner contempt for the woman's extravagant affection for the Master or was he really concerned about the group's money?
- Judas was hypocritical; he used his gesture of affection for Jesus, unashamedly, as a sign for Jesus' enemies to seize Him.
- He continued on the road of no return when he did not repent but hung himself instead.

Conclusion

All the disciples failed to see value in Jesus because of the low value they set on Him and were offended (even though Jesus had warned them the night He was betrayed).

- How do you think the woman's sacrifice confronted the disciples (and ourselves today) to ask:
√ What do I believe?
√ What do I value - and am I willing to lose it for Jesus' sake?
√ How much scorn am I willing to endure?