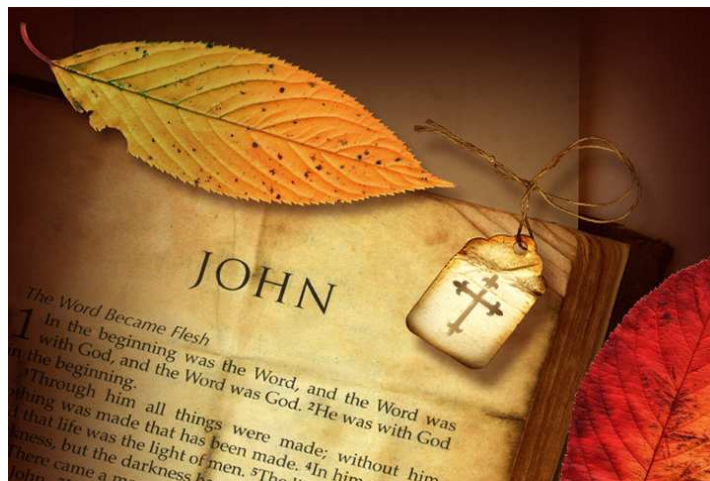


Fall 2010 Sermon Series:

# *The Gospel of John*

## *Week #8*

### Discussion Guide



October 30/31, 2010

### *"Mary's Devotion"*

Pastor Bruce Humphrey  
Luke 10:38-42, John 12:1-8

<http://www.rbcpc.org/about-us/sermons/>

*This is the last in the Gospel of John series –  
the next series will be "Mark Up Your Bibles," beginning January 2011*

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**Scripture References**

Read and reflect on the following scripture:

**Luke 10:38-42**

Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. <sup>39</sup> She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." <sup>41</sup> But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; <sup>42</sup> there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

*Notes:*

**John 12:1-8**

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup> There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. <sup>3</sup> Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. <sup>4</sup> But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, <sup>5</sup> "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" <sup>6</sup> (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) <sup>7</sup> Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup> You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

*Notes:*

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**Discussion Guide**

**Scripture**

1. Read the Luke 10:38-42 scripture. Jesus seems to compare the sisters, possibly leading us to think that one is right, and one is wrong. How does this conflict with what we know about how Jesus loves everyone?
2. What is Jesus' message to Martha? What is he trying to get Martha to understand?
3. Read the John 12:1-8 scripture. How is the behavior of the sisters in the story consistent with the Luke passage?
4. How does Jesus respond to Mary anointing him with the expensive oil?
5. What is the value of Mary's act from Jesus' perspective?
6. What is the value of Mary's act from Judas' perspective?
7. In Jesus' response to Judas, what is the message about the value of earthly possessions?
8. The main focus of the Gospel of John is to proclaim the divinity of Jesus. How does the story of Mary and Martha do that?
9. How does Jesus' response to Mary's devotion show us the value of a loving relationship with him?

**Sermon**

Key Words: **devotion – reason – generosity – creativity**

10. How does Martha express her love for Jesus? How does Mary?
11. Why is it important that we know what role each household member, Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, has in the story?

*"Reasonable arguments against wasteful devotion are always convincing. We've used these same reasonable arguments haven't we? ...' just think of how much good could have been done if we sold it and used the money for poor people.' The argument is cogent, reasonable, pragmatic, utilitarian. This disciple makes sense." Bruce Humphrey*

12. What is Judas' ultimate goal in engaging in this argument with Jesus about Mary's extravagance?
13. Why is Judas' comment about Mary's apparent wastefulness so disturbing to Jesus?
14. Without calling him a liar, how does Jesus denounce Judas' argument?
15. How is this relevant today as we reflect on our own generosity?

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**Life Applications**

**Personal:**

1. How do you interpret Mary's feelings about what she did with the oil?
2. What do you do to show Jesus how much you love Him?
3. For further reflection: Read Psalm 113:1-4. When is it appropriate to worship Jesus?
4. How might this guide your own creativity when it comes to how and when you show your devotion to Jesus?

**Small Group:**

1. Share the most extravagant thing you ever did to show someone that you loved him or her.
2. Describe how this extravagant act might help you relate (or not) to what Mary did with the oil.
3. Are you inclined to feel that Mary's act was an extravagant waste of what could have been spent on the poor? Why or why not?
4. The adage, "waste not, want not," has deep roots in American culture, especially in times of economic hardship. Discuss how you think Jesus would address apparent "wastefulness" in our culture today.

**Prayer:**

Pray the ACTS prayer below, or create your own devotion using the acronym:

**A. Adoration** – We praise you Jesus, as He who comes in the name of the Lord, the Anointed One, revealing your truth in a way we can understand.

**C. Confession** – We confess that you are the way, the truth, and the life, and that no one comes to the Father except through you.

**T. Thanksgiving** – We thank you Jesus, for your unconditional love and salvation by grace for all who believe in you.

**S. Supplication** – We ask that our generous hearts would rule over our reasonable heads.

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." John 3:16*



