



While the Pharisees plotted against Jesus, the grateful sister of Lazarus poured out a love offering at His feet. Mary truly understood that nothing in this world compares to the new life that Jesus offers.

Day #1: No Room for Jesus

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, people took notice! Raising a man from the dead was not something that people could ignore. With just one command, Jesus proved that He had power over death. The Bible says many people who saw what Jesus did put their faith in Jesus (John 11:45).

Some of the people watching Jesus that day went to the Pharisees to tell them what Jesus had done. The Pharisees claimed to know more about God than anyone else, so the Jews probably wanted to know what they thought about this amazing man, Jesus.

Sadly, while the Pharisees focused on the rules, they really didn't know God. They didn't know about mercy and grace, love, healing, and forgiveness. They were very proud and their hearts were far from God (Mark 7:6). The Pharisees and chief priests held a meeting to decide what to do about Jesus.

✝ *"What can we do?" they asked. "This man is doing many miraculous signs. If we let Him keep on doing this, everyone will believe in Him. Then the Romans will come. They will take away our temple and our nation." - John 11:47b-48*

The Pharisees and chief priests **admitted** that Jesus was doing miracles! But they still **refused** to put their faith in Him. The Pharisees had power and riches at that time. They didn't want anything to mess up their comfortable way of life. They were not willing to give up anything for Jesus - even though He offered new life in the kingdom of God.

So from that day on, the Jewish rulers planned to kill Jesus. - John 11:53

✱ The religious leaders wanted to get rid of Jesus because they had no room for Him in their lives (John 8:37). They would rather hold onto their pride and greed than allow Jesus to change them. Is there any area of your life that you know is not right? Maybe it is a bad attitude or unkind words. Don't hold onto your sin like the Pharisees! Invite Jesus into that area of your life. When you welcome Him in, He will reclaim and renew every part of you (Revelation 3:17-21).

Day #2: Poured Out

Jesus and His disciples stayed out of town for a while. The Pharisees and chief priests were on the lookout for Him.

Six days before the yearly Passover feast, Jesus went to Lazarus' hometown. Jesus was invited to a party, but there had never been a party quite like this one. It was a party to celebrate Lazarus' coming back from the dead! It was held in Jesus' honor.

Many people, including the disciples, were at the dinner. Lazarus was sitting at the table with Jesus, and his sister Martha, was serving food.

Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard. It was an expensive perfume. She poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the sweet smell of the perfume.

✝ *Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard. It was an expensive perfume. She poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the sweet smell of the perfume. - John 12:3*

The perfume that Mary poured out on Jesus was worth a year's wages. Mary was not a rich woman, but she freely gave everything she had to worship the One who had come to give her new life. Some people complained that Mary was wasteful. But Jesus said she did very well. Mary loved Jesus far more than she loved anything in this world.

✱ Put a drop of perfume or cologne on your pillow. At night, when you smell the beautiful scent, think of Mary pouring out her best for Jesus. Then lift up your own offering of praise to Jesus.

May my prayer come to You like the sweet smell of incense. When I lift up my hands in prayer, may it be like the evening sacrifice. - Psalm 141:2

Day #3: A Tangled Web

If Jesus had been on earth in our time, how do you think people would have found out about His raising Lazarus from the dead? Surely it would be on the news, on the radio, and on the Internet. Someone would probably do a "special investigative report" on T.V.

Back in Jesus' day, there were no computers or televisions, but news traveled pretty quickly without them. The Jewish people who actually witnessed Lazarus come alive must have ran to tell their friends and family members what they saw. Then those people ran to tell other people. News about Jesus was buzzing through the entire countryside.

While Jesus was having dinner with Lazarus and the others,

Day #3 continued:

a large crowd of Jews came to see Him. They also wanted to see Lazarus because he had been raised from the dead.

+ *Because of Lazarus, many of the Jews were starting to follow Jesus. They were putting their faith in Him.* - John 12:11

Every time Jesus performed a miracle, more people put their trust in Him. Raising Lazarus was a HUGE miracle! People came from all around to see Lazarus. More and more of the Jews believed in Him. And the Pharisees and chief priests became more and more angry.

So, the chief priests planned to kill Lazarus too (John 12:11). Notice how one sin leads to another. It was no longer enough for them to kill Jesus, now they wanted to kill Lazarus also. When would they stop? Would they plan to kill everyone He ever healed?

***** Again, the Pharisees teach us lessons in how **not** to live. Their sin of pride and greed led to plotting a murder. Now they were planning another murder. They were truly ruled by their sin just as Jesus had warned them (John 8:34).

Did you know that when you put your trust in Jesus, you are no longer ruled by sin? You are free - you do not *have to* sin! The key is **abiding** in, or remaining with, Jesus (Romans 6:5-7, John 15:1-8). By His grace, Jesus gives us the power to say "No" to sin (Titus 2:12).

Day #4: Hosanna!

The Passover feast was just a few days away. God had instructed His people, the Jews, to celebrate this feast each year. Thousands of Jews had come to the city of Jerusalem to celebrate the feast at the Holy Temple. All the people were wondering if Jesus would come.

+ *The next day the large crowd that had come for the (Passover) Feast heard that Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem. So they took branches from palm trees and went out to meet Him. They shouted, "Hosanna! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord! "Blessed is the King of Israel!"* - John 12:12-13

The excited people picked palm branches and covered the dusty road that led into town. Some people even laid their coats along the road (Matthew 21:8). This was what they did when a king came to town. By doing this, they kept the dirt off of His feet.

The people shouted, "Hosanna," which means, "Save us, now!" The people called Jesus the King of Israel. It seemed that the crowd finally understood Who Jesus was, and they welcomed Him into Jerusalem.

Jesus sent two of His disciples to get a young donkey for Him to ride on (Matthew 21:1-3). This fulfilled another one of God's promises about the Messiah. Zechariah 9:9 said that the Messiah would enter Jerusalem (Zion) on a donkey's colt. All the people were shouting happily,

Day #4 continued:

and the disciples were caught up in the excitement as well.

The Pharisees became even more angry and frustrated because so many people were following Jesus (John 12:19). But in just a few days the excited mood about Jesus would take a tragic turn.

***** It is pretty easy to sing praises to Jesus when we are with other people who love and worship Him. This is a great thing. But do you still praise Him when you are the only one in the group who believes in Him? Pray for the boldness to speak the joyful truth about Jesus no matter who you are with (Acts 4:29).

Day #5: He is No Fool

We have seen many different reactions to Jesus. How did the Pharisees react to Him? (They wanted to get rid of Him, even when they knew He performed miracles.) How did Mary react to Jesus? (She told Him she believed in Him even while her brother was still dead. John 11:27) The Pharisees had no room for Jesus in their lives, while Mary poured out everything she owned at His feet.

Still, today we see these same reactions. Sadly, many people today have no room for Jesus in their lives. They think only of the things in this world - work, recreation, things that money can buy. These things will all fade away.

But other people have given up everything for Jesus. There are missionaries who leave their homes and even their country to take the Good News of Jesus to people who haven't heard. And still other believers freely give of their time and possessions in order to share Jesus' love with others. Investing in the souls of people will last forever.

Think about the quote, "He is no fool who gives what He cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose." This is a quote from Jim Elliot, a missionary who was killed while sharing God's truth with a tribe of people who did not know Jesus. Because of his sacrifice, an entire tribe of lost people came to know the saving grace of Jesus. They have become "God followers"! And this tribe has gone out to tell other tribes about Jesus. Generations have come into the kingdom of God through the sacrifice of Jim Elliot and his ministry partners.

***** How do we live for what matters instead of things that will fade away? We must **change our focus** to what is most important. Stand next to a window looking outside. First, focus your eyes on the actual glass of the window. Then **change your focus** to something outside, far beyond the actual glass. In the same way, we can turn our heart's focus to eternal things instead of what we see in the here and now. The Bible puts it this way:

+ *Don't store up treasures on earth! Moths and rust can destroy them, and thieves can break in and steal them. Instead, store up your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy them, and thieves cannot break in and steal them.* - Matthew 6:19-20 CEV