

St Marc Grenoble

Sunday 3rd April 2002

John 12: 1 - 8

**'Celebration, Love and Commitment'**

Good Morning Everyone, in Church, on Zoom and, especially to Jimmy and our friends from Soweto. I'm so disappointed not to be able to join you in person today, but I'm very grateful I'm able to join you by Zoom.

It's great to have Jimmy and his team leading us in worship this morning, and our Gospel reading fits in very well. But, as usual, before we start looking at it together, I'd really like to hear your thoughts - what jumped out at you?

Thanks, so let's have a look together: Jesus likes parties! But, some of the people He partied with while He was on earth weren't always the kind of people you'd expect to find in church.

But, Jesus loves people; especially people who've had a raw deal in life.

While He was on earth, He mixed with many people religious leaders didn't want anything to do with; the downtrodden and outcasts – unlikely people.

He mixed with all sorts of people, the New Testament tells us about some of those He met and befriended – lepers, social outcasts, beggars, street people, tax collectors, rich people, poor people, prostitutes, divorcees, foreigners, slaves, asylum seekers – young and old. In fact, people - just like us. Jesus made friends with all sorts and they worshipped Him.

Why? Because He wanted to share the good news of God's kingdom with them. That was the reason He came to earth, so people like them and like us would be saved from hopelessness and despair and welcomed by His love.

Incredible as it may seem, Jesus gave His life so all sorts of people, from all kinds of backgrounds – even people like you and me – could be saved from our sins, and considered worthy of sharing eternal life with God.

We hear Jesus was making His way towards Jerusalem, where, within less than a week, He knew He'd be betrayed by one of his best friends, and killed.

On the way, He passed through Bethany, where His friend Lazarus, (who Jesus had brought back from the dead) and his sisters, Martha and Mary lived. Jesus stopped and spent the night with them, and a party was given in His honour. (I think I'd want to give a party for a friend who'd saved my life!)

Little did they know that this would be the last time Jesus visited their house.

While Jesus was reclining at table eating, Mary came and poured about a pint of very expensive perfume over His feet; it cost at least a year's wages, so Mary probably spent all she had buying it.

The whole house was filled with the beautiful fragrance - a perfume often used to prepare bodies for burial. **Why do you think Mary did that??**

(Judas Iscariot, objected to this waste of money...that's another story)

I want us to concentrate, this morning, and look closely at what Mary did.

Jesus described it as an act of love, which He deeply appreciated. He said she was anticipating His burial. – Looking back, we know that was much sooner than any of them, except Jesus, had any idea of. Jesus used the opportunity to prepare them for the shock of His coming death.

There's so much more to think about here. None of these people were anything like well off. The perfume probably cost every cent Mary had.

Mary wanted to express her deep, deep love for Jesus, in every way she possibly could and with everything she had, in total humility and, it seems, without saying a word.

There's so much for us to take away from this delightful story.

Mary gave everything to express her love for Jesus. She was there to greet Him. She worshipped and cared for Him with total humility and total commitment. she worshipped silently while she listened to His teaching. She spent all her money to buy the perfume. She ignored all outside influences and criticism she received. She focussed solely on Jesus.

So much to learn from that beautiful story of commitment...What about us?

We fail to turn up on time - and only when we have nothing else to do. We struggle to assist in preparing for worship on time. We get upset if our preferences aren't observed, or if we don't like the music. We complain if our worship goes on too long, or if the time is inconvenient. We will only come once a week, on the day and the time that suits us. When we're here, we allow our phones to ring, we send texts, we even have conversations during the worship. Most challenging of all, we fail to focus solely on Jesus.

There is a lot to learn from this beautiful story of Mary's dedicated love and worship of Jesus - Mary gives us a clear example ... we have a very great deal to learn and we need to start today ... Let's be still for a moment and reflect on how we can change ...

**Let's Pray**