

## Extravagant Devotion (John 12:1-19)

Have you ever watched someone express love or gratitude and think, “Come on now, this is over the top! Settle down, you’re taking it too far!” Maybe it got awkward, a bit embarrassing for those watching? John 12:1-19 begins with an act of extravagant devotion and ends with shouts of enthusiastic expectation. Both scenes are uncomfortable and controversial, but totally appropriate and exemplary. We’re invited into a devotion to Jesus that will appear awkward to some and wasteful to others but nonetheless is the appropriate response to who he is and what he’s done.

### 1. An act of extravagant devotion (John 12:1-11)

Mary takes a large amount of “expensive” ointment, anoints Jesus’ feet, then wipes his feet with her hair! What would motivate her to behave this way?! Seems so “extreme” and “wasteful”!

It’s a display of great humility, of intense personal devotion.

She knew what the cultural norms were - none of that mattered.

Judas breaks the awkward silence with a question V5. “*This is a waste! What are you doing?!*”

Jesus defends Mary’s actions. “*Leave her alone!*” Her behavior isn’t at all shameful. Her actions are an expression of gratitude and (to everyone’s surprise) preparation for Jesus’ burial (death).

### 2. Shouts of enthusiastic expectation (John 12:12-19)

Palm branches are being waived (symbol of Israel’s national/political hopes). Shouts of “*Hosanna!*” (expression of praise - “*Save us we pray!*”)

Quoting Psalm 118:25-26 = words filled with expectation and longing.

The crowds have political and nationalistic hopes. Jesus *is* the king but his kingdom is bigger than their nationalistic dreams and his deliverance will come in a way never expect.

V15 = Zechariah 9:9. Jesus, the humble shepherd-king has come to take his rightful place.

### 3. Filling your life with the fragrance of extravagant devotion

A fragrance of devotion that “fills the room” wherever we go; that acknowledges Jesus’ kingship over every area of our lives. We’re invited into a devotion to Jesus that will appear awkward to some and wasteful to others but nonetheless is the appropriate response to who he is and what he’s done.

**QUESTIONS** (Pray, read the passage and pick 4-5 questions to discuss. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide.)

1. Have you ever experienced a dinner party or social function that turned awkward because of something you said or did? How did people seated at the table respond?
2. Read John 12:1-11. What’s happening in this scene? What did Mary do and why was it considered awkward by some and wasteful by others? What motivated Mary to behave this way?
3. Have you ever felt so overcome with love and gratitude for someone you were willing to look like a fool, willing to spend a lot of money, willing to give up what others can’t understand? Mary is determined to honor Jesus for who he *is*. She’s so overcome with love and gratitude for Jesus she’s willing to look like a fool. In what ways does this encourage and/or challenge you?
4. Judas broke the awkward silence in V5 with a question that made things even more awkward. What was Judas’ reasoning? What are his real motives? How might we buy into his reasoning?
5. What does Jesus say in defense of Mary that reveals her actions are pure and prophetic?
6. Have you ever been tempted to “hold back,” afraid of what others might think or say? What’s the remedy? How can you move forward in a way that isn’t dictated by what others say or think?
7. Read John 12:12-19. How does this scene emphasize Jesus truly is the promised King? In what ways is Jesus’ kingdom bigger than the crowd’s nationalistic dreams?
8. Are we filling our lives with the fragrance of extravagant devotion to King Jesus? What priorities and convictions are essential for this to happen?

A prayer in response: “*Jesus, I want to honor you with an “everything in me, all that I have” devotion. I owe my entire life to you. I don’t want my devotion to be dictated by what others think. I want my life to be filled the fragrance of extravagant devotion to you. Devotion that will appear awkward to some and wasteful to others but nonetheless is the appropriate response to who you are and what you’ve done.*”