

Anointed by a Woman in Bethany

Key Verse: *“Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.”*
—Matthew 26:13

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 26:6-13

As the treasurer for the group, however, Judas spoke not out of genuine concern for the needy but, because he was a thief, he desired the money for himself.—John 12:4-6

“When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.”—Matt. 26:10-12

Our Key Verse demonstrates that the Master appreciated Mary’s performing this remarkable act of loving devotion, and immortalized it by declaring that it would

NEAR THE END OF HIS earthly ministry, Jesus attended a feast in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper. A woman, thought to be Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus, approached the Master and poured some very expensive perfume on his head.—Matt. 26:6,7

His disciples, especially Judas, protested that her actions were wasteful and that the perfume could have been sold for a considerable sum and the pro-

be retold through the ages as a memorial to her.

In striking contrast to Mary's appreciation of the privilege of anointing the Master, we note the spirit of treachery that permeated Judas' heart. "Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him."—vss. 14-16

An important lesson for believers is to avoid anything akin to the spirit of betrayal that Judas manifested. Instead, the example of Mary in anointing Jesus is one we should seek to emulate.

Although our Lord is no longer in the flesh and we cannot literally anoint him with perfume, if we manifest unto our brethren the fragrance of concern and devotion, such a spirit will surely be pleasing to Christ and to our Heavenly Father.

When we note the weaknesses, trials, and temptations of fellow believers, let us remember that we, too, are subject to the same attacks by the world, the flesh, and the Adversary. In our sympathetic desire to help others be more than overcomers, a reciprocal anointing of one another would imply close contact with loving thoughts of helpfulness.

There are many forms of service which each of us can provide, including sending messages of comfort to others, or visiting the ill or isolated. We should realize that we all have something to give for the edification of the body. We can be faithful in contributing to our Bible studies, praying for others, and being an example of one whose life is undergoing the transformation process. Let us be an example of a believer and demonstrate the attitude of Mary. "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment."—John 12:3 ■