**A Sermon Plan for John 12:1–8: The Extravagant Generosity of Mary**

*12 Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. 2 There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. 3 Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus’ feet, and wiped them*[*a*](https://biblia.com/bible/nrsv/john/12/1-8#footnote1) *with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.*

*4 But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, 5 “Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii*[*b*](https://biblia.com/bible/nrsv/john/12/1-8#footnote2) *and the money given to the poor?” 6 (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.) 7 Jesus said, “Leave her alone. She bought it*[*c*](https://biblia.com/bible/nrsv/john/12/1-8#footnote3) *so that she might keep it for the day of my burial.*

*8 You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.*

**Notes**

The story of Mary of Bethany in John 12:1-8 illustrates extravagant generosity and devotion. After Jesus raised her brother Lazarus, Mary anointed His feet with perfume worth nearly a year’s wages—a profound act of worship and love. Her gift was sacrificial, intentional, and deeply personal, reflecting her recognition of Jesus' worthiness. True generosity, as shown by Mary, is not about monetary value but the heart and spirit behind the act.

Generosity often involves sacrifice, as echoed in King David’s refusal to offer God anything that cost him nothing (2 Samuel 24). Mary’s act cost her financially and socially, breaking cultural norms to express devotion. Her broken alabaster jar symbolizes offering our brokenness to God, who treasures it.

Mary’s story highlights the importance of giving to the church. Like her gift to Jesus, our giving honours Him and advances His kingdom. This generosity supports ministries that nurture faith, spread the gospel, and serve others, reminding us that all we have belongs to God (Psalm 24). We are called to seize opportunities to give, trusting that even small contributions can be multiplied by God.

Mary’s anointing also foreshadowed Jesus’ sacrificial death, reflecting His ultimate generosity in giving His life for humanity. Generosity mirrors Christ’s character and proclaims His gospel. It uplifts the marginalized, as Jesus defended similar acts of love by others. Even overlooked acts of kindness carry eternal significance.

True worship involves complete self-giving—our time, talents, resources, and love. Inspired by Mary’s example, we are called to inspire others in our parishes to live generously. By giving sacrificially, we glorify God and embody His love, becoming a light to others.

As we reflect on Mary’s extravagant gift, let us ask ourselves: Are we holding back, or are we giving in ways that reflect true worship and devotion? Through generous acts, we honour God and build His kingdom, trusting Him to use our offerings for His glory.

**End**