

TELLING THE STORY – 26 TRIUMPHAL ENTRY
John 12:1-11, Matthew 21:1-11, Luke 19:39-40

EXPENSIVE OIL

Place

Bethany (house of dates)

- Mentioned only in the new testament
- Located on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, about two mile east of Jerusalem
- On the main road to Jericho
- In this village Jesus' raised Lazarus from the dead
- Home of Simon the leper and the family He loved, Mary, Martha and Lazarus
- It was in Simon's home that Jesus was anointed by Mary
- Nightly abode of Jesus the week preceding His betrayal

Occasion

One short week after Lazarus was raised from the dead and one week prior to Jesus death burial and resurrection.

People

- Simon host for a relaxing evening banquet
- Lazarus – beloved friend, brother and one of the honored guests, interestingly enough his voice is never heard. This raises the question: did he love silence, did he seek obscurity? Nevertheless, what a powerful testimony He was of God's glory and power.
- Martha – a servants posture
- Mary – sat worshipping at the feet of Jesus, anointing His feet with fragrant oil
- Judas – deceitful, demanding, controlled by Satan and his own prideful self
- The disciples – the twelve
- Jesus – honored guest, interceder, prophet, priest, king, savior, defender

Product

Ointment (Oil) of spikenard – an aromatic herb from northern India, usually imported in alabaster boxes which were only opened on special occasions. Its fragrance would have filled the house. It was worth about one year's wages ... perhaps a lifetime of savings.¹

Principle(s)

What a picture we have here! There is **Lazarus** alive from the dead and in fellowship with Christ. Then we see **Mary** sitting at Jesus' feet, growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. Then, thirdly, we see **Martha serving**, putting on a meal. That is her gift and she is exercising it. These are the three essentials in the church today: new life in Christ, worship and adoration, and service. This home at Bethany should be a picture of your church and mine.²

Does the fragrance of your love and devotion fill our homes?

¹ Bible Knowledge Commentary/Old Testament

² McGee, J. Vernon: *Thru the Bible Commentary: The Gospels (John 11-21)*

A WAITING DONKEY

Place

Bethphage (a place near)– a small hamlet located on the Jericho road between Bethany and Jerusalem approximately 1 mile east of the city near the summit of the Mount of Olives. It was in this city that the disciples retrieved the donkey Jesus would ride into Jerusalem.

Mount of Olives – is a ridge two and a half miles long on the other side of the Kidron Valley east of Jerusalem. The view from the top of this twenty-nine hundred-foot ridge is spectacular one can see the whole city. The Mount of Olives is an important place of God’s final revelation and judgment (See Ezekiel 43:2-9; Zechariah 14:1-19)³

Phrase

The Lord has need of them, means no more than the “master” has need of them ... Its common use is a mere title of respect given by an inferior to a superior, by a servant to a master, by a disciple to a teacher. As a title of “high respect” it was given to Christ. The persons to whom these disciples were sent were probably acquainted with the miracles of Jesus and favorably disposed toward him He had attracted great notice in that region, particularly by raising Lazarus from the dead, and most of the people regarded his as the Messiah.⁴

THE COMING KING

Place

The road from Bethphage to Jerusalem about one mile in length was the parade route.

Observation(s)

- This was Jesus’ last public appearance before His crucifixion
- This was the only time in His ministry that Jesus actually planned and promoted a public demonstration.
- Jesus was in control He was fulfilling the prophecy recorded in Zechariah 9:9 ... it forced the Jewish leaders to act when they saw the spontaneous demonstration of the people.
- This event marked the official presentation of Jesus Christ to the nation of Israel as the rightful Son of David.⁵
- Officials used donkeys for civil, not military processions (e.g. 1 Kings 1:33). Thus this text is not a “triumphal entry” in the sense of a Roman triumphal procession; it is Jerusalem’s reception of a meek and peaceful king.⁶
- It was an ancient custom (see 2 Kings 9:13) for citizens in throw their garments in the road for their monarch to ride over, symbolizing their respect for him and their submission to his authority It was as if to say, "We place ourselves at your feet, even to walk over if necessary."⁷
- A very great crowd – means, many, much, the greatest, very great the most a very great multitude.⁸

³ The Life Application Commentary

⁴ Barnes’ Notes New Testament

⁵ Bible Knowledge Commentary/New Testament

⁶ IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament

⁷ The MacArthur New Testament Commentary

⁸ The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament

- The Lord was now completely surrounded by a mass of humanity, perhaps several hundred thousand people, some of whom were going before Him and some who followed after Him.⁹
- Hosanna is from a Hebrew word meaning “save (us) we pray,” taken from Ps. 118:25. While the crowd did not fully understand the significance of this event, they seemed to be acknowledging that this One is the promised Seed of David who had come to grant them salvation.¹⁰
- But then take notice of these perplexing reactions, from great shouts of acclamation to puzzling questions “Who is this,” to a revealing response “This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.” I could they have missed this?

THE STORY

Questions

1. From the account in John 12:1-11, what would you say Mary considered to be the most important things in life?
2. Keep the events of Matthew 21: 1-11 in mind, as you discuss how much you agree or disagree with this statement: The cheering welcome and praise which Jesus received as He entered Jerusalem was rooted only in the people's misunderstanding of what kind of king He truly was, and this was proven by the way the crowds turned against Him later in the week.
3. If the mind and heart of Judas Iscariot had been genuinely open and submissive to what Jesus said and did in verses 1-8, what lesson do you think he could have learned about the value of money?
4. What actions can we do that, in God's eyes, would be equivalent to what Mary did with the perfume in verse 3? Or is it truly too late?
5. Remember again the command in Col 3:1 —“Since you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.” What have you personally observed about Jesus Christ in this story that would be worthy of setting your heart on?¹¹

⁹ The MacArthur New Testament Commentary

¹⁰ Bible Knowledge Commentary/New Testament

¹¹ The Complete Bible Discussion Guide: New Testament