

Good morning! How do you express your love for Jesus? I have known some unusual people over the years that express their love in unique ways! We once had a friend who lived alone. Each night when he cooked dinner for himself, he set aside a portion to overcook on purpose as a “burnt offering” to God. What do you think of that? You might think it was nutty and unnecessary but I suspect that God probably really liked it. Most of us don’t want to be seen as a fanatic. Oh, we want people to know about Jesus but we want to be seen as “normal”. Many years ago, I heard Bob Mumford say, “You know what a fanatic is? It’s anyone who loves Jesus more than you do.” Ouch! Would anyone ever think you’re a fanatic? This morning, let’s look together at a person in the Bible who one of the disciples thought was a fanatic:

Six days before the Passover celebration began, Jesus arrived in Bethany, the home of Lazarus - the man he had raised from the dead. A dinner was prepared in Jesus’ honor. Martha served, and Lazarus was among those who ate with him. Then Mary took a twelve-ounce jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard, and she anointed Jesus’ feet with it, wiping his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance. But Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would soon betray him, said, “That perfume was worth a year’s wages. It should have been sold and the money given to the poor.” Not that he cared for the poor - he was a thief, and since he was in charge of the disciples’ money, he often stole some for himself. Jesus replied, “Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.”

**John 12:1-8**

Last week, our pastor used this passage in the “Children’s Sermon”. He asked the kids why Mary washed Jesus’ feet with her perfumed hair. One little girl immediately answered, “Because she loved Him.” I think that was really perceptive, don’t you? It wasn’t because Jesus needed it or because washing His feet with her hair was some kind of accepted Jewish ceremony; it was simply because she wanted to express her overwhelming love for Jesus. One of the disciples complained about it. Guess who? Yep, Judas. He said, *“That perfume was worth a year’s wages. It should have been sold and the money given to the poor.”* Well, Judas said it, but

I'll bet some of the others were thinking it. If I had been there, I probably would have thought so, too. After all, despite his obvious character flaw, Judas was right - that money could really have helped poor people. We know that Jesus cares about poor people so you might think that He would agree and say something like, "No, Mary, that's OK. Judas is right. I appreciate your devotion but let's be practical - please just sell this and give the money to the poor; it will be such a blessing to them!" Instead, He said, "Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me." Jesus appreciated her over-the-top expression of her love for Him and expressed His appreciation for the gesture. Do you have an overwhelming love for Jesus? You do? How do *you* express it?