

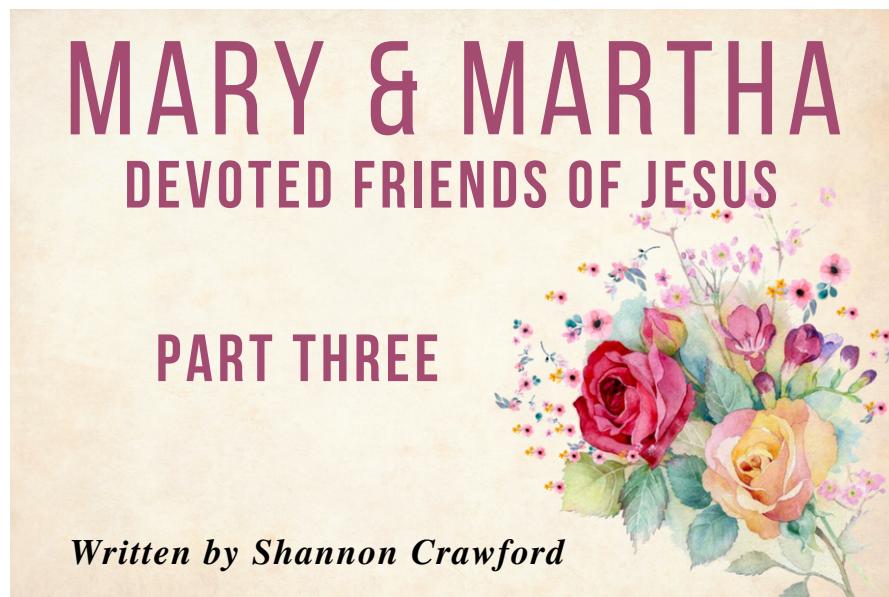
Women & the Bible



A Biblical Guide of Christian Living for Ladies

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The following scripture references are from the New King James version.



*J*esus' ministry on the Earth was getting closer to an end. His mission from His Father was to make a way for people to be able to reconcile back to God. The end of that precious plan took Jesus to the cross where He died for the sins of many. In this lesson, we will conclude our study in **John 12:1-8**. This passage takes place six days before the Passover. Jesus went to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom He had raised from the dead. While there, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus hosted a dinner they had made for Jesus. They wanted to show their appreciation to the Lord.

Martha's appreciation

Lazarus was visiting with Jesus at the table while Martha was serving. This woman was doing what she loved to do, serving those who meant so much to her. This was something she could do her best at because that was her God-given talent.

In this case, Martha was not in a hurry at all. She wasn't even nervous or anxious. Perhaps she thought about what Jesus told her in **Luke 10:41-42**, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." Instead, she was calm and showing her faith and love to the Lord.

Mary's appreciation

Mary chose to show her love and devotion to Jesus by giving Him something very special. She "took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil" (v. 3). Pouring the perfume over Jesus' feet was Mary's way of giving something back to Jesus, as well as worshipping Him.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Spikenard perfume was the fragrant oil from an Indian plant grown near the Himalayas. The "pound" (or "pint") may have been as much as 12 ounces; the average perfume container contained not more than an ounce. The amount Mary poured on Jesus' feet would have cost almost a year's wages. It was customary to anoint the head of an important guest with small amounts of oil or perfume, but water was normally provided to wash feet.

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Jesus defends Mary.

Jesus' disciples were witnessing Mary's behavior. One of them was Judas Iscariot. This Judas was the apostle that would betray Jesus. He criticized Mary for what she did. He says in verse five, "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" Unfortunately, he didn't really care for the poor. He said that because all he could think about was money. Judas' job was to manage all the disciples' money and he often stole from their funds for his own use.

Mary was only trying to show Jesus her love and understanding. Perhaps Judas' remarks were offensive to Mary. But Jesus praised her for her gift in verses seven and eight.

"Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

Jesus had tried to tell His disciples what was coming of His death, but they didn't ever really understand. Mary gave the best she had. Wherever the gospel of Jesus is preached, the story of Mary will be told (**Matthew 26:13**).

Today's application

There are many lessons we can learn from Mary and Martha. For example, physical things are not what are most important. From the moment we wake up every day, we have choices to make. No matter how many things we have to do, or how busy we are, let us always keep spiritual things in mind—especially prayer and studying God's Word daily. These are ways we can "sit at Jesus' feet" and choose "the best part."

Throughout our study, we read how much Jesus loved Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. How wonderful it is to know that He loves us, too. We can give our best to the Lord just like Mary and Martha did. Can you think of a way to show your love and appreciation to the Lord? If we want to have part with Jesus and in the salvation that He offers, we must develop in ourselves a servant's heart (**Philippians 2:3-7**). It's not easy to be a servant, but Jesus challenges each of us to take up our cross and follow Him. Remember, our reward will outweigh all our trials this side of heaven.

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