

Kingdom Metrics: The Worship Metric

In John 12:1–8, Mary moves from learning at Jesus’ feet to surrendering her future at His feet. Her act of pouring out “a pint of pure nard... worth a year’s wages” becomes a picture of worship that is costly. In contrast, Judas masks greed with religious language. God weighs the heart, not words or outward displays. This lesson invites us to examine what Jesus is worth to us—and whether or not our worship communicates His true value, marking our lives with a lasting fragrance. Let’s see what God’s Word has to say!

Read John 12:1-8 along with the additional verses, then answer the questions.

12 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 Here a dinner was given in Jesus’ honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. 3 Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, a very expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus’ feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. 4 But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, 5 “Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year’s wages.” 6 He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it. 7 “Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. “It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. 8 You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.”

Mark 14:3-9 (cf. Matthew 26:6-13)

3 While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. 4 Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? 5 It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly. 6 “Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. 7 The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. 8 She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. 9 Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

Additional Verses

- Mark 12:43,44 – Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”
- 1 Samuel 15:22 – But Samuel replied: “Does the Lord delight in offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice.

- Proverbs 21:2,3 – A person may think their own ways are right, but the Lord weighs the heart. To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.
- 2 Samuel 24:24 – King David replied, “No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God offerings that cost me nothing.”
- Matthew 26:15 – Judas asked, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver him (Jesus) over to you?” So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver.

Questions for Reflection

1. What speaks to you the most? What stands out? What would you say is a key verse?
2. Where do you see yourself in this scene—Martha serving, Lazarus reclining, Mary worshiping, or Judas objecting? How does knowing Jesus was days from the cross shape the meaning of this narrative? Who responded out of love or out of fear?
3. The accounts relate that the perfume was “very expensive” and “worth a year’s wages.” What does that level of sacrifice communicate? Can you think of an example of what that might look like today? How do worldly metrics differ from Kingdom metrics when evaluating worship? How can we flip the world’s metric upside down?
4. Can we sound spiritual without any real substance behind it? Explain. How does this relate to God weighing the heart? What’s the difference between Judas and Mary?
5. What does your response to Jesus reveal about what you truly value? How does what you value shape your choices and reveal your allegiance? How does your worship declare Jesus’ worth? What would it look like to pour out your “alabaster jar” in this season of life? How can you “carry the fragrance of Christ” in your daily life?
6. Identify one major takeaway from this lesson. What insight did you gain? Summarize it in one or two sentences.

Summary: Mary’s worship filled the house with the fragrance of the perfume. It clung to her hair, marking her act of devotion long into Christ’s crucifixion. True worship leaves a lingering aroma—choices that last, sacrifices that matter, and a life that reveals Jesus’ worth. While Judas’ betrayal left the stench of hypocrisy, Mary’s devotion endures wherever the Gospel is preached.

“Father, I come to You with a heart that wants to value Jesus the way Mary did—with love that costs something and devotion that isn’t afraid to be seen. Help me lay down anything that competes for my affection and pour out my life and my future at Your feet in worship. Let the fragrance of my obedience show honor to You in everything I do. Amen!”

Bible Refs: [John 12:1-8](#); [Matthew 26:6-13](#); [Mark 14:3-9](#); [Hebrews 9:11-12](#); [1 Samuel 15:22](#); [Proverbs 21:2-3](#); [Micah 6:6-8](#); [2 Samuel 24:24](#); [Mark 12:41-44](#); [Matthew 26:15](#); [Exodus 21:32](#); [Zechariah 11:12-13](#); [Matthew 27:3-10](#) [**SPANISH**]