

Extraordinary Love

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[0 : 0 0] Good morning. So, this morning we are reading from Matthew chapter 26 and verse 1 to 29. So, starting verse 1, we read.

When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.

Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the place of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him.

But they said, Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people. Now, when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table.

And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, Why this waste? For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.

[1 : 1 2] But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me.

In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.

Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?

And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment, he sought the opportunity to betray him. Now, on the first day of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Where will you have us prepare for you to eat the Passover?

He said, Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, The teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.

[2 : 2 6] And the disciples did, as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover. When it was evening, he reclined at the table with the twelve.

And as they were eating, he said, Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me. And they were sorrowful, and began to say to him, one after another, Is it I, Lord?

He answered, He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him.

But woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It will have been better for that man if he had not been born. Judas, who would betray him, answered, Is it I, Rabbi?

He said to him, You have said so. Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it, broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat.

[3 : 33] This is my body. And he took a cup, and he had given thanks. He gave it to them, saying, Drink of it, all of you. For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

I tell you, I will not drink again of these fruits of the vine until that day when I drink it with you in my Father's kingdom. This is the word of God.

Thank you, Soda and Florence. Let's pray together as we come before God's word. Father God, thank you for your word that gives life.

We think of Psalm 19, speaks about how your word enlightens our eyes, gives life to the soul. It's sweeter than honey and great riches. God, as we come to your word this morning, we pray that you will speak to us.

We pray that you will feed our souls, that you will encourage us. God, we pray that through your word, you will draw us to yourself. And Lord, help us to be men and women. Help us to be a church in the great city of Hong Kong that is like Mary, that worships you wholeheartedly with everything that we have.

[4 : 43] We pray this in your great and your gracious name. Amen. On August the 30th, 1993, long before half of you were born, an American musician and singer-songwriter by the name of Michael Lee Adde, he had a stage name called Meat Loaf.

I don't know if any of you remember him, which is a terrible stage name, by the way. But he released this song, his one and only hit single. Anyone know what it was? Bernard knows what it is.

I would do anything for love, but I would not do that. Anybody know that song? I would do anything for love, but I would not do that. And Michael Adde says, over the last 30 years, he actually passed away last year, over the last 30 years, the number one question he's been asked in almost every interview he's ever given, what is the that?

What is the thing that you would not be willing to do? Friends, let me ask you, what would you be willing to do for love? What would you not be willing to do?

What is your limit, the one thing that you would not do, even for the one that you love? Well, this morning, we are looking at this passage of Scripture, and it's all about love.

[6 : 04] And it's about two people, and their extraordinary thing that they will do for the one that they love. This passage is broken up into two sections.

The first one, 1 to 16, and the second one, 17 to 29. And so let's look at it together. And so the first one is the extraordinary love of an unknown worshiper.

The extraordinary love of an unknown worshiper. Now, this section is full of contrasts, and Matthew wants us to see the various contrasts that are happening here.

We have the high priest, and the leaders, and the religious leaders on the one hand, and we have an unnamed woman on the other hand.

We have all the social elites, the who's who of Jerusalem, and this social outcast who meets in the house of another social outcast, the leper. We have the palace of Caiaphas and the house of Simon the leper.

[7 : 04] We have plotting and scheming done in secret, and we have the open worship and devotion of this lady. And Matthew's trying to show us something by contrasting the actions and the thinking and the behavior of this woman, who he doesn't name, and all the people that are around her.

And on either side of the story of this lady who brings this expensive perfume, pours it out in Jesus, on either side of her are these religious people, Caiaphas, the elders, the leaders, and Judas Iscariot, one of the disciples, people who should have known who Jesus was, people who should have been full of worship and devotion and adoration, and yet somehow they blinded to who Jesus is.

They cannot see him. And so they don't worship him. And yet in the middle of that, we see this lady, unnamed, unknown in many ways, and yet she brings this extravagant worship to Jesus.

And so let's look at, let's look at what she does. Let's look at verse 6 onwards with me. Matthew doesn't name her, but we actually know from John's Gospel she is Mary, who is the sister of Martha and Lazarus, that family that Jesus loved so well.

And she comes to Jesus, this is a few days before his death and his crucifixion, she comes to Jesus with an alabaster flask full of very, very expensive perfume.

[8 : 30] perfume. We know it is about a year's wages for a kind of entry-level job. Think 200,000 Hong Kong, right? Perfume, 200,000. And she comes to Jesus and one of the other Gospels tells us that she breaks the jar open, she doesn't just uncork it and gently put the flask back.

The flask itself was extremely precious, not the kind of thing that you'd find in an ordinary person's home. Some commentators said it's the kind of thing that would be passed down as a family heirloom.

So it's an extremely precious flask. She breaks it open and she pours the whole lot on top of Jesus in this act of worship and devotion. Now for us, that may seem like a very strange thing to do, right?

Someone comes as a guest at a dinner party and you bring your most expensive perfume and pour it on top of them. But in the first century, this was a common way of showing hospitality, showing care to your guests.

When any guests came to your house, you would wash their feet with water, you would pour oil on their head as a way of showing care and hospitality to them. And so in some ways, this is a usual act, but what's unusual is the extent of it, how lavish and extraordinary she is.

[9 : 43] She holds nothing back. Taking this family heirloom kind of vase, this extremely expensive perfume, and in one instant pours it all out on Jesus.

The point here is that here we have this unnamed woman in Matthew's gospel list, someone of low social standing. She's not in the temple, she's not in the palace, she's in the house of a leper, another social outcast, and yet she so loves and so devotes herself to Jesus, she holds nothing back from him.

Nothing is too valuable, too precious, two off limits in her worship and her devotion to Jesus. And yet contrast that just to the person who comes after us.

Look at verse 14, right? Then one of the twelve, in other words, one of the disciples, those who have been with Jesus for three years following him, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priest and said, what will you give me if I deliver him over to you?

And they paid him thirty silver coins. Judas has just seen this woman pouring out a year's wages of extravagant love and worship.

[10 : 57] And what does he do? He makes plans to go to the leaders and he sells Jesus for four months' wages, just a fraction of the price. The price of a common slave.

Judas comes in and sells Jesus to them. While Mary is lavishly loving Jesus, the son of glory, Judas is making plans to enrich his own pockets and line his own pockets.

And Matthew's point is this. Who is Jesus and what is he worth? Matthew's point is he wants us to see who is Jesus to us. How do we view Jesus?

Because here are a whole lot of people, some very religious people, some very people that have followed Jesus and they've followed all the rules and yet they don't see him for who he's worth. In fact, actually, when they see Jesus, they see something else.

They see, how can I enrich myself? And here is a simple lady. She doesn't have all the bells and whistles, maybe not very educated, certainly not social elite, certainly not in the inner circle, and yet she sees Jesus for who he is.

[12 : 02] She sees him for all that he's worth. And the answer that Matthew wants us to see is Jesus Christ is worth the most extravagant worship and the most costly love.

And that it's not a waste to pour out your life, even the things that are most precious and valuable to us, it's not a waste to pour that out in the service of Christ, our King.

At the church office, we've been trying to rebuild our website recently because we closed down the app and so we're trying to make our website mobile friendly. And so Jeremy and I have been looking at the website a bit recently and this week I looked at our website and do you know what the front page of our website says?

Anybody know? The opening line says something like this, loving God deeply, delighting in the gospel lavishly. And then look at the first line there, we as a church family believe that God is magnificent, deserving of wholehearted devotion.

Well, one of the things that I've learned is never believe what any organization writes on their website, right? I mean, any organization, whether it's Catholic Pacific or a church or HSBC, they're going to tell you what they want you to think, right?

[13 : 16] Or they're going to tell you what they aspire to be like, but what they aspire to be like and what's in reality may be two very different things. I wasn't sure whether to laugh or smile or cry when I saw this this week and I was preparing for this sermon, right?

Loving God deeply, loving God extravagantly, loving God lavishly. Is that true of us? Is that true of me? Here we see what that means.

What does it mean to love God deeply? Well, Mary shows us. Matthew wants us to see that Jesus Christ is worthy of the most lavish and deep devotion because all around Jesus are these religious people, right?

People who should have seen what Jesus was worth and yet they miss it completely. Look at the first one. Look at verse 3 and 4 with me. It says, verse 3, Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, Caiaphas, plotting together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him.

Now, if you're familiar with the Gospels, it's easy to read over that quickly, but just slow down and think about it. Who was the high priest? The high priest is the most important person in the nation of Israel.

[14 : 33] He's the person that oversees all worship, all the temple, all the sacrifices. He's the one person that oversees all other priests. Everything that happens in the temple compound is his responsibility.

And so, all the priests who day in and day out are offering worship and praise and incense and praise to God, he oversees all of it. He's the one person who represents the nation of Israel as he goes into the most holy place, the inner part of the sanctuary, once a year as Israel's representative to encounter the presence of God.

He's the one person that oversees all the sacrifices. And what weekend is coming up? Passover, when almost a million people are going to flood into Jerusalem and offer sacrifices of lambs in remembrance of Passover.

And Caiaphas is the one person who should oversee all of it. And yet, what's on his mind this weekend? Not worship, not sacrifice, but murder.

They're plotting and they're scheming how to secretly arrest Jesus and kill him because of the threat to their own political ambitions. You know, Caiaphas was quite a shrewd guy.

[15 : 50] At the time of the first century, the Romans had said that the high priest could only be in office for one year at a time, one year term, and then he had to hand over. Caiaphas made a deal with the Romans and ended up in office for 18 years as he lined his own pockets and enriched himself.

And then, in John's gospel, he issues these amazing words. He says to a couple of people, don't you understand it's better for us that one man, Jesus, should die for all the people rather than the whole nation should perish.

Now, Caiaphas is not talking about Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross for the sins of the world. What he's talking about is Jesus is causing an uproar and the Romans are going to get tired of us and they are going to come and stamp out our authority and take control.

Better for us to kill Jesus than we lose our favored status with the Romans. So who's Caiaphas thinking about here? He's thinking about himself, right? Here before him is the King of Glory, Jesus Christ, the eternal God and all he's thinking about is his pockets.

Or think about Judas, right? What's going on with him? He has somebody who knows how to say the right things, do the right things, act the part and yet there's a whole other side to his life where nobody's watching that's going on and he thinks that nobody knows what's going on.

[17 : 12] He's double-sided except Jesus, of course, knows what's going on. Jesus says to him, one of you will betray me and Judas says, not I, Lord, right?

And Jesus just quietly nods and says, yes, it's as you've said. And so even though he's already gone and negotiated the price for Jesus' head, here he is at the Passover meal taking the bread and the cup and celebrating the grace of God to God's people and yet all the while there's a whole other double life that's going on behind the scenes, right?

And what about the disciples? They possibly have the best intentions, they see Mary's extravagant worship and immediately they think of all the good things that could have been done and so they're annoyed, they're indignant, they say, what a waste, all this, we could have done all sorts of good ministry, we could have had our name in light, we could have served the poor, we could have expanded our ministry and yet even their good intentions doesn't stop them from Jesus' rebuke.

Verse 10, why do you trouble the woman? She has not wasted the money, she's done something beautiful. Verse 11, you will always have the poor with you but you will not always have me. Jesus is saying here that to love Jesus above all with all of our affections, all of our worth, all of our wealth, with everything we have is never a waste.

The extraordinary love of an unnamed woman. Friends, who is Jesus Christ and what is he worth to us this morning? Maybe put it another way, the question Matthew is asking us is, what's more important to us than Jesus Christ this morning?

[18 : 52] What holds us back from giving our entirety to him? Now for some of us, maybe it's not finances and wealth in her situation that was it but maybe for some of us it's our reputation, right?

We think, okay money, I can dispose of that but what people think of me, what my family thinks of me, what my colleagues will think of me. Friends, this woman must have known and seen and heard the grumblings of people going on around her and yet she comes and issues her all.

For some of us, our reputation is what holds us back. Maybe for some of us it's a relationship, right? It's someone you we're dating, we think I'll give anything for Jesus as long as he doesn't touch that relationship.

That is something I cannot give up. Friends, maybe for some of us it's a career, it's a job, you've dedicated years to studying, your parents have paid for your education, you feel like I could never walk away from this career that I've dedicated myself to.

But maybe Jesus is asking you to take a bold step of faith and to contemplate doing something extravagant for him. Maybe for some of us it's the cost of bearing of forgiving somebody that's hurt us.

[20 : 05] You know, Jesus says, as I've forgiven you, so you should forgive one another. It may be you feel like that's the one thing that I hold on to and it's too much to let go of the right that I feel aggrieved by someone else's hurt.

Friends, what would we be willing to give up for Jesus? Matthew shows us here that Jesus Christ is worthy of extraordinary love, extraordinary devotion, such lavish pouring out of our lives in worship for Jesus.

Jesus. Now, the question, that's the first part. Now, the question is this, how do we love Jesus like this? I mean, how do we become the kind of people, let me put it this way, I long for myself and I long for us as a church to love Jesus like this.

We've said it many times before, we don't need to be a famous church, we don't need to be a big church, we don't need to be the talk of the town, but I long for us to be a church that worships and loves Jesus like this.

But the question is, how do we become like that? And we were talking before the service, you know, us as leaders, we can really try our best to manipulate you. We can beat you over the back, proverbially, say, you must be better, you must be more devoted, don't you know how amazing Jesus is?

[21 : 20] You don't worship Him like that, you terrible Christians, okay, we can shout at you. We can manipulate you and say, well, you'll get all these rewards in heaven if you really love Him like that.

You know, we can do all sorts of things. But actually, that doesn't work, right? The human heart doesn't respond to manipulation, doesn't respond to pressure, doesn't respond to being scolded.

So how do we as a church become the kind of church that loves Jesus like this from the heart, not just out of pressure or manipulation? What did Mary know, what did Mary see that caused her to give not just this expensive perfume, but actually her whole self?

I think part of the clue is found in verse 12 and 13. Look at it with me. Look at verse 12. Jesus says, in pouring out this perfume on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial.

Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her. somehow Mary saw or connected or understood who Jesus was and what he had come to do.

[22 : 35] I don't think Mary understood the full gospel. I don't think she understood it all, but somehow the eyes of her heart had been opened to see that Jesus Christ was not just a good man, not just a great teacher.

Somehow she had come to see that he had to die and that he would rise again and that the good news of the gospel that the prophets had spoken about for hundreds of years was somehow connected with him.

Remember Mary and Martha and Lazarus were some of Jesus' closest friends. In John 11 when Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, just before that he has a conversation with Martha, Mary's sister, and he says to her, I am the resurrection and the life.

Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. He says, do you believe these things? And she says, yes Lord, I believe that you are the Christ the Son of God who is coming into the world.

So Mary's sister Martha says, you are the Christ, the anointed one, the long-awaited Messiah King who has come into the world to save us. And I think Mary had heard of the many times that Jesus says, the Son of Man is going to Jerusalem, will be killed and will rise on the third day.

[23 : 41] And somewhere along the line she's connected the dots and understood this is the Messiah King. And so she knew about the extraordinary love of an unlikely Savior. And that's our second point today.

The extraordinary love of an unnamed woman is fueled and motivated by the extraordinary love of an unlikely Savior and deliverer. Because look at what happens in verse 17 and onwards.

This section is all about the Passover. Look at how many times Matthew writes the word Passover in the first three verses. He says, the disciples came to Jesus saying, where will you have us prepare the Passover?

Jesus says, go into the city and tell the man, I want to prepare the Passover at your house. So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and they prepared the Passover. This entire section is all about the Passover.

But what was the Passover? Well, the Passover was this feast, this celebration in Israel. It's the most important celebration in the history of Israel.

[24 : 45] It's like Chinese New Year and Christmas and Easter all rolled into one. Where literally almost every family in the whole of Israel will descend on Jerusalem, a couple of million people, and they will celebrate God's deliverance from Egypt, how God saved and delivered His people by the blood of the Lamb.

And why is it called the Passover? Because when God's people were slaves in Egypt, one-off thousand years before Jesus came, how did God deliver them?

Well, God brings His judgment on the nation of Israel and on Pharaoh because of His wickedness. And so, all of Egypt, the firstborn son of every family is going to die.

God had warned them and spoken to them and called them to repent and to turn and to listen to Him. They won't have it and so God says, fine, have things your way, but there's a price. And the consequences for your wickedness and rebellion is that the firstborn son of every family is going to die except for those who will trust in God.

And what does it look like to trust them? They are to take a lamb and to sacrifice it and to take the blood and to put the blood in a bowl and they're to stand at the doorway of their house and they're to paint the door frames of their house in the shape of a cross with the blood of the lamb.

[26 : 11] And that night as judgment comes over Israel, every house that has the blood of the lamb painted the shape of the cross in the door frames of their house will be passed over and they will be saved.

And so those families are delivered and saved. And so the next day, Pharaoh says, okay, fine, get out of Egypt. And a couple of hundred of thousand, maybe million people leave Egypt, are saved and delivered, set free from an enemy that they could not save themselves from.

They are saved by the blood of the lamb as judgment passes over them because they trusted in God. And so every year on the second month of the year, all of Israel comes to Jerusalem, they come to the temple, they sacrifice lambs and they celebrate the Passover, the time when God saved them by grace alone from an enemy that they could not save themselves from.

And if you celebrated the Cedar meal with us over the last few years at Easter, you'll remember some of the elements, right? All these amazing elements at the Passover meal. They eat the bitter herbs to remember the bitterness of their time in Egypt.

They drink salt water to remember the tears that they cried as they cried out to God for deliverance. They eat this mixture of nuts and herbs and fruit, kind of like a mixture of the clay that they had to make these clay bricks.

[27 : 37] And they drink this cup of wine and every cup of wine they proclaim the blessing from Exodus chapter 6, right? Except this year, in Matthew 26, something's going to be different.

The Passover's going to be different. Jesus turns this 2,000 year old tradition on its head because this year Jesus rewrites the script. And so as Jesus is with his disciples in Jerusalem about to celebrate the Passover, the time when God saved his people from judgment, Jesus rewrites the script.

And rather than picking up the unleavened bread and breaking in various pieces and saying, Blessed art thou, Lord God of heaven, creator of all things, for from you come the bread of the earth, Jesus takes the unleavened bread and he breaks it and he says, Take.

Eat this. This is my body that is broken for you for your deliverance. And rather than taking a cup of wine and saying, Blessed are you, Lord God of heaven, creator of the earth, from you come the fruit of the vine, Jesus takes the wine, the third cup, and he says, Take and drink this.

This is my blood that is going to be poured out for you for your deliverance. Friends, you see what Jesus is saying here? The Passover and the Exodus is what constituted the people of God.

[28 : 54] It's what made them the people of God. The people of God and the nation of Israel were saved by God's grace. That's what made them who they were. And Jesus now comes and he says, I am the true lamb of God that is going to be sacrificed.

I am going to be sacrificed to save God's people that all those who trust in me will be saved from judgment to come. Not just from Pharaoh, not just from Egypt, but from hell, from judgment, for all eternity.

Jesus is instituting a new covenant the covenant that Moses and Jeremiah and Ezekiel spoke about. A covenant where all those who come to him and trust in him will be saved from their sins, past, present, and future, forever.

Forgiveness for all people. Where those who were once rebels will be transformed into his family, to sons and daughters. Jesus comes and he says that I will save God's people by my extraordinary love.

The extraordinary love of an unlikely savior. And throughout this passage, Jesus is entirely in control of everything. Look at verse 2. I don't know if you remember. Verse 2 says, Jesus says, after two days, the Passover is coming, the Son of Man will be delivered up and crucified.

[30 : 06] The whole of Matthew's gospel has been moving in this climax. And now, over this passage lies the shadow of Calvary. And yet, Jesus is unflinching. He's not one bit concerned.

Jesus knows what Judas is going to do. He knows what the high priest is talking about. He knows every single bit of detail. He's unflinching. Because Jesus is orchestrating everything towards the cross.

Because this is why he came. To die on the cross for us. Look at verse 5. It says, I love this. It says, Caiaphas says, let's kill Jesus, but not during the Passover, unless there be an uproar amongst the people.

So, Caiaphas says, listen, let's wait for the Passover to be over and then you'll kill Jesus. Except it didn't work out how Caiaphas wanted, right? When did Jesus die? Well, John's Gospel tells us that it seems that at the very moment that thousands of lambs are being sacrificed in the temple, up on the hill behind the temple is the true Lamb of God breathing his very last at that very moment.

See, Caiaphas didn't want Jesus to die of Passover, but Jesus is orchestrating the whole thing because he's the true Lamb of God. Friends, we started off saying that this passage is about the extraordinary love of two people.

[31 : 24] It's about Mary's extraordinary love for the Messiah that she's come to love, Jesus Christ. But even more than that, it's about Jesus' extraordinary love for people like you and I.

That he would go to the cross and take on our sin and our shame and our brokenness and our rebellion and our guilt. Jesus would go to the cross for sinners like you and I.

that we can know him and love him and be included in his family. That now we really can worship him and adore him as he deserves. In John chapter 11, we spoke about it earlier, when Jesus hears that Lazarus is ill, John tells us, he says, now Jesus loved Martha and her sister Mary and Lazarus.

Jesus loved this family. We saw earlier Mary's love for Jesus radical and extravagant, deep and personal. But friends, that's nothing compared to Jesus' radical love for the world for sinners like us.

Radical and extravagant, deep and deeply personal. That Jesus, the Son of God, would suffer for you and I. And friends, you know how we, like Mary, can give up everything and worship him?

[32 : 35] It's only by knowing his love for us. It's the extravagant love of Jesus that fuels our love for him. And the point here is only as we see Christ's love for us can we actually in any way love him in return.

In 2017, there was a British parliamentarian, politician called Tim Farron. He was the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, which is the third biggest party.

They're not the Labour or the Conservatives. But in 2017, they were kind of like the kingpins. It was quite a powerful position as the Labour and Conservatives were fighting for power.

And Tim Farron was the leader of the party. And one day, his party makes some decisions that go against his convictions as a follower of Jesus.

And so he resigns as the party leader. And it was a remarkable decision because he's in his 40s, because he's at the high point of his career. He's kind of the top of his career. He couldn't progress any further.

[33 : 41] And out of nowhere, he resigns as the leader of the party. And he almost demotes himself to some, you know, backbencher, ordinary parliamentarian. And someone comes to him and says, why would you do that?

I mean, you've got, you're at the top of your career. Why would you walk away from it now? And Tim Farron quoted the words from the old hymn when I surveyed the wondrous cross. He says, were the whole realm of nature mine.

They were an offering far too small. Love so amazing, so divine, demands my life, my soul, my all. See, friends, at Watermark, we talk about Jesus and the gospel and his grace a lot.

And the grace of God is not meant to make us lazy. We're not meant to say, oh, Jesus died on the cross, I can do whatever I want. I can sin however I want because Jesus covered it all, right? Who cares? No, no, friends, the love of Christ is so amazing, so divine, so extravagant.

It's meant to cause a fireball of explosion in our hearts that says, Jesus, have my life, my soul, my life, my all. Friends, it's entirely impossible to be very religious and yet end up like Judas Iscariot.

[34 : 52] It's entirely possible to be very religious and end up like Caiaphas. How are we going to be those that are so in love, so enamored with Jesus Christ that we pour out our all with him? Ironically, it's not by looking at Mary and saying, I want to be more like her.

It's not by looking at Mary and saying, what are the three lessons we can learn from her life? It's actually forgetting about Mary altogether. It's forgetting about ourselves altogether. It's by looking at Jesus and seeing what he did on the cross for us.

And as we see the extraordinary love of Christ for sinners like us, it will melt our hearts to love him in return. This is how we love like Mary. Not by looking at her, but by looking at Jesus.

Friends, is there anything that you won't do for love? Anything that's too far, too hard to let go of? Come to Jesus and let his extraordinary love melt your heart that you too can worship him as he deserves.

Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, we must confess that as we look at this passage, we don't love you anything like what you deserve.

[36 : 05] Father, I must confess that my heart is probably more closer to that of Caiaphas, thinking about my own kingdom, my own will, my own life, probably closer to Judas Iscariot, thinking about how I can enrich myself in really loving you wholeheartedly.

Jesus, this morning we confess we need your grace, not only to save us from our sins, but to change our hearts. Jesus, we need your extravagant love to come and melt our hearts to love you in return.

And so Christ, I pray, won't you come and do that amongst us. Lord Jesus, as we come to the communion table now and we take the elements, I pray, God, open the eyes of our hearts to see our depravity and our sin, to see our hopeless condition, to see how utterly lost we were without you, and to see your great mercy and your great love for us.

God, may we see in these elements this morning, more than just a wafer and some juice, but Jesus, the Son of glory and His amazing love for us. And God, come and change us.