



Anointing at Bethany: Devotion, Worship, and Heart Preparation



Explore Jesus' anointing at Bethany through devotion and worship as you prepare your heart to love and serve Him fully.

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Introduction

The story of the Anointing at Bethany stands as a powerful invitation to each believer's heart to engage deeply in worship, devotion, and preparation for Jesus. When Mary anointed Jesus with costly perfume, she demonstrated an extravagant love and surrender that challenges us to examine the condition of our own hearts. This story found in *John 12:1–8* is not just about a memorable act of kindness, but about how we honor Christ with our lives.

The devotion Mary showed reveals a heart fully attentive to Jesus. In a world that often values practicality over praise, her act reminds us that worship is more than routine ritual—it is an expression of love and adoration springing from deep affection and reverence. Through her example, we learn the value of preparing our hearts, setting aside distractions and grievances, to truly encounter Jesus.

Worship in this scene is both personal and prophetic. Mary's act anticipates Jesus' impending sacrifice and burial, helping us glimpse the connection between worship and surrender to God's redemptive plan. This passage encourages us to worship with intentionality, recognizing that every act of devotion can be a fragrant offering to God.

This 7-day study invites you to walk through this story with fresh eyes. We will discover how to develop a heart that worships without reserve, how to prepare ourselves spiritually for Christ's work in our lives, and how devotion transforms us into servants willing to follow Jesus daily. May this journey



inspire your worship to be a fragrant and pleasing gift, drawing you ever closer to the Savior's loving presence. 🙏





Day 1: Setting the Scene: Bethany and Jesus's Arrival



Day 1: 🌿 Setting the Scene: Bethany and Jesus's Arrival

Your Verse

John 12:1 - "Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead."

Supporting Scriptures

- *Luke 10:38 - "As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him."*
- *John 11:35 - "Jesus wept."*



Day 1: 🌿 Setting the Scene: Bethany and Jesus's Arrival

Devotional: Preparing Your Heart for Jesus's Presence

Bethany was not just a village but a place of intimacy and transformation. Jesus' arrival here shortly before the Passover highlights the importance of timing and setting in God's unfolding plan. Lazarus's resurrection had already set the stage, demonstrating Jesus' power over death and foreshadowing His own imminent sacrifice.

Jesus choosing to be in Bethany with close friends reminds us that relationships and community are vital in our spiritual walk. It prepares us to understand the deep love and personal connection Jesus desires with each of us. When Jesus arrives, He brings new life and comforts broken hearts. As we begin this study, consider: How do you prepare your heart when Jesus comes near? Is there openness or resistance?

Take a moment to visualize this setting—the quiet village, the loving friend circle, and the anticipation building around Jesus' mission. It encourages us to cultivate spaces in our lives where Jesus can be welcomed and honored.



Day 1: 🌿 Setting the Scene: Bethany and Jesus's Arrival

Reflect and Apply

1. What does Bethany represent in your life—a place of rest, transformation, or challenge?

2. How do you prepare your heart to receive Jesus daily?

3. In what ways do relationships influence your faith journey?



Day 1: 🌿 Setting the Scene: Bethany and Jesus's Arrival

Journaling Prompts

1. Describe a moment when Jesus arrived unexpectedly in your life.

2. Write about the people who have been your spiritual 'Bethany'.

3. List ways you can create a welcoming space for Jesus in your daily routine.



Day 1: 🌿 Setting the Scene: Bethany and Jesus's Arrival

Prayer for Today

Lord Jesus, thank You for coming close to us like You did in Bethany. Help me to create a welcoming heart and life that invites Your presence. Teach me to prepare for Your arrival with expectancy and faith. May I nurture relationships that deepen my love for You and others. Guide me to be ready each day to receive Your grace and to serve You with joy. Amen. 🙏 🌿 ❤️





Day 2: 💧 Mary's Devotion: Anointing with Love



Day 2: 💧 Mary's Devotion: Anointing with Love

Your Verse

John 12:3 - "Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair."

Supporting Scriptures

- *Luke 7:38 - "She wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them."*
- *Psalms 45:7 - "You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy."*



Day 2: 💧 Mary's Devotion: Anointing with Love

Devotional: Extravagant Worship in Humble Surrender

Mary's act of anointing Jesus' feet with costly perfume is a vivid picture of extravagant devotion. In a culture where washing feet was a servant's task, Mary's willingness to humbly anoint and wipe Jesus' feet with her hair speaks of surrender and love beyond social convention or cost. This act teaches us that true worship often involves humility and costly giving.

Her devotion invites us to ask: What are we willing to offer Jesus—our resources, time, reputation, or heart? Are we prepared to worship Him in ways that might be misunderstood or undervalued by others? Mary's focus was entirely on honoring Jesus, without concern for human opinions.

Her example helps us see worship as a deeply personal expression of gratitude and love that flows naturally from a heart touched by Jesus' presence. It encourages us to become people who worship not out of obligation, but from genuine, passionate devotion.



Day 2: 💧 Mary's Devotion: Anointing with Love


Reflect and Apply

1. What might be the most costly expression of worship you can offer Jesus?

2. How do you respond when your acts of worship are misunderstood or criticized?

3. In what ways can humility deepen your relationship with Christ?



Day 2:  Mary's Devotion: Anointing with Love

Journaling Prompts

1. Write about a time you sacrificed something valuable for your faith.

2. Reflect on how humility shapes your prayers and worship.

3. List tangible ways to show devotion to Jesus this week.



Day 2: 💧 Mary's Devotion: Anointing with Love

Prayer for Today

Jesus, help me to worship You with a heart like Mary's—full of love, humility, and generosity. Teach me to give freely what I treasure without fearing others' opinions. May my devotion be pleasing to You, fragrant like the costly perfume she poured out. Transform my worship into a true reflection of my love for You. Amen. 💧 🙏 🌹





Day 3: 🔥 Worship as Preparing the Heart



Day 3: 🔥 Worship as Preparing the Heart

Your Verse

John 12:7 - "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she save this perfume for the day of my burial."

Supporting Scriptures

- *Romans 12:1 - "...offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship."*
- *Psalms 95:6 - "Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker."*



Day 3: 🔥 Worship as Preparing the Heart

Devotional: Worship: Aligning Your Heart with God's Purpose

Jesus highlights Mary's act as preparation for what is to come—His burial and sacrifice. Worship, then, is not just about praising God in the moment but it prepares and aligns our hearts with God's redemptive purpose. It molds us into vessels fit for His work and presence.

Offering ourselves in worship is a form of spiritual preparation. It means surrendering our plans, aligning with God's will, and embracing the difficult seasons, knowing they serve a greater purpose. Worship becomes an act that readies us to face challenges with faith and hope.

Consider how worship in your life is connected to obedience and readiness. Just as Mary's perfume foreshadowed Jesus' death, our worship can reflect our readiness to follow Christ—even when the path involves sacrifice.



Day 3: 🔥 Worship as Preparing the Heart

Reflect and Apply

1. How does worship prepare you for life's challenges?

2. In what ways are you called to surrender plans to God's will?

3. How can honoring Jesus in worship impact your daily decisions?



Day 3: 🔥 Worship as Preparing the Heart

Journaling Prompts

1. Describe how worship has prepared you during a difficult season.

2. Reflect on what it means to offer your life as a sacrificial act of worship.

3. Write ways to deepen your surrender through worship this week.



Day 3: 🔥 Worship as Preparing the Heart

Prayer for Today

Father, may my worship align my heart with Your purposes. Help me to see that preparing my heart for You means surrendering fully and trusting Your plan, even when it's hard. Strengthen me to offer my life as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to You. Keep my eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and perfecter of my faith. Amen. 🔥🙏❤️





Day 4: 🎵 Worship That Provokes Criticism



Day 4: 🎵 Worship That Provokes Criticism

Your Verse

John 12:4 - "But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot... said, 'Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor?'"

Supporting Scriptures

- *Galatians 1:10 - "Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people?"*
- *Matthew 6:1 - "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them."*



Day 4: 🎵 Worship That Provokes Criticism

Devotional: Remaining Faithful Amid Criticism

Judas's criticism contrasts sharply with Mary's worship. It reveals how **expressions of true devotion sometimes face misunderstanding or opposition**. Our worship—especially when sincere and costly—may not always be popular or approved by others. This can challenge our faith and commitment.

Paul reminds us that seeking God's approval over people's opinions is essential in maintaining pure worship. Jesus' warning about public displays teaches us to worship with sincerity, not to gain human applause but to honor God genuinely.

It can be tempting to tone down our worship or disguise acts of devotion to avoid criticism. Yet, Mary's example encourages us to hold fast to heartfelt worship, regardless of the voices that challenge it. Reflect on how you handle criticism in your faith journey—does it deter you or deepen your resolve?



Day 4: 🎵 Worship That Provokes Criticism

Reflect and Apply

1. Have you ever faced criticism for your worship or faith? How did you respond?

2. What motivates your worship—to please God or people?

3. How can you maintain purity in worship despite external opposition?



Day 4: 🎵 Worship That Provokes Criticism

Journaling Prompts

1. Write about a time you stood firm in faith despite criticism.

2. Reflect on how you can guard your heart from seeking human approval.

3. List ways to cultivate sincere worship independent of others' opinions.



Day 4: 🎵 Worship That Provokes Criticism

Prayer for Today

Lord, help me to worship You with a heart focused on pleasing You alone. Give me courage to stand firm when others criticize or misunderstand my devotion. Teach me to find joy in genuine worship that honors You, regardless of what others say. Strengthen my faith to persevere and grow through opposition. Amen. 🎵 🙏 🛡️





Day 5: ✨ Fragrance of Worship: Impacting Your Surroundings



Day 5: ✨ Fragrance of Worship: Impacting Your Surroundings

Your Verse

John 12:5 - "This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor."

Supporting Scriptures

- *2 Corinthians 2:15 - "For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing."*
- *Ephesians 5:2 - "Walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."*



Day 5: ✨ Fragrance of Worship: Impacting Your Surroundings

Devotional: Cultivating Worship That Influences Others

The perfume symbolizes more than expense—it signifies the fragrant impact of worship on the environment around us. Mary's worship was a sweet aroma, a tangible influence that testified to Jesus' worth and mission. Paul calls believers a pleasing aroma of Christ, demonstrating that our acts of devotion announce and attract God's presence to the world.

Our worship affects not only God but people we encounter. It can soften hearts, inspire others, and validate God's love in action. Reflect on how your worship—private and public—casts a fragrance into your surroundings. Is it one that draws others nearer to Christ, or does it repel or confuse?

This calls us to intentionality—cultivating worship that influences for good, rooted in truth, love, and sacrifice.



Day 5: ✨ Fragrance of Worship: Impacting Your Surroundings

Reflect and Apply

1. How does your worship impact those around you?

2. In what ways can your life serve as a fragrant offering to God?

3. Are there obstacles that hinder your worship from influencing others positively?



Day 5: ✨ Fragrance of Worship: Impacting Your Surroundings

Journaling Prompts

1. List examples of how your faith has impacted others recently.

2. Reflect on ways to make your worship more fragrant and attractive to God.

3. Write about a person who influenced your worship journey.



Day 5: ✨ Fragrance of Worship: Impacting Your Surroundings

Prayer for Today

Heavenly Father, may my worship be a fragrant offering that draws others toward You. Use me to spread Your love and truth wherever I go. Help me walk in love and surrender so my life reflects Christ's sweet aroma. Empower my worship to impact hearts and reveal Your glory. Amen. ✨ 🙏 🌸





Day 6: 🕊️ Serving Through Worship: The Heart of Devotion



Day 6: 🕊️ Serving Through Worship: The Heart of Devotion

Your Verse

John 12:6 - "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."

Supporting Scriptures

- *Mark 10:45 - "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve."*
- *Philippians 2:3 - "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves."*



Day 6: 🕊️ Serving Through Worship: The Heart of Devotion

Devotional: Worship Leading to Humble Service

Judas's selfish motives contrast sharply with the true spirit of worship and service. Genuine worship leads to servant-hearted living. Mary's sacrificial act was an expression of service to Jesus; Judas acted out of greed, highlighting the danger of self-interest in spiritual contexts.

Jesus' own example shows us that worship is inseparable from serving others with humility. True devotion molds us into servants who follow Jesus' footsteps, laying down selfish desires and elevating others.

Reflect on your heart's motives in worship and service. Are you serving Jesus and others with pure intentions, or is temptation toward selfishness a barrier? Let Mary's devotion inspire you to embrace worship that drives loving, humble service.



Day 6:  Serving Through Worship: The Heart of Devotion

Reflect and Apply

1. Does your worship motivate you to serve others selflessly?

2. How do you guard your heart against selfish motives in ministry?

3. In what ways can you embody Jesus' servant leadership today?



Day 6: 🕊️ Serving Through Worship: The Heart of Devotion

Journaling Prompts

1. Write about a time you served others as an act of worship.

2. Reflect on areas where selfishness affects your spiritual life.

3. Plan practical ways to serve humbly this week.



Day 6: 🕊️ Serving Through Worship: The Heart of Devotion

Prayer for Today

Lord Jesus, teach me to worship with a heart that serves others humbly and selflessly. Help me reject selfish motives and follow Your example of servant leadership. May my devotion not only honor You but overflow in love and service to those around me. Shape me into the servant You desire. Amen. 🕊️





Day 7: ✨ Living a Life of Fragrant Worship Daily



Day 7: ✨ Living a Life of Fragrant Worship Daily

Your Verse

John 12:8 - "You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."

Supporting Scriptures

- *Colossians 3:17 - "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."*
- *Hebrews 13:15 - "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name."*



Day 7: ✨ Living a Life of Fragrant Worship Daily

Devotional: Embracing Worship as a Lifestyle

Jesus' reminder places urgency and perspective on how we prioritize worship and devotion. While practical needs remain, our time with Jesus is limited and precious. This challenges us to live with a daily focus on worship that permeates all aspects of life.

Every word, action, and choice becomes an offering of praise when done in Jesus' name. This breathes life into our worship as ongoing and vibrant, not confined to special moments or places. Living this way cultivates a heart continually prepared to honor Jesus with authentic love.

As you conclude this study, ask yourself: How can I make worship a lifestyle—overflowing and fragrant? What habits or attitudes need transformation so your life truly reflects Christ's presence?



Day 7: ✨ Living a Life of Fragrant Worship Daily

Reflect and Apply

1. How can you incorporate worship into everyday moments?

2. What priorities might you need to adjust to live a life of worship?

3. In what ways does recognizing Jesus' presence change your daily decisions?



Day 7: ✨ Living a Life of Fragrant Worship Daily

Journaling Prompts

1. Write about ways to worship God continuously throughout your day.

2. Reflect on how you balance practical needs with spiritual devotion.

3. Set goals for cultivating lifestyle worship in the coming weeks.



Day 7: ✨ Living a Life of Fragrant Worship Daily

Prayer for Today

Dear Jesus, help me to live a life of worship every day—not just in special moments but in every action and word. Teach me to keep my heart prepared and focused fully on You. May my whole life be a fragrant offering pleasing to the Father. Guide me to embrace this calling with joy and faithfulness. Amen.





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