

The Value of Judas's Reward and Mary's Sacrifice

The Bible seems to infer that the drama that took place at Simon the Leper's house was a hinging moment for Judas Iscariot. After the rebuke directed at him and the other disciples, Judas set out to betray Jesus. It is worth noting that the value of money was mentioned in both the dinner at Simon's and Judas's subsequent treachery. Could the mention of money in these connected events teach us a lesson?

As Jesus reclined at the meal provided by his hosts, an unexpected act of devotion began to play out. Mary came unto Jesus and anointed both his head and his feet with oil. Though anointing an honored guest's head with oil was customary, this display of reverence was taken to a superlative degree. Perhaps the container that held the oil or the rich aroma of the oil itself revealed that this act of anointing was very costly. John records that the spikenard was worth three hundred drachma or nearly one year's worth of wages. Upon realizing this, the disciples began to speak of what waste it was and how they could have done so much more with the ointment than what Mary had just done. Jesus stingingly corrected his followers and praised the woman for an act that would immortalize her memory in holy writ. However, as Judas left the house from a stay he didn't pay for and with a belly heavy from a meal that cost him nothing, three hundred drachmae echoed in his offended mind.

As soon as Judas had the opportunity, he slipped away and met with the chief priests and conspired to hand over Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. Here, the value of money comes in again. The pieces of silver were likely the Athenian tetradrachma, which would be worth about 120 days of wages. What Judas was willing to sell out for was about one-third of what Mary gave in sacrifice. Judas was quick to express what Mary ought to do with her sacrifice when he would sell Jesus out for much less.

The critic is never as invested as the true worshiper!

Jerry Trevino