

Jesu Juva
Text: John 12:1-11

Jesus had just raised Lazarus from the dead, and so they were hosting a banquet for Him. Before, when Jesus was at their house - the house of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha - Mary sat at Jesus' feet and listened to Him, while Martha served. Here, we see Mary at Jesus' feet once again - listening, surely; but even more this time: anointing His feet with a very expensive ointment, and wiping them with her hair. This was very unusual.

And not welcomed, by some. Judas speaks up and objects, but I wonder how many there were thinking the same thing. What a waste, he says. This money should have been given to the poor. But the pious words that flow from his lips do not match the evil that is crouching at the door of his heart, desiring to rule over him (Genesis 4:7). And it will. Like Cain, he will kill his brother.

Jesus knows this, and so speaks of His burial. That's what this ointment is for. There will be no time for a proper preparation of His body. So it is being done, in this small way, now. Does Mary realize this? Certainly not. She knows only her love for Jesus and is expressing it in this way. But like Caiaphas, who unknowingly prophesied that "it is better that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish" (John 11:50), her deed is prophetic. In six days, Jesus will be dead and laid in a tomb.

But also in six days, another will be dead as well: Judas himself. He will not only betray and kill his brother, he will kill himself. And the money he cared so much about, both here and the 30 pieces of silver he got for handing Jesus over, will give him no consolation or help. He loved and hoped in that which could not save him.

How often do we do that too? How often do we act the Judas instead of being like Mary? Loving the things of this world yet wanting others to think us so pious and holy. Objecting to the loving deeds of others because of the sin that lurks in our hearts. Repent. Do not let the sin crouching at the door of your heart rule over you. And see in Jesus' anointing your hope. For it is for you. He dies your death and lies in your grave, so that when death comes upon you and you are laid in the grave, you will not be alone. Instead, you will be like Lazarus - merely sleeping. Until the day your risen Jesus calls you out of your tomb, to live with Him forever, at His banquet, prepared for you - the Feast of heaven that has no end.

In the Name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.