

## MARY AND JUDAS: CONTRAST BETWEEN LOVE AND HATE

John 12:1-8

We tend not to talk about villains very much — their lives are too depressing. It's nicer to talk about heroes. But the bible says a lot about villains and with good reason. Mostly because the bible is real history and real history is practically spray painted with villainy. But also because while God wants us to be good, he also wants us to be not bad, and so God not only gives us good examples to follow but also bad examples to not follow.

Judas is unique in history. While there are many who would betray a friend for money, only one had the distinction of betraying the very best friend the world ever had.

It was Saturday, the evening before Palm Sunday. Jesus was at the home of Simon the Leper in Bethany enjoying supper and the company of good friends. Then Mary, Lazarus's sister, did a peculiar thing.

*John 12:3 Then took Mary a pound of ointment of Spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.*

Costly indeed. All the way from Tibet. A pound was worth three hundred pence. At workman's wages of a penny a day, that was a year's salary she poured on Jesus. And she washed his feet! Only slaves wash feet. And the mess she made. Oh my. Look at that. Dripping on the floor. And she forgot a towel. Where's a towel? No towel. Quickly, without thinking, Mary unbundled her hair (a Jewish faux pas) and used her lovely hair to dry Jesus feet.

Extravagant. Embarrassing. Where was her dignity? It was gone, replaced by uncontrolled love which cannot be measured in dollars and cents, and cares nothing for the opinions of party guests. But everyone was polite, everyone was kind. Except one.

Then Judas spoke, and complained.

*John 12:4 Then said one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son which should betray him. :5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor? :6 This he said not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief and had the bag and bare what was put therein. :7 Then said Jesus, let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. :8 For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.*

Judas wasn't interested in the poor. He had other things on his mind: a dying Christ (There, Jesus said it again: he will die), a failed kingdom, three wasted years, and now how to bail out of it all without empty pockets. Three hundred pence from the wasted spikenard would have lined Judas's pockets nicely.

But it was the Lord's reproof that was Judas's tipping point. That reproof was the last straw. That very night, as everyone slept, Judas's anger and greed led him out of the house and to Jerusalem where he arranged to trade his Lord's life for thirty pieces of silver.

The combination of hate and greed will do that to a man, lead him to violence and betrayal. But boundless love, such as Mary's, will bring us, on our knees, to the feet of the savior.