Sermon for Lent 5C At Calvary Rockhampton and Living Waters Yeppoon

7th April 2019

**Jesus annointed**

# Today we have been reading from John12: 1-8

In this reading, we see lots happening for Gods Kingdom!

Jesus has come to Bethany, which was about 3kms from Jerusalem. that same place where Lazarus has been raised from the dead. Jesus has already done great things! Lazarus had been dead for 4 days, and Jesus called on God the father for help in raising him, and it was done. He had been moved to do this by the grief of the sisters of Lazarus, Mary and Martha.

We see that the time is set at a point 6 days before the Passover! In the not too distant future, Jesus our Saviour King will be arrested, crucified, suffering for our sins on the cross at Calvary.

There is a lot of activity in this reading. The dinner that they were at was being given in honour of Jesus, who had raised Lazarus from the dead. Imagine how grateful we might be if one of our loved ones was raised from death, to be with us, hale and hearty! How thankful we would be! We have all lost someone at some time who we would dearly love to have with us. Truthfully, in celebration for such a tremendous gift from Jesus, would we not bring out the best lined, the best food, the best wine, the best cutlery? I would get a new set myself! Yes, my day to day set is a mish mash of old and new! Those that cut and some that don’t cut so well! Instead of place mats, I would get out the lace table cloth. Oops! Now where is that, haven’t seen it for a while..

Martha was doing her bit, serving those present, which included the disciples. We can see that Jesus had his team there with him, including Judas Iscariot. Mary, (not the mother of Jesus, but rather the sister of Lazarus), was honouring our Lord Jesus, and took a half litre of nard (a very expensive perfume) .

A quick search of the internet sites such as Amazon offers a variety of products claiming to be pure Nard oil, however I found it confusing as prices were all over the place, sources variously claimed to be from Jeruselum, the Holy Land, etc, while the collins dictionary points to a Himilayan source for the oil. Truthfully, I doubt if any of those on offer today offer the purity which is described in our bible passage!

Mary took that oil, poured it on Jesus feet and then wiped his feet with her hair!

Perhaps we are seeing here a forecast of things to come. Jesus is being anointed, even perhaps indicative of an embalming process, begun even before his death to come over the coming days. That is in fact reinforced in verse 7 when Jesus advised Judas to leave her alone as this perfume was intended for use on the day of his burial.

In fact, Jesus was awake to the machinations of Judas in the background at this time as well. Judas was helping himself to the communal funds, and for him, this nard could have represented a tidy little profit. Jesus continues to make the point that if funds were given to the poor, rather than being used for Jesus, the poor would still be there, even after Jesus had gone on.

Now of course, what is the import of all this in a scriptural sense?

Well, think for a moment, the care and love which this woman has lavished on Jesus! What can we do ourselves do you think? What would Jesus ask of us?

Jesus asks that we love, honour and obey. He tells us that when we love our neighbours, our enemies even, then we are fitting in with Gods plan for us and the world. He shows us by his knowledge of Judas and his sinful nature, and his forbearance of that, after all, he could have accused Judas, stood him down from his task of treasurer, embarrassed him, even sent him away from his company, and yet he had compassion.

We can do those things. Jesus is an example for us yes, yet much more than that, he sets us up, puts us in the right frame for eternal life! His death on the cross in a few days’ time prepares the way for us, allows for the forgiveness of our sins which makes us holy, ready for our entry into Gods heavenly kingdom.

It is through Christ we are made ready, made Holy!

*Dear heavenly Father we ask that you make us holy, that we would be like Christ toward not just our friends, but also towards our neighbours or our enemies. That in so doing, our enemies might become as our friends. We ask that you guide us and make us one, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*This is how we can say: the peace of God, which surpasses all human understanding, will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.*