



# TRANSFORMED

DEVOTIONS CONNECTING TEENS TO CHRIST

**While [Jesus] was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly. "Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."**

*Mark 14:3-9*

## **The people you meet: True value**

Bill Gates, one of the co-founders of Microsoft, is currently the richest person in the world with 84.2 billion dollars to his name. Several years ago Gates said in an interview: "Just in terms of allocation of time resources, religion is not very efficient. There's a lot more I could be doing on a Sunday morning." To Gates, a successful expert in this world, church just isn't that valuable.

Jesus met a woman named Mary on the way to the cross. Not long before he died, she poured a bottle of incredibly expensive perfume on his head. It cost apparently more than a year's wages. The average income in the U.S. right now is about \$27,000. Several people who witnessed this action were outraged. What a waste this was! That money could have gone to something with actual value instead of pooling on the floor under Jesus' feet.

How much value does God have to us? Do we consistently bring our best to God?

The argument of Mary's critics sounded kind of hollow out loud. Our hearts are often guilty of the same attitude: "Are you sure you want to give this up?!?" And so we keep part of ourselves from God: our efforts, our abilities, our time, our money, our heart. It's worth mentioning that all of these items were gifts from God in the first place. Our best is often spent on things that have no real value, at least not as God defines it. Our best goes toward buying stuff, toward extracurriculars and sports, toward things we know will bankrupt us spiritually. These things all seem so hollow when compared with Jesus.

Jesus gave up everything he had for us. Mary's use of the perfume demonstrated her understanding that Jesus would soon be dead and buried for all sinners. When we, too, understand the significance of Jesus' sacrifice, we are also equipped to give up everything. God doesn't just want our time or money. He wants every single part of us. God finds eternal value in what Jesus has done *for us* and in what Jesus then does *through us*.

Here's God's investment advice. Invest time in meeting Jesus on a Sunday morning. Invest in time at home, on the bus, at lunch. Motivated entirely by God's grace, give everything you are to Jesus. In Jesus' view of economics, we gain by giving up.

**Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, we are very grateful that we meet you at the cross. Transform our hearts through the means of grace that we might recognize your value and give up everything for you, as you have given up everything for us. Amen.**