

Mother's Day:  
**Celebrating  
Women of  
Service**

**OUTREACH**

**Title: Mother's Day: Celebrating Women of Service**

**Scripture:** John 12:1-8// Ephesians 5:1-2

**Write Up:** This Mother's Day let's remember that the way we live our lives in the presence of our family, friends, coworkers, and culture can be a fragrant offering to God. Mary Magdalene, for example, demonstrated what sacrificial love for Jesus looked like by washing His feet with costly perfume despite the embarrassment and criticism she received from others. Let's celebrate the women in our lives who serve others and remember that to worship Jesus extravagantly will cost us something. But in the end, the reward of a faithful life is worth it.

**Think:** The way I serve others around me as a wife, mother, daughter, and friend can bring glory to God and incredible blessing.

**Feel:** I want to love Jesus so much that my life becomes a sacrificial form of worship that will leave a pleasing fragrance to God.

**Do:** Humbly submit yourself before Jesus and worship Him by living a life of sacrificial service.

**Sermon:** Good Morning and Happy Mother's Day. Today we are celebrating all of the impactful women in our lives who have served us, raised us, loved us, taught us, and, ultimately, mothered us even if they were not our birth moms. We want to take a second and say thank you to all of the outstanding mothers who hold space in our hearts. We are grateful for your service and the love you pour out each and every day to help shape us into the people we are today. In light of this day, we are going to talk about how we live our lives for Jesus can have a great impact—just like these wonderful women around us.

**Story:** Growing up, did you have a teacher or youth leader or, in my case, a neighbor down the street who always looked out for you? An adult outside of your immediate family that you knew you could trust to go the extra mile for you? For me, that person was Ms. Joanne. She lived in my neighborhood and played a huge role in my day-to-day life as a kid. I am the oldest in my family, and in my early elementary years, my parents were swamped with my younger siblings. They did not always have the time to come to every school or extracurricular event. Even when they did, they were usually chasing toddlers around. This is where Ms. Joanne came in. She was there to look after me and serve me in whatever way I needed. She had older children and extra time. She had love to give and the energy to share. Ms. Joanne would pick me up from school so my mom could stay home to let the babies nap. She would always have a funny story to share and a snack ready for me. She would come to chorus concerts, basketball games, and after school events. Ms. Joanne never complained and always led with kindness. She always took the time to make sure I felt special. Even all these years later, Ms. Joanne sends me a

card for every birthday and holiday. She knows my children's birthdays, checks up on my family, and still offers her help. The way she actively lives out serving and loving others is something that has impacted me greatly. Her example is one I will forever hold onto and reflect on. At the time, she might have thought she was just helping out a young family here and there, but she was actually modeling what it looks like to love people well as a woman of service.

Just like Ms. Joanne left a lasting impact on my life, Mary Magdalene left a lasting impact on her community by the way she loved and served Jesus. Let's take a look at this story in John 12:1-3.

### **READ John 12:1-3**

Before we dive into Mary's fragrant and generous offering to Jesus, let's talk about the context and background of what is going on in the text. John told us very clearly that this event was six days before Passover. The timeline is important because it was the week before Jesus was crucified. Jesus had come to Bethany where he had previously raised Lazarus from the dead. Jesus was invited to dinner, most likely to celebrate Lazarus's miraculous rising from the dead. The supper was hosted by Lazarus's sisters, Martha and Mary, and was attended by a woman named Mary Magdalene.

### **POINT #1 – THE WAY WE LIVE OUR LIVES LEAVES A LASTING IMPACT ON PEOPLE.**

Now that we have some context, let's talk about Mary's fragrant offering. Scripture says, "Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet." The idea of washing your houseguest's feet at a dinner party today might not go over so well, but back then it was not uncommon to wash a guest's feet when they entered your home. It was not strange; it was an act of hospitality—an act of love. It was also something the servants of the house usually did. Mary washing Jesus's feet was a humble offering. The only strange thing about what Mary did was that she washed Jesus's feet during the middle of dinner, and she used expensive oils and perfume.

One thing that I think is so beautiful about this passage is that something fragrant was used. When you poured out a fragrance as strong as nard in a room, it would fill the entire space with the scent. It was so strong and lasting that the scent would linger long after the source was dry. If you have ever walked by someone in the airport or on the street and gotten a whiff of their cologne or perfume, you know what I am talking about. Or if you walk into a bathroom or kitchen after someone has deep cleaned, the smell is strong and hangs around for a while. I bring this up to say that, just as Mary's physical act of washing Jesus's feet with perfume had a lasting fragrant impact, so did Mary's generous acts of service and love. Her example in the way she served Jesus made an impact on the people around her at the dinner party. She did not care what anyone said or thought. She was extremely generous in her actions. Not only did she lower herself to wash Jesus's feet, but she washed them with her hair. That alone was extremely humble because she had to let her hair down in public, which was something Jewish women rarely, if ever, would do. Her sacrifice and choices had a lasting impact.

Actions that last are actions that are done with incredible intentionality. Mary Magdalene must have known her worship would have been met with cynicism by some. But like any good woman of service (whether mother, grandmother, teacher, youth leader, or friend) it is a risk they are willing to take. *(Consider sharing all of the reasons why some women don't take the risks to serve other people the way Mary served Jesus.)*

This takes me back to my neighbor, Joanne, and the way she served and showed up for my family when I was growing up. She was not looking for recognition or payment. She did not care if it inconvenienced her or if it was something she particularly wanted to do. She showed up and served in a way that marked me. Her actions were a fragrance that hung in the air.

How many people will we remember forever because they showed up and served us? Who are the people (like Mary) who have done something humble for us that we will never forget? The way we live our life for Jesus and for others matters. It matters because one action could change a life or a perspective. The way we live our lives leaves a lasting impact on others.

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