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Scripture

John 12:1-8

¹ Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ² There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. ³ Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴ But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, ⁵ "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" ⁶ (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) ⁷ Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸ You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

Devotional

I remember that when I was a child I looked forward to my birthday and Christmas every year. I looked forward to receiving gifts; it was a way for people to show their love for me, and it made me feel special. I think there is something about receiving and giving gifts that makes us feel special and loved. I now watch with glee as my kids open their gifts for their birthdays and Christmas.

In the Gospel reading, Mary, the sister of Martha, gives Jesus an extravagant gift, a jar of costly perfume that she used to anoint Jesus' feet. As the scheming Judas watches, Jesus explains the use of the perfume: anointing him for burial. In this small exchange we are reminded of what is to come, the death and burial of our Lord, Jesus Christ. As we prepare for the sacred memory of the death of our Lord, His resurrection, and through that our salvation, let us give to God our gift of devotion. Let us come to our Lord, much like Mary, and offer ourselves to the One who offered Himself to us.

Prayer

Lord, allow us to be like Mary, devoting ourselves to you in heart, soul, and might. Give us the strength to love you more, to be the people you have called us to be. Amen.