

**BUCYRUS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH      March 12, 2023**

# **“THE COST OF LOVE”**

**Pastor Mike Corwin**

**3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY IN LENT**

**TEXT: JOHN 12:1-8**

**SCRIPTURE: 1 PETER 1:13-20**

## **I – STACY & SNOOPY:**

I doubt that you could consider me to be a squeamish guy, or accuse me of having a weak stomach. I won't be graphic this morning, but I've seen and dealt with things most people never want to and done it all without flinching. Some of my hair loss has been earned in the line of duty. There was one time though I was affected deeply by what I was seeing and experiencing.

When my daughter Stacy was about a year old, she developed a bad case of the flu. Her little body was unable to hold anything down and it wasn't long until we were admitting her to the hospital because she was dehydrated to the point it had become dangerous. I remember carrying her into the hospital and going through the admitting process. I then carried her to the pediatric ward where she was handed to a nurse, who promptly stripped her down to her diaper and laid her in the crib while they prepared to start an IV in her. I'd seen IV's started before, but I had never seen strangers strapping my little girl to a "Y" shaped board so she couldn't grab the needle and pull it out. I had never had to stand by and watch her scream because of fear. I had never before had her reach her little arms up for me to pick her up and make her feel safe and be unable to comply. Although I knew it had to be done, big strong police officer dad had to leave the room and let nurse mom deal with it!

I did what any father would have done...I went to the gift shop to find something for my little baby girl. I remember Julie and I were living from paycheck to paycheck at the time. I think my base pay was only about \$8,000 a year as a young officer and that didn't stretch very far. I had \$6.00 left to get us through until payday, but I spent it all on a stuffed snoopy dog doll for my daughter. My daughter was worth every penny I had, and I spent every penny I had on her. Last I knew she still has that stuffed animal.

## **II – THE COST OF LOVE:**

My question for you this morning is simple...what is the cost of love? You could look at this story and say I bought my daughter's love that day for a mere \$6.00, but you'd be wrong. I

showed my love for my daughter that day because I sacrificed all that I had. Love isn't about money it's about sacrifice. It's about willingly giving of yourself for others. It's about putting the needs of others above your own, regardless of the cost. I didn't buy her love; I showed her I loved her. If I would have handed her money it would have meant nothing to her, but that white floppy eared dog said "I LOVE YOU."

I didn't care what Julie thought. I didn't care what the nurses or doctors thought; I didn't care what anybody in the whole world thought. All I cared about was that my daughter knew that while she was sad, hurting, and in sorrow, she knew someone cared, someone loved her, and someone would do whatever was necessary to show it.

There is a story in the Bible where we see this same love showed to Jesus at a time he was feeling sad, hurting, and in sorrow. A story of sacrifice made by one person that touched the heart of our Savior and showed him his coming sacrifice was not in vain. There were those who loved him and would sacrifice for him also.

### **III – TEXT:**

#### **John 12:1 - 8 (NLT)**

<sup>1</sup>Six days before the Passover ceremonies began, Jesus arrived in Bethany, the home of Lazarus—the man he had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup>A dinner was prepared in Jesus' honor. Martha served, and Lazarus sat at the table with him. <sup>3</sup>Then Mary took a twelve-ounce jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard, and she anointed Jesus' feet with it and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with fragrance. <sup>4</sup>But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples—the one who would betray him—said, <sup>5</sup>"That perfume was worth a small fortune. It should have been sold and the money given to the poor." <sup>6</sup>Not that he cared for the poor—he was a thief who was in charge of the disciples' funds, and he often took some for his own use. <sup>7</sup>Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. She did it in preparation for my burial. <sup>8</sup>You will always have the poor among you, but I will not be here with you much longer."

It's the Saturday before what we know as Palm Sunday, the beginning of Holy week. Jesus is fully aware of what's going to happen to him in the next few days; fully aware of the fact he will be crucified and buried within the next six days. He is coming to the end of his journey and everything has been set in motion to fulfill God's plans for him and for us. Before he rides into Jerusalem tomorrow on the back of a donkey he stops in the city of Bethany and visits his friends Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. He's been here before; he knows and loves them all. He was there just a short time ago when the sisters called for him to come and heal their sick brother. But Lazarus died before Jesus arrived...and Jesus cried. These were close friends. Jesus proved his love in a startling way. He didn't just give the women money to cover the burial expenses. He didn't give them money so they could live comfortably without their

brother to support them in a male dominated society. NO...he called Lazarus back from the dead. He gave them back their brother! They knew how much Jesus loved them, how much he cared for them.

This night is special. They've prepared a large feast for Jesus and his disciples to honor this Savior who took the time out of his busy ministry to save the life of a friend. This friend who showed the people the glory of God by resurrecting someone he loved. The neighbors and relatives have all shown up to pay honor to Jesus. As they set around and dined, Lazarus was sitting at the table with his friend Jesus, and Martha was being Martha, running around making sure everything was right, all the food was cooked to perfection, and the guests' cups and plates were never empty. Then it happens. The room is hushed as they see Mary do the unthinkable. Here's a young unmarried woman, who has a Jewish man, not just any man, a teacher, a rabbi in her house, and she comes into the room without her head covering, her hair is hanging loose, and she's carrying a jar of perfume. Not a perfume she puts on each day after bathing, this is a special perfume, a mixture of oils and spices that had cost her at least an ordinary man's wages for a year. This was a jar that had been bought and put away for her own funeral. To be applied to her body before she was placed in a tomb. As her brother and sister watch, as the disciples look on, she kneels at the feet of Jesus, breaks the seal on the jar and pours the perfume over his feet. As the fragrance permeates the air and everyone now looks to see where the smell is coming from, she begins crying and bends over and wipes the feet of Jesus with her undone hair.

It doesn't tell me so in the Scripture, but I can imagine that Jesus was crying too. I believe the same Savior who had just recently cried at the death of Lazarus, was now crying at the sacrifice of Mary. I have to believe at the moment Jesus knew his coming sacrifice of love for all of humankind was not going to be in vain, that there were those who did love him and would love him in the years to come. He felt so overwhelmed with this love that when his disciples spoke up about the useless waste of this costly perfume, Jesus took them to task and told them to leave her alone. Mary had shown Jesus love. She had sacrificed not only money, but also her very dignity in front of others because of her love for this man who would soon prove God's love for everyone. Mary knew Jesus loved her and she wanted Jesus to know that she loved him.

#### **IV – GOD KNOWS THE COST:**

God knows the cost of love. God knows well the cost of love...the cost of his love for us was Sacrifice. The cost of love for him was his one and only Son. God didn't send us a plush stuffed animal to say "I love you." God sent us flesh and blood to say "I LOVE YOU."

God looked around at his creation and wanted to show us how much we were loved, so he too broke open a jar and anointed us with it's contents:

- When the whips came down across his back, the jar was broken and the scent of Salvation spilled out
- When they pushed the crown of thorns into his skull the jar was broken and the perfume of life came spilling out
- When they drove the nails into his hands and into his feet the jar poured out it's contents more rapidly
- When they drove the spear into his side every bit of the essence of life spilled out of the jar and it was empty.
- They took the empty, used up jar and put it in a tomb. They put the jar inside another jar.

But unlike Mary's perfume, which was used for burial, this perfume was used for life. The perfume that came out of the body of Jesus Christ didn't have the odor of death; it had the odor of life. Three days later the Angel of God opened this jar, and we were all anointed for life. God knew the cost of love and He paid it:

### **1 Peter 1:18 - 20 (NLT)**

<sup>18</sup>For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And the ransom he paid was not mere gold or silver. <sup>19</sup>He paid for you with the precious lifeblood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. <sup>20</sup>God chose him for this purpose long before the world began, but now in these final days, he was sent to the earth for all to see. And he did this for you.

When Mary did what she did, it was an act of worship. I think when she did it she knew the sacrifice Jesus was about to make, she knew the cost of her sin and how it was going to be paid. She wanted to let Jesus know it was appreciated, it was worth it, and she did love him.

### **V- HOW MUCH DO YOU LOVE JESUS?:**

How about you? When it comes to the way you treat Jesus does he know you love him? Do you realize just how incredibly much Jesus loves you and what he did for you? The price he paid so that you could be forgiven? The blood, which covers your sins and bought your Salvation? Do you give of yourself for him? Do you make sacrifices for him? Does he know that spilling his blood was worth the effort? Have you even come close to showing him the love Mary showed him that Saturday night so long ago?

You see Jesus doesn't want a broken wallet...Jesus wants a broken heart. When Jesus says that you must pick up your cross and follow him, the question isn't "How much can you carry?" The question is "How much do you love me?"

AMEN