

LENT TO HOLY WEEK

Week 1 Sunday 9 March
Week 2 Sunday 16 March
Week 3 Sunday 23 March
Week 4 Sunday 30 March
Week 5 Sunday 6 April
Week 6 Sunday 13 April

Holy week: 14 April to 19 April

We welcome you joining us on the Liturgical journey from Lent to Holy Week. This material reflects the Sunday sermons ensuring the whole church is on the same page and can take the learnings deeper with scripture readings, daily devotions and questions for group discussions. May you draw closer to God whilst learning His truths, find the journey transformative and experience God's love for you in a very deep and real way.

Week 5 Sunday 6 April - Anointing His feet

Bring God into the meeting with prayer, lighting a candle, listening to a worship song.

CeCe Winans (Worthy) - https://youtu.be/f7AnVhGC_aA?si=XdlYE_IYvecDeNtx

Read the Bible readings provided:

Liturgical Date: Fifth Sunday in Lent

First reading: Isaiah 43:16-21

Psalm: Psalm 126

Second reading: Philippians 3:4b-14

Gospel: John 12:1-8

John 12:1-8

The Message

Anointing His Feet

12 ¹⁻³ Six days before Passover, Jesus entered Bethany where Lazarus, so recently raised from the dead, was living. Lazarus and his sisters invited Jesus to dinner at their home. Martha served. Lazarus was one of those sitting at the table with them. Mary came in with a jar of very expensive aromatic oils, anointed and massaged Jesus' feet, and then wiped them with her hair. The fragrance of the oils filled the house. ⁴⁻⁶ Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, even then getting ready to betray him, said, "Why wasn't this oil sold and the money given to the poor? It would have easily brought three hundred silver pieces." He said this not because he cared two cents about the poor but because he was a thief. He was in charge of their common funds but also embezzled them. ⁷⁻⁸ Jesus said, "Let her alone. She's anticipating and honouring the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you. You don't always have me."

A reflection on the Bible reading by: Siya Gama (Local Preacher)

It was not so long ago that we were informed about Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11:38-44). Today finds us at the home of the resurrected Lazarus together with his two sisters Mary and Martha. The scripture tells us that Jesus entered Bethany six days before the Passover. The setting could not be more apt, as one would be forgiven for thinking that Mary's act of anointing the feet of Jesus with expensive perfume - could be an act of gratitude for raising her brother from the dead!

However, Mary's anointing is not just an act of hospitality, it is a prophetic gesture that speaks volumes and teaches us about the nature of true discipleship. Mary did not worry herself about the cost of the perfume but rather was obsessed in demonstrating a love for Jesus. She offers this perfume, not out of obligation but out of love. Mary's action is an expression of deep insight, and deep understanding which signifies (a premonition perhaps?) her grasp of Jesus' impending death and burial. Therefore, Mary was not caught up in the moment, but her act tells us she was looking beyond the present, as her actions foreshadowed Christ's upcoming death, which was an outpouring of His life for the salvation of all humankind.

In contrast, Judas criticises Mary's generosity for her wastefulness and instead suggests that the money could have been better spent on the poor. Judas' concern, at face value, appears to be noble. However, the gospel reveals it as insincere. Judas' heart is not aligned with his words. Jesus defence of Mary's actions, signifies the importance of sincerity and purity of heart in our worship and service.



This event invites us to reflect on our own spiritual insights. Are we merely going through the motions or are we attentive to the deeper meaning of our faith? Do we love God at all costs and beyond any self-interest and expectations? Mary challenges us to seek a deeper understanding of Jesus mission and to live our lives accordingly. Mary's actions are motivated by genuine love and devotion while Judas is concerned with appearances and self-interest.

Mary's anointing of Jesus has profound implications for us today, because we live in a world that often values practicality over passion. I am reminded of the act by the late apartheid era Minister Adrian Vlok washing the feet of Rev Frank Chikane, who he had tried to poison in 1989, as a modern parallel. Vlok's act was an act of humility and reconciliation, symbolising the power of forgiveness and the breaking down of barriers.

Anointing, whether with oil or through acts of service, can be a transformative experience which promotes healing and unity. Let us be challenged to look beyond our differences and embrace the radical love that Jesus embodied. Mary's act should inspire us to live lives that are marked by love, sacrifice, and a commitment to reconciliation in our communities and beyond. Let us embrace a faith that is both deep and active, characterised by love, understanding and a willingness to serve others selflessly. Let us obsess about our love for God who has given us the sacrifice of his son, for or salvation.

Questions for group discussion:

1. What does Mary's anointing of Jesus feet with expensive perfume symbolise in relation to love, sacrifice and devotion. How can we apply this level of devotion in our daily lives?
2. Mary used a costly perfume for the anointing. How does this reflect on the concept of giving our best to God, and do we do this in our lives?
3. Judas criticised Mary for her wastefulness. How do we discern between acts of genuine worship against acts that may be misunderstood or criticised by others?
4. How can the act of washing feet, as seen in the case of Adrian Vlok and Frank Chikane, serve as a powerful symbol of forgiveness and reconciliation in South Africa? What does this act teach us about healing and unity?
5. How can we in the church promote peace and understanding in divided communities? Do we consider our personal faith as having a bearing to the broader society that we live in?

Daily lectionary readings:

- **Monday, April 07, 2025:** [Psalm 20](#); [Exodus 40:1-15](#); [Hebrews 10:19-25](#);
- **Tuesday, April 08, 2025:** [Psalm 20](#); [Judges 9:7-15](#); [1 John 2:18-28](#);
- **Wednesday, April 09, 2025:** [Psalm 20](#); [Habakkuk 3:2-15](#); [Luke 18:31-34](#);
- **Thursday, April 10, 2025:** [Psalm 31:9-16](#); [Isaiah 53:10-12](#); [Hebrews 2:1-9](#);
- **Friday, April 11, 2025:** [Psalm 31:9-16](#); [Isaiah 54:9-10](#); [Hebrews 2:10-18](#);
- **Saturday, April 12, 2025:** [Psalm 31:9-16](#); [Leviticus 23:1-8](#); [Luke 22:1-13](#);



FAMILY TIME:

Written by Jenny Blake – CHILDREN'S PASTOR – jennyb@bmc.org.za

Week 5 - Anointing His Feet

Scripture: John 12:1-8 (The Message)

Key Verse: “Mary came in with a jar of very expensive aromatic oils, anointed and massaged Jesus’ feet, and then wiped them with her hair. The fragrance spread through the house.” (John 12:3)

Introduction

Have you ever wanted to give someone a special gift to show how much you love them? Maybe it was a handmade card, a thoughtful present, or simply spending time with them. In today’s story, we meet Mary, who showed her love for Jesus in a surprising way—by pouring expensive perfume on His feet.

Bible Story Recap

Jesus was visiting His friends, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, just days before He would go to the cross. During dinner, Mary took a very expensive jar of perfume, poured it on Jesus’ feet, and wiped them with her hair. The whole house was filled with the beautiful scent. But not everyone was happy. Judas, one of Jesus’ disciples, complained that the perfume could have been sold and the money given to the poor. Jesus defended Mary, saying that she had done something beautiful—preparing Him for His burial. Mary’s act of love and worship would be remembered forever.

Family Discussion Questions

1. **Why do you think Mary poured perfume on Jesus’ feet?**
Talk about how this was a way to show deep love and honour.
2. **How do we show Jesus that we love Him today?**
Discuss ways we can worship, serve, and give generously.
3. **Why did Judas criticize Mary? What does that teach us?**
Share how sometimes people miss the heart of worship and focus on the wrong things.

Teen Discussion Questions

1. **Mary’s act of love was costly. What does it mean to give Jesus our best today?**
Reflect on ways we can put Jesus first in our lives.
2. **Judas acted like he cared about the poor, but his heart wasn’t right. How can we check our own motives when we criticize others?**
Talk about the importance of having a sincere heart.
3. **Jesus said Mary’s act would be remembered. How can we live in a way that honours Jesus and leaves a lasting impact?**
Encourage thinking about faith in action.

Activity: Scent of Worship

Take some perfume, scented oil, or a candle, and let everyone in the family smell it. Talk about how Mary’s gift filled the whole house and how our worship and love for Jesus should fill our lives.

Prayer

“Dear Jesus, help us to love and worship You like Mary did—with all our hearts. Teach us to give You our best and to focus on what truly matters. Amen.”