

How to Love So Extravagantly That It Burns Through Offense

Sometimes we offend people, and that's a hard thing to resolve. However, in those moments when people are offended because we love so extravagantly and they misunderstand it, let's thank Jesus for the opportunity to stand with Him.

Let's celebrate taking a risk and following the leading of the Holy Spirit even into uncharted waters. It's so much better to obey God than to remain stationary and immovable because of the fear of someone getting offended.

I have been marked recently by the story of one who loved Jesus so lavishly that it offended even His closest friends. Mary of Bethany was compelled with such passion and gratitude that she courageously loved Jesus through the offense, anger, rage and misunderstanding surrounding her. She stepped through the fear of man to pour out such an extravagant love that thousands of years later, her act of love is still being celebrated.

A Lavish Gift of Thanksgiving

Mary of Bethany had lost all hope. Her brother Lazarus was dead, and Jesus came too late to help. Her brother was gone. Deeply moved in spirit and troubled when He saw the pain in Mary's heart, Jesus also wept with her. Then He went on to raise Lazarus from the dead. After this miracle, nothing was too costly to lavish upon Jesus as an act of thanksgiving and worship (John 11). A life was saved and restored because He was moved by compassion. What can one offer in exchange for a life restored? Mary poured out all she had over Jesus.

"While He was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at supper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of ointment, a very costly spikenard. She broke the jar and

poured the ointment on His head” (Mark 14:3, MEV).

A Love That Burns Through Offense

This intimate act of love for Jesus offended even His closest friends.

“There were some with indignation within themselves, saying, “Why was this ointment wasted? It might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.” And they grumbled against her” (Mark 14:4-5, MEV).

We find out in Matthew 26:6-13, that it was Jesus’ disciples who rebuked Mary. This act of lavish love apprehended them, offended them, and arrested them. This act of extravagant love pushed their buttons to the point of anger and indignation. They saw it as a waste and not as the best stewardship of the gift that she had. She wasted it all on Jesus. We find out in John 12:4-6 that Judas Iscariot was the forerunner in rebuking this woman of her lavish love. It was not long after this, that he went on to betray Jesus for a mere 30 silver coins (Mark 14:10; Matt. 26). Mary’s radical act of love was catalytic in bringing alignment, purity, and focus once again. Those who were for Jesus would remain while those against Him would be repelled by such intimate expressions of love toward Him.

Jesus Covers Us

Jesus received this beautiful gift from Mary and stood in the gap to protect her from the accusations, rebukes and anger.

“Jesus said, ‘Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. You always have the poor with you, and whenever you wish, you may do good to them. But you will not always have Me. She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel will be preached throughout the whole world, what she has done will also be spoken of as a memorial

to her'" (Mark 14:6-9, MEV).

Loving Excessively

What beautiful yet offensive acts of love are we going to pour out today? Sometimes the more intimate acts of love that Jesus sees as beautiful, the more offensive even to those closest to Jesus. Don't be afraid to love Jesus extravagantly today even if others around you don't understand or get offended. As long as you are led by the Spirit and led by love, He will be honored.

What kind of radical love will you pour out to Jesus simply because you are in love Him and grateful for all He's done on your behalf? Who in your family has He brought back to life? How have you been impacted by His mercy? Where would you be right now without Jesus?

Today, may you throw aside every weight or distraction that entangles, may you run wholeheartedly into the arms of Jesus. Keep your eyes fixed on Him, the Author and Finisher of your faith, who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross and despised the shame so that He could lavish His love upon you (Heb. 12). May you be inspired to step through fear of offending others to love Him excessively today. May your extravagant love spark a revolution and set things in motion for people to be impacted generations from now. May the expressions of your intimate love for Jesus arrest people with a new kind of love and awaken a passion inside of them to fall in love with Jesus like never before. {eo2}

*In addition to authoring Silver to Gold, Spirit Flood, Water to Wine and Life on Wings, **Jennifer A. Miskov** has supported Bill Johnson and Heidi Baker on several writing projects. She was ordained with Iris Global on New Year's Eve 2011 by Heidi Baker. Shortly after, she walked through one of the most stretching times of her life to establish Destiny House in February 2012. She also launched the first of the Annual*

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