

A Devotion Of Epic Proportions

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[0 : 00] Well, have your Bibles open to Mark 14, but as we start, just to make a few points about perfume. Now, when a man wants to smell nice, he generally buys something that looks like this.

That's, I think it's called a speed stick. They're quite cool, I like them. I mean, they're not going to change the world, but you're going to smell less manly, if I can put it like that.

But when a guy is dating a girl, and he wants her to smell nice, he will buy something like this. Now, for those who don't know, I've had it on good authority that this is the thing to buy for if you're dating a young girl.

It's from Frozen, and it says this, It'll make them feel like a princess with this simmering body spritzer that has a beautiful sweet berry fragrance.

Now, I don't know what a body spritzer is, but you buy that and your girl will be happy. But when a man buys this, Oh, okay, so now you know things are getting serious.

[1 : 15] This is not dating material. This is, we're moving on towards long-term commitments over here. And the thing that tells you he's serious about this person is that this fragrance is worth a lot more than that frozen spritzer.

And it tells the person that you're buying it for that he loves them and that they're worth a lot to him. That's why you buy it. Just so, by the way, a marketing friend of mine told me about the fact that this Chanel 5 is about 1,500.

I could be wrong. Let's just peg it there, 1,500. And he says that those perfumes, the ingredients aren't more than a couple of hundred. But they market up like that because who's going to buy a perfume that's only a few hundred rand when you're wanting to express how much you feel for the person?

They've got to market it up so that the girl knows that the guy's paying something and it's costing him. So she feels better. And of course, he feels better because he's telling her how much she's worth to him.

I'm not quite sure what this last one is saying if a guy buys this last one, though. Can you see it? Oh, that's number five, Chanel. That's a ripoff and we get those, don't we?

[2 : 29] And when you open up the bot and you think, is that really Chanel number five? The girl will know. All right, so thanks. So in our story today, perfume is going to act as a catalyst for us thinking through how much we think Jesus is worth to us.

So that might be something interesting for us to latch on to. And what we'll see is that this today's passage is about a devotion of epic proportions.

A devotion of epic proportions. That's the woman who gives Jesus that perfume. But of course, Jesus wants us to be devoted to him in just such epic proportions. And so we'll be thinking through that together.

One of the main themes in the Gospel of Mark is discipleship. It asks the question, what does it mean to be a follower of Jesus? What kind of people is Jesus looking for to be in his kingdom? How are they to live their lives in response to him? And so today we're going to learn all about the kind of sacrificial devotion Jesus is looking for in his people.

[3 : 34] And it's going to challenge us to think through how we can express our devotion to him. We don't often spend time thinking through what Jesus requires of us as his followers in how we devote and how we give sacrificially to him and to his cause.

Now in order to properly understand what kind of devotion Jesus is looking for, we need to look at the different characters in our story. Because they'll tell us, they sort of play off each other. Mark has highlighted a little story and it's a sort of a compare and contrast situation going on.

So first of all, you've got the treachery of the Jewish leaders. So verse 1 and 2, the Passover is close by and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill him.

Now the Passover is one of the highlights of the Jewish calendar. The other one is Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. The Passover of course commemorates the great day of salvation that came out of Egypt. And instead of being focused on Passover and what God has done for them, they're busy focusing on killing an innocent human being.

The religious leaders of all people. And they've got all these little plans. They're looking for a sly way how to arrest Jesus and kill him. But not during the feast, because the people might riot.

[4 : 48] So what you see is they've got these schemes and plans going on. They're full of guile and deception. They're basically making cold-hearted calculations as to how they can get Jesus killed.

They're not interested in God at all. Not even closely, remotely interested in doing the right thing. They see Jesus as a threat to their power and position and he's got to go. End of story.

There's no reconciliation. We can't be friends. He must go down. We must stay. It doesn't matter who he is. But for all their planning, they don't seem to be able to get anything done. They've got all these plans, but they're too scared to make a move.

We want to do something, but not now because there's too many people. It's only when Judas, at the end of our story, goes to them that they have a plan that can work. So you'll see verse 10.

When Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priest to betray Jesus to them. Sorry, then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priest to betray Jesus. They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money.

[5 : 49] So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over. Now, in between the treachery of the Jewish leaders and the treachery of one of Jesus' own disciples, you've got this story sandwiched in between those sort of two bookends of people who are calculating and scheming to bring Jesus down.

And sandwiched in between is this beautiful story of this devotion of truly epic proportions. Mark deliberately places her story inside these two bookendings of the Jewish leaders' scheming to highlight the difference in her response to Jesus compared to their response.

As we look at her, we see someone whose devotion to Jesus is one of, as we've said, epic proportions. And there's four aspects of her devotion that are important for us to get a hold of if we're going to sort of take that on board ourselves.

Now, we could make the mistake of thinking the story is about her gift. It's certainly in the story. But it's not actually about her gift. It's actually about her and the depth of her devotion to Jesus, her purity, the beauty, and the fierceness of her devotion, really, of her sacrificial devotion to Jesus. Having said that, the gift is part of the devotion, and it's really the first thing you notice in the story. It's the first thing that sort of leaps out at you, doesn't it? Have a look at verse 3. So while he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume made of pure nard.

[7 : 27] She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. The first thing that we see is a gift of extravagant devotion.

A gift of extravagant devotion. The gift that she gives to Jesus is incredibly expensive. It puts the Chanel No. 5 in the shade. Chanel No. 5, maybe 1,500 Rand.

This bottle of nard, the disciples will tell us, is worth 300 denarii. No one knows what that means. Some translations say it's about a year's wages. If you peg that in modern terms, we're talking anywhere up with over 100,000 Rand.

It could be close to 250,000 Rand. That's an extravagant gift, no matter how much money you've got to back that up with. Now the perfume is pure nard.

We don't really deal in nard anymore. Has anyone had nard? If you've been to the East, you might have... Well, no one's bought a bottle of nard, that's for sure. Well, it's imported from India.

[8 : 28] It's only grown there and it's imported all that way from India. Now in those days, it's not just jumping on the train or sending it over with a plane. It's got to be walked across thousands of kilometers of desert. And that's where it gets its value from.

So this is a singularly extravagant gift. But its value is nothing compared... The value of the gift is nothing to her compared to the value of showing her love to the Lord.

So the emphasis isn't really on the gift other than to tell us that it's a picture of extravagant devotion. Then the second thing going on is what I call scandalous devotion.

Scandalous devotion. Have a look at how the scene unfolds. Again in verse 3. While Jesus was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the Nepper, a woman came with an abaster jar of very expensive perfume.

Now we don't make much of that. In our modern age, women eat with us when we eat. And going forward, back and forth. In those days, women didn't dare walk into the room where the men were eating.

[9 : 38] It's a very conservative culture. They were confined to the outer rooms. Maybe the kitchen or another room. They would eat later. And so she's breaking a huge social taboo by just walking into the room.

And then she, by breaking the jar and pouring it over Jesus' head, she's breaking another taboo. She's bringing a stop to the whole evening's festivities. Everyone's got to stop talking and start talking about this incredibly extravagant thing that she's just done.

You know, she pours out the entire contents of the jar onto his head. And that's going way beyond socially accepted greeting protocols. The greeting protocols in those days, if you did come and visit, they would either wash your feet or take some oil and pour it over your head as a sign of respect, just to wash the dust off and to make you feel welcome.

But they don't pour a whole jar of the most expensive oil on the planet onto people's heads. Ladies, for example, just imagine your man dousing you with the entire bottle of Chanel No. 5 when you go out on a date.

You say, well, you know, that's too much. It's just a little bit is enough. So everyone notices what she's doing. She stops the whole evening's meal in its tracks and causes this huge uproar.

[10 : 50] The disciples are furious with her. The NIVs, they're indignant. Yeah, it's a little bit more than that. We'll get to that in a second. But she's not going to let anything stop her from showing her love for Jesus.

She's happy to break those taboos. If she's not happy, she's willing to do it because she wants to show her devotion to Jesus. She's not going to let anything stop her from showing Jesus and potentially others how much he means to her.

So we've got extravagant devotion. We've got scandalous devotion. And then we've got what I call spontaneous devotion. Spontaneous devotion. Now, compared to the calculating schemes of the leaders and the disciples who calculate the cost and they themselves are scandalized, the woman doesn't seem to care about the cost.

She's the opposite of both the Jewish leaders and the disciples. She's not calculating what it costs. It doesn't matter to her. Now, just have a look at how the disciples respond.

Don't worry, I don't need that. They respond indignantly to one another. Verse 4. Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another. Why this waste of perfume?

[12 : 04] It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor. And they rebuked her harshly. What that means is they were actually shouting at her. What do you think you're doing? Are you crazy?

Don't do that. That's worth a whole... That's 100,000 rand. We could have given it to the poor. Whether they really thought in those terms or whether they were just trying to be a little bit maybe sanctimonious, we don't know.

Jesus' followers did give to the poor. She doesn't care. She doesn't care. It doesn't matter to her. Her expression of love and gratitude to Jesus is spontaneous.

She's not calculating the costs. She hasn't overthought it and she hasn't overanalyzed it. And I think this is the key to unlocking her extravagant devotion.

She's not taking into account the cost of the gift to her, but simply being willing to give whatever she wants to match the level of her love and affection for Jesus.

[13 : 02] And then we've got genuine devotion. Genuine devotion. Another comparison. Well, this is the one with the disciples.

See, her devotion is genuine. The disciples are absolutely furious about the cost of the perfume. But their condemnation demeans both the gift and demeans her and it demeans Jesus.

They sound sort of holy. Hey, we could have given it to the poor. But perhaps unknowingly they demean Jesus because they're saying Jesus is unworthy of such extravagance.

Back to our illustration where the men are giving something to their lady. Imagine you went shopping for perfume and you walk down the aisle in the perfume aisle, I guess. You walk past the Chanel No. 5 and you pick out that little frozen spritzer.

You normally buy Chanel No. 5, but no, no, no. Now you're going to buy the frozen spritzer. What is your wife? It's going to be a long, silent drive home after that. Because you're not really showing her what you feel about her, what she's worth.

[14:11] You're demeaning her. That's what's happening here. The disciples are judging by appearance and by worldly standards. By their standards, she's done a wasteful thing. But Jesus sees into her heart.

He can see into people's motivations. And he sees nothing but beauty in this gift. In fact, he says in so many words she's done a beautiful thing, depending on your translation. Her devotion is genuine because it comes from a genuine place.

It doesn't matter what the gift is. The extravagance of the gift shows that she alone understands and values Jesus' immeasurable worth. So those four things, we've got a gift of, there's extravagant devotion, there's scandalous devotion, there's spontaneous devotion, and genuine.

And all those things are wrapped up into this woman who gives this gift to Jesus. Now that presents a challenge to us. So we want to think through, what about our devotion to Jesus?

Where do we stand in this? And it presents us with a challenge. In fact, a sacrifice challenge.

Because her devotion was sacrificial, meaning it cost her.

[15:21] So the challenge of the woman who anoints Jesus is a challenge for us to think through our response to what Jesus has done in our lives. How do we show our devotion in sacrificial terms for Jesus and his kingdom?

And look, let's be honest, sacrificial giving or sacrificial devotion is hard. So it's worth spending some time thinking through that. Now, there are two things that stop us thinking sacrificially before we even approach, you know, thinking through giving and being devoted to Jesus.

Now firstly, our culture pulls us back a little bit, doesn't it? Because our culture is no longer Christian. There's nothing in it that points to sacrifice as a way of life. Everything in our culture screams pleasure and comfort, doesn't it?

All the adverts. You and your comfort are the most important thing in your life. Everything is about putting you first and putting and giving you what you want and making it easy at the same time.

So that you can have a life of leisure and comfort. Now thanks to all the gadgets that make our life easier, our time is filled actually really with trivialities, with stuff that doesn't actually matter. Just think of all the time we spend on social media watching online content.

[16:36] And these things don't produce one ounce of godliness or change in the world that Jesus wants to see. In fact, it holds us back. And then the second thing that we've still got to think through when we think sacrificially maybe is our own Christianity.

Or rather, our particular sort of style of Christianity. As good evangelicals, we know we cannot earn our salvation. And we're also wary of external shows of religion that look holy but isn't.

Now those things are good and in and of themselves. But we must be careful that we don't throw the baby out with the bath water. Now the person who had to think through this whole issue of receiving grace from God but still being busy with works for the kingdom is Martin Luther.

He had to think very carefully through this because he came out of the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages. Late Middle Ages. See, Luther, by teaching that one is justified by grace alone through faith alone, bumped up against the church.

And they accused him that this kind of teaching would lead to no one doing any good works at all. In response, Luther penned this famous quote. He says this, A Christian is an utterly free man, lord of all, subject to none.

[17:53] But at the same time, a Christian is an utterly dutiful man, servant of all, and subject to all. So you've got these two competing ways of thinking about a Christian. So what is he saying? Well, he's saying, first of all, that a Christian is utterly free because of the redemption price paid by Christ.

He's freed us from obligation to the law and from condemnation in sin, from our judgment and from our shame. But because a price has been paid, we've been bought, we no longer belong to ourselves.

We now belong to a new master. We're not free to do whatever we want. We're to live under a new master and to live how he wants us to live. And Jesus tells us very plainly that he wants us to live a

life of love and service to God, to him, and to our fellow man.

So Luther says this, Insofar as a man is a servant, he does all kinds of works. That's what servants do. They're busy doing stuff. A servant not doing anything isn't a good servant.

You with me on that? I mean, no one employs someone to come and do something in the yard or the house, paint, whatever, do some carpentry, fix it. You get the electrician in to come and he just, oh.

[19 : 08] Just stands around looking for a while and then just leaves it. He's like, no, no, I'm paying you to do something. You need to do something now. So Luther says, Insofar as a man is a servant, he does all kinds of works.

And he says here, man must learn self-control and have dealings with others in this life. Once you become a Christian, you're going to start living a different way. Becoming a Christian isn't about Jesus dying for you so that you can go away to be in heaven when you die.

There's an in-between bit. The living bit. And it's all about spreading the kingdom as we've been going through Mark. This is what Luther further says. He says here the works begin.

Being a Christian doesn't mean you mustn't work. It means you've got to have the right relationship between salvation and works. Here, he says, a man cannot enjoy leisure. Here he must indeed take care to discipline his body.

Notice by fastings, by watchings, by being careful, by labors, effort and other reasonable discipline. And subject it, the body, to the spirit.

[20 : 10] So that it will obey and conform to the inner man. Meaning the man that's being renewed by Jesus. So that should help us. That should free us. Our culture is pulling us back.

And our own idea of Christianity might be bumping up against sacrificial giving or sacrificial living. So what should our devotion to Christ look like?

Well, I want to just mention a look at two of those things we saw a bit earlier. But those are really the center of how the woman responds to Jesus. And that is we've got to have devotion that is scandalous and spontaneous.

So our devotion, if it's going to match hers, must be scandalous and spontaneous. So here's a great question for us to wrestle with as we think through how do we live our lives in response to Jesus?

How do we follow Jesus? How do we live our lives as Christians? Here's a question. Are others scandalized by your devotion to Jesus? Are others scandalized by your devotion to Jesus?

[21 : 10] Do you do things so that other people go, Really? Are you doing that? That's incredible. You know, one of the most amazing stories of this kind of devotion is the story of Corrie ten Boehm.

In the Second World War, she was a Dutch woman taken by the Germans and put in a concentration camp. And she was a devout Christian. But, you know, obviously, I mean, it's like Christians living in Ukraine at the moment.

But worse than that. And then she said, no, what must we do? She was with her sister. And her sister said, no, we must be thankful to God for everything. And she could, you know, they've been taken prisoner of war in this death barracks.

And she said, no, let's thank God that we're together. The two sisters were together. Let's thank God that we've got his word. And then the sister said, and we need to thank God for these fleas. Because they're in this concentration camp barracks infested with fleas.

Everywhere. And non-stop. And she just, Corrie ten Boehm just couldn't. The fleas are too much. Anyway, the fleas bit her. She got sick. And then she said, yeah, you see, how can we be thankful for the fleas?

[22 : 14] But she recovered. And when she recovered, she was able to take God's little Bible and go speak to all the different prisoners in the barracks. And pray with them and sit with them and read the Bible with them. And the soldiers didn't come near to the barracks because of the fleas.

And so she ended up being thankful for those fleas. So that kind of, it's incredible kind of devotion. Later on, she met the prisoners that guarded her.

And they were vicious to her sister. And she forgave them. She made the point of going to find them after the war. And go and forgive them so that they would know that she's forgiven them. Do we show our love for Jesus and for his people no matter what?

Or are we too quick to find an excuse to get up doing something for the kingdom? Maybe some of the excuses. I'm a bit sick. I don't feel well. Maybe I don't have enough money.

I'm a bit poor. Maybe you've come off a 12-hour working shift. Maybe your kids are sick. And how are you supposed to deal with that? Or your car doesn't work. Or whatever normal obstacle gets in the way of us showing our love for Jesus.

[23 : 22] Or scandalous devotion just keeps on going. It doesn't let small things like that stop us from showing others how much we love Jesus. By serving them.

Nothing should stop us from showing our love for Jesus. Do you remember the poor widow a couple of chapters ago at the temple who put just a little two cents in? All she had? That's a scandalous gift.

The woman in our story today is an example of scandalous devotion. It gets people talking. So if you want to know if your devotion is deep enough, are other people talking about how crazy you are to get stuck into church work when you've got all these things hanging on your plate?

Or to go and serve someone? Or to make that call? Or take that little bit of energy? Or drive to where you might need to drive to? Or take that little bit of extra time, even though you don't think you can, and say, Jesus, please, I don't know if I can do this, but actually, deep down, you know you can.

But it's okay. You can ask him for help. And of course, he's going to give you the energy to be able to do that. Are you willing to be held up to scorn and ridicule in showing how much you love Jesus?

[24 : 37] Especially in our modern world, it's turning more and more away from Jesus. That might well cost us, as we tell people the truth about Christ. Okay, so the first question is about, are they scandalized by our devotion?

The second question is, how spontaneous is our devotion to Jesus? How spontaneous is our devotion to Jesus? Spontaneity here is looking for new and interesting ways to serve him.

And not calculating or over-calculating how much it's going to cost you in time and energy and money. We've got to look for new and interesting ways to serve him and not be too worried about how much it will cost me.

I need to get back home for lunch. Okay, can't do anything after church. I can't drive to that area. I need my recovery time from work.

Work is so hectic, I just can't do anything. I just need to, I can't do anything now. Or maybe, if you're a sort of a business type person, maybe you over-calculate the cost to benefit ratio.

[25 : 47] If I don't see instant results, I can't, it's not for me. I need to see something happening on the spot, now, because otherwise it's a waste of my time. But just imagine, that that's how God worked with us before he sent Jesus.

Imagine God was over-calculating or non-spontaneous. If he over-calculated what it would cost him to save the world. And he went, hmm, look, I love you guys, but you know, it's my son I'm talking about over here.

Yeah, I don't think I'm going to send him. It's just, it's just too costly. So, so God himself doesn't calculate the cost to him. He's happy to pay the cost. He himself shows spontaneous scandalous love, if you want to call it like that.

Paul talks about this kind of love, this kind of spontaneous devotion, I should say, when he writes a letter to the church at Corinth. And he reminds the church at Corinth about some very poor believers north of Corinth in Greece to show them what spontaneous devotion to Jesus looks like. I'm just going to, it should be up on the screen for us. Paul says this, now brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches.

[27 : 11] I wonder, if we just stop there, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. We want you to know about a blessing that God has given us. Now in our modern day language, if someone says to you, hey, we had, this church was really blessed by God.

Nine times out of ten, we think, oh, they must have got something. These guys give something out of their grace and blessing. They're not receiving, they're giving. In the midst of a very severe trial, not a small trial, a very, think of a church, maybe the church like in Ukraine, they're being bombed out of existence.

Now they're still going. In a very severe trial, they're overflowing joy and their extreme poverty, not their extreme riches, welled up in rich generosity.

How do people do that? Well, if you love Jesus, then nothing is too much for you to do. For I testify, this is Paul writing, he was there, that they gave as much as they were able and even beyond their

ability.

So that's the grace that God has given them. God gives us grace to go beyond our ability to do what we can and then go beyond. Entirely on their own, no one had to tell them what to do, they were just creative and thought of new and interesting ways they can serve.

[28 : 33] They urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in the service to the Lord's people. Not, you know, Paul, look, we'd love to give, but you know, I mean, like, look, you know, the bombs, the famine.

They did the opposite. Paul, just wait, please, we want to do something. How can we do something? What can we do? But you guys are poor. No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, God is going to give us grace. We're going to give you something.

They pleaded with us urgently for the privilege of sharing in the service to the Lord's people and they exceeded our expectations. They gave themselves first of all to the Lord and then by the will of God also to us.

Now, I'm not saying we mustn't plan anything. Spontaneous given isn't, spontaneous devotion isn't the same as being impulsive. Rather, spontaneous devotion is love towards Jesus that doesn't just factor in cost to me.

It constantly looks for new ways of expressing itself and when you combine these two, scandalous devotion and spontaneous devotion, you end up with sacrificial giving that in Jesus' words is beautiful.

[29 : 44] You might have missed that in verse 6. So, I just want to end up by talking about the beauty of sacrificial devotion. The beauty of sacrificial devotion. Do you notice how Jesus described what the lady had done for him?

Leave her alone, said Jesus. In fact, he would have been angry. Leave her alone. Go away. Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me.

Depending on your translation, it might say a good thing or a noble thing. But the word good doesn't quite capture the Greek word, the translation. Beautiful or noble is much better.

The Greek word describes something that's noble, something that's worthy, something that's honorable, that's attractively good, that's noticeably beautiful.

It's appealing. And so, when we talk about beauty, we're not talking, we're no longer talking just about obedience. We're talking about, we're in the realm of sort of glorious sunsets, breathtaking mountain views.

[30 : 51] Those are beautiful. It's like, oh, did you see the sunset? Yes, it was rather good. No, it was beautiful. Did you see this mountain? It's beautiful. Do you see this exquisite piece of jewelry? Beautiful. This is not just plain, old, mundane goodness or obedience.

It's way more than that. Now, we don't often think of our sacrifice and devotion as something beautiful. I don't know if you've ever thought about that. But whatever you do for Jesus, if it's done like this lady's doing, just out of the goodness of her heart, without calculating the cost, what you're doing is beautiful for Jesus.

If we follow this woman's example and give out of her place of pure and genuine thankfulness, of pure and deep love, then whatever we do, big or small, whatever we say, lots or little, by saying, thank you to Jesus, he will see that what we're doing as beautiful or noble or praiseworthy.

I don't know about you, but I don't mind being beautiful. Noble is maybe a little bit nicer for me.

Ladies, beautiful is good. Jesus will look at whatever it is and say that you're doing something beautiful or noble for him.

and just knowing that, that it pleases him, this Jesus, this cosmic king that as we sang about, came and died for us. The man who sacrificed everything he had to give us the greatest gifts we could ever possess.

[32 : 17] Forgiveness of sins, the Holy Spirit, blessings beyond measure and a future and a hope and a past that doesn't come up and overwhelm us. knowing that you made him happy, this man happy, and that he thinks what you're doing is amazing, well, that should be plenty reward enough.

And that should be motivation to think through spontaneous giving, spontaneous devotion and extravagant and scandalous devotion.

We can give extravagantly. Whether it's big or small, we don't worry about the cost. We can give scandalously. Being prepared to break social norms of whatever is acceptable to show our love for Jesus.

We can give spontaneously, not over calculating the cost and not even bothered about the cost because who cares? Because I just love Jesus and I want to give him something nice and do something nice for him.

And genuinely, from a place of real heartfelt love and appreciation for who Jesus is and what he's done for us. Well, let's pray to Jesus and ask him to help us to do these things.

[33 : 33] Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for a lovely reminder of how you responded to one of your followers' act of devotion.

It was an incredible act, Lord. And we can learn so much from it. Help us, Lord, to be the kind of disciples and followers that you describe here who are willing to take risks and be scandalous and who don't calculate the cost of what we do or say for you, but just knowing that we can do it freely because of the love and the grace that you've given to us.

Accept whatever we do and say, Lord, as sacrifices in honor of you. In Jesus' name. Amen.