

Sermon Questions: Labor of Love – Gifts
Matthew 26:6-13

1. How would you describe the difference between giving and *thoughtful* giving?
2. What are some of the best gifts you've given or received, not in terms of money, but in terms of the thought behind them?
3. What is the difference between being materialistic and receiving or communicating love through gift giving?
4. Read Matthew 26:6-13. Mary uses her expensive jar of perfume to anoint Jesus. It is a great gift. What is the most extravagant gift you have ever given to someone? Was it difficult to give something of great value away? How was the gift received?
5. The disciples scold Mary for her gift, saying it was wasteful. Have you ever had someone second-guess or question your act of giving a generous gift?
6. What is the modern-day equivalent to the love and devotion that Mary showed to Jesus in this story? What can you do to show your love and devotion to Jesus? How does gift-giving apply to your relationship with God?
7. In terms of gifts, Gary Chapman says, "it is not the thought left in your head that counts. It is the gift that came out of the thought that communicates emotional love." Describe a time when you thought of giving a gift, but never acted on it. What happened?
8. All of us have days when we struggle to manage the demands placed on us. Given this, how do you make space to be alert and aware of what, how and when you can show love to others? How does gift-giving fit into this?
9. Pam shares the idea that if we want to show our love through thoughtful giving, our intentions matter. Describe a time when you gave a gift out of obligation, gave reluctantly, or gave to make yourself look or feel good. How does this differ from thoughtful giving?