

JESUS, THE LAMB OF GOD

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9 July 2023

Key verses: John 12:1-33

John 12:1-11 NIV

*1 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 **Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him.** 3 Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.*

*4 But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, 5 **"Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages."** 6 He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.*

*7 **"Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. 8 You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."***

9 Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. 10 So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, 11 for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him.

Background

Jesus was on His way to the Passover feast. It was not just any Passover. It was the one where Jesus was going to be crucified. It was the final week of Jesus' earthly ministry. He came to fulfil divine prophecy. He came humbly, peacefully; He came to die.

In chapter 11 we see Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. It was 6 days before the feast so Jesus decided to spend some time with his friends Lazarus, Martha and Mary.

The Dinner Party

Jesus came a few days before the feast and spent time with His friends. Simon, the leper invited them to his house for supper. He wanted to honour Jesus and probably to celebrate the miracle that had taken place. It seems that there were at least 20 people present at this dinner party.

The way they enjoyed dinners at that time was for the men to be reclining around a low table, **possibly the height of today's coffee table.**

Most probably they were talking about the fact that Lazarus was raised from the dead and Simon could have chimed in talking about the time that he was a leper, losing his fingers one at a time. But then Jesus came along, showed him mercy and healed him.

Simon

The bible calls him Simon the leper, but I think he should be called Simon the former leper. Jesus must have healed him otherwise he would have lived in a camp, outside the city.

Martha

Martha and the other women were serving the men. Martha was in her happy place, hovering over Jesus. She loved Jesus, but was a practical lady.

Mary

Right in the middle of dinner, Mary walks in and went and knelt at the feet of Jesus. She takes out an alabaster flask, with the most expensive perfume inside. She takes the perfume, and poured it over the feet of Jesus. She lovingly washed His feet. This was a job that was usually performed **by the lowest slave in the house. Mary didn't care. All she wanted to do was to worship Jesus.** John tells us that the fragrance of the perfume was hanging in the air. Instead of using a towel to dry His feet, she uncovered her hair and proceeded to dry His feet with her hair. It was unheard of for a Jewish lady to uncover her hair in that manner. **A woman's unbound hair was reserved only for her husband's eyes. Mary didn't care. All she wanted to do was to worship Jesus.** She did not care what others would think of her. **She couldn't care less about protocols.** She broke through societal norms of what women should be doing in that generation. She was bold and courageous, and took a stand, because she understood exactly who Jesus is. She refused to be caught up in the busyness around Jesus. She discovered the secret of connecting with Jesus. Mary was a box breaker in a time where women were expected to know their place. **Mary's end goal was to Worship Jesus.** John in writing this chapter, could still remember the smell of the perfume.

Judas

There must have been a stunned silence in the room. The room filled with the fragrance of her **worship. Judas couldn't control himself any longer. He said,** this is a waste! **Why wasn't it sold and given to the poor.** Why was perfume the equivalent of a full year's wages wasted like this? The scripture tells us that he did not care about the poor. He cared that there was less for him to steal. He was so mad! According to Matthew and Luke, it was right after this that Judas decided to sell Jesus out for 30 pieces of silver. **Judas' greed gave the devil a foothold in his life.**

Jesus

Answered "Leave her alone, she kept this for my burial. The poor you will always have with you, but me you will not always have with you.

In other words, 'Back off Judas, what Mary did for me will stand as a memorial to her.'

Mary vs Judas

Mary understood exactly who Jesus was. Judas was so blinded by his greed that he never really saw who Jesus was. He walked with Jesus. He experienced and saw the miracles that took place. He was even part of the miracle. When Jesus was feeding the 5000, he broke the bread and gave it to the disciples to hand out to the people. That miracle happened in his hands. As he was handing out the bread it multiplied in front of his eyes as he was handing it out. But he still could not understand who Jesus was. God was in their midst, but he did not fully recognise Him.

People from the neighbourhood

A lot of people from the neighbourhood came to see Jesus. They heard about Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

The religious authorities were not happy. Lazarus was the irrefutable evidence of the power of Jesus and His ability to bring that which is dead to life. They hated Him because of that. They wanted to kill Jesus.

The Lamb prepared for sacrifice

John 12:12-19 NIV

12 The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. 13 They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting,

"Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the king of Israel!"

*14 Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written: 15 **"Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt."***

16 At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.

*17 Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. 18 Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him. 19 **So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!"***

This was the final week of Jesus' life on earth. Thousands upon thousands came to the feast.

Each family would bring a lamb. It had to be without spot or blemish. According to the historian Josephus approximately 256 000 lambs would be in the city which meant 2.5 million Jews attended the feast.

As Jesus was riding into the city the people came and they were singing and dancing, crying "Hosanna, Blessed be the King of the Jews." But they still did not understand who they were dealing with. They thought that He was a political deliverer and that He will be the new King of Israel. A deliverer that would free them from Roman oppression. They did not understand that He was the Son of God that came to deliver all people and that He came to take the place of those lambs. That for all of eternity no other sacrifice would be needed.

Jesus was sobbing and crying when He looked over Jerusalem. According to Luke 19:39-40 some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus that He must rebuke His disciples. **"I tell you, "He replied, if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out. " I refuse that a stone cry out on my behalf!**

The prophecy in Zechariah 9:9 predicted that the Messiah would come into Jerusalem riding on a donkey. The disciples did not recognise the significance of Him riding on a donkey. They did not recognise the hour of their visitation. May we be a people so in tune with the Spirit of God, that we will recognise our moment of visitation in our midst!

When Jesus looked at those lambs that would be slaughtered as a sacrifice, He knew, that just like those lambs, He would be crucified and die as a sacrifice for the sin of all mankind.

He also knew that the same people who were shouting "Hosanna to the King," would be the very same people who would cry out, "Crucify Him!" That they would spit in His face as He hung on the cross.

John 12: 23–27 NIV

*23 **Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. 25 Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.***

*27 **"Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.***

The Father spoke from heaven to affirm Jesus as His Son. The time has come for the Son of God to be gloried.

The time has come for the Son to be lifted up on the cross, so that All men, Jews and Gentiles can be drawn unto Him.

John 12:32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Which of the guests at the dinner table do you identify with, and why?
2. The majority of Jews in Jesus' day were looking for a political leader who would free them from Roman oppression and make Israel great again. They did not realise who Jesus was and what He did for them. What does Jesus being the Lamb of God mean to you?
3. Could this be the hour of your visitation, where Jesus wants to reveal Himself to you? Are you positioned to hear Him, or are you too busy with life around you?