



March 16, 2025

Jesus at the Festivals

THE THIRD PASSOVER (PART 1)

John 11:55 – 12:8



1. Opening Discussion Questions: (in a group setting, you may not want to use all of these)

- a. What is your most valued, prized material possession – the one you might be tempted to reenter your house if it was on fire to retrieve? Under what circumstances would you gladly give it up?
- b. As a child, did you ever get a puppy or a kitten, or more recently, did you ever get one for one of your children? How long did it take for you or your children to develop a significant attachment to the new pet? Hopefully, it didn't happen, but what would have been the emotional reaction if you had needed to get rid of the pet shortly after getting it?
- c. Have you ever been in a situation where you had to deal with an individual who was claiming to do the right thing but had all of the wrong motives? How did you respond, and how did it affect your view of that person? In your opinion, which is most important, an act or the motive behind an act?

2. Sermon Outline/Key Points

- a. As People Prepared for Passover, Jesus Prepared to Be the Ultimate Passover Sacrifice
 - i. People were getting prepared before the last Passover during the earthly ministry of Jesus.
 - ii. Jesus was preparing to be our Passover sacrifice.
- b. Extravagant Love and Devotion for Jesus Is Always Appropriate
 - i. Mary's action expressed profound love and devotion for Jesus.
 - ii. It's easy to criticize love and devotion like that as weird, wild, or wasteful - don't!
 - iii. Do good deeds but cultivate extravagant love and devotion for Jesus.

3. Study/Discussion Points:

- a. **Sunday Afternoon** – As soon as possible after listening to the sermon, set aside some time to ponder these questions prayerfully:
 - i. What one thing stood out most to you in this sermon?
 - ii. What new truth did you learn, or what truth were you reminded of?
 - iii. After listening to the sermon, is there a Scripture passage you feel led to meditate on or commit to memory this week?
 - iv. What is one thing God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
 - v. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?
- b. **Monday:**
 - i. As background in preparation for this week's study, read John 11:1-44.
 1. Excluding His resurrection, how would you rate the raising of Lazarus in comparison to other miracles that Jesus performed?
 2. What is there about this miracle that would make it much more difficult to ignore for those who did not believe in Him (see perhaps verse 18 and verse 39)?

3. What do verses 4, 15,23-26, and 40-42 suggest about Jesus' motives throughout this entire account?
- ii. Now read John 11:45-52.
 1. What are the two or three reactions to Jesus due to His raising Lazarus?
 2. If Jesus were to perform such a miracle today in our highly skeptical age (and we have no reason to say that He could not if it was His will to do so), what would the response most often be?
 3. What is significant about the admission of the chief priests and the Pharisees in verse 47b (read Matthew 12:38-39 & 16:1, Mark 8:11-12, Luke 11:29-30 and John 4:48 & 20:30-31 as you consider your answer)?
 - iii. How would you summarize the principal motivation of the chief priests and Pharisees in verses 47-52? What should they have been? Do we ever see similar motives displayed in the actions of church leaders in our day?
- c. **Tuesday:**
- i. Read John 11:53-57.
 1. What did the Jewish leaders decide they would do about Jesus? Why was their action not only morally wrong but in violation of their own laws (see Numbers 35:30-33, Deuteronomy 17:6 & 19:15, and Numbers 35:12)? What does the repeated use of "testimony" suggest must happen before someone can be executed?
 2. What was Jesus' reaction to the Jewish leader's decision to kill Him?
 - a. What does that suggest about who was in control of the entire situation?
 - b. While there are no perfect parallels, what might we learn from Jesus' actions about how we should respond to some situations in which we face conflict (see Matthew 5:9, James 3:18, and Romans 14:19)?
 - i. But how do Matthew 10:38 & 24:9, Luke 9:23 & 14:27, and John 15:20 show us that we cannot use this example simply to avoid persecution as Christians?
 3. As the Passover approached, why does John say many went to Jerusalem early (see John 12:1 to help see the timeline)?
 - a. The Law does not require any unique process of purification before the Passover. Read Numbers 9:4-14. What did God require before one could eat the Passover?
 - b. Read 2 Chronicles 30:13-20 (especially verse 17). In addition to being ceremonially clean, what else was required before the sacrifice of the Passover lamb?
 - c. Read Exodus 12:3-6. How were the lambs consecrated at the first Passover? How would this have caused the Israelites to identify more closely with the sacrifice?
 - d. After they had selected their lambs on the tenth day of the month, they were to "take care of them until the fourteenth day." How do you think the care that those lambs received compared to the rest of the flock?

d. Wednesday:

- i. Read John 12:1-8 and the parallel passages in Matthew 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9
 1. What are the most significant differences in how this event is described in the three Gospels?
 2. What part of the descriptions makes it obvious that it is the same event being described?
 3. Who hosted the dinner given in Jesus' honor (see Mark 14:3)? Who was the hostess (John 12:2)? What does this suggest about Simon?
 4. Who were the primary attendees? Considering all three accounts, what does the minimum number of attendees seem to be? What do you think the atmosphere was like sitting around a table with that large group of men?
 5. Given that the host was Simon the leper (who Jesus probably had healed) and Lazarus (who Jesus raised from the dead) was there, what do you think was the focus of much of the conversation?
- ii. Compare this event as recorded in John (12:1-8) with that described in Luke 7:37-39.
 1. What differences are there between the two that make it evident that two separate events are being described?
 2. How is the woman doing the anointing described differently?
- iii. Compare what Martha and Mary do in Luke 10:38-42 with their roles in this story. How are they similar? What does it suggest about the character of each woman?

e. Thursday:

- i. Reread John 12:1-8 today and meditate especially on verse 3.
 1. Try to establish a mental image of what occurs in verse 3 based only on what that verse tells us (try to ignore any depiction you may have seen in a movie).
 2. Despite the competing distractions of a large dinner party, where was Mary's focus? What reasons would you think might have motivated her to perform this act? What do you think her attitude was as she performed it? What object lessons can we take away from her example?
 3. Mary is mentioned three times in the Gospels. What is one significant similarity in all three events (see Luke 10:39, John 11:32, and John 12:3)? How do you think Jesus' assessment of Mary's actions in Luke 10:42 prepared her for the role she is now performing? What do you think Jesus meant when He said only "one thing is necessary"?
- ii. While John's account focuses on Jesus' feet, where do Matthew and Mark report the perfume being applied?
 1. What Psalm does their descriptions bring to mind? How prophetically does Psalm 23:5 seem to apply to the event of John 12:1-8?
 2. Given how guests reclined at a table in Jesus' day, why would anointing His head have been more difficult and intrusive to the dinner party? What does anointing His head do to Mary that she might have avoided if she had just done his feet? How does Matthew 10:32 relate?

f. Friday:

- i. Today, focus on John 12:4-6, Matthew 26:8-9, and Mark 14:4-5.

- ii. What was the reaction to Mary's act of love?
 1. Matthew and Mark report on the general reaction of those at the dinner party. How many seem to be opposed or upset by Mary's generosity?
 2. John zeros in on one Apostle. How does this Apostle's reaction differ from that of the other Apostles?
 - a. What do we know about Judas' motivation that we don't know about the other Apostles? What immoral title does John give him?
 - b. Why do you think we tend to concentrate on the failings of one Apostle/Disciple and ignore the similar weaknesses of others (i.e., Peter's denial of Jesus, Thomas' doubts about the Resurrection, and here Judas' questioning of the gift to Jesus)?
- iii. There are three different reactions to Jesus in this passage: Mary's extravagant love and associated gift, Judas' (and the other's) view of wasteful behavior, and Martha's quiet, faithful, almost unnoticed service. Putting aside a natural inclination to distance oneself from Judas, where would you be in this story? Which character—Mary, Martha, or Judas—most closely describes your walk? Why?

g. Saturday:

- i. Finally, read John 12:7-8, Matthew 26:10-13, and Mark 14:3-9.
- ii. How would you interpret or paraphrase Jesus' response to those criticizing Mary's action?
 1. What does it clearly show us about Jesus' awareness of the events that would occur in the coming week?
 2. Do you think it is possible to deliberately misunderstand His statement to mean we should not care for the poor? If we understand it correctly, where does Jesus say our focus should be even as we rightly help those in need?
- iii. How does Judas respond to this rebuke by Jesus (see Mark 14:10)? How does this differ from Peter's reaction when rebuked in Matthew 16:23-17:1?

4. Application:

- a. Mary was no doubt motivated, at least in part, by gratitude for Jesus' act of raising her brother. Jesus has done far more for us by giving us new life in Him. While we can't anoint Him as she did, how willing are we to show our love and appreciation in equally generous ways? Would we consider giving a year of our careers/lives (what the perfume cost) for Him?
- b. Mary wiping Jesus' feet with her hair was an act of extreme humility, even degradation, for which she will always be remembered. We should never consider any task for our Lord to be beneath us or worry that it might be degrading (see Philippians 2:6-8, Galatians 5:13-14, and Ephesians 4:2)

5. Prayer Points:

- a. Adoration – Psalms 8:1 and 29:1-2
- b. Confession – Proverbs 28:13 and 1 John 1:8-10
- c. Thanksgiving – Psalms 95:1-2 and 100:4-5
- d. Supplications – Matthew 21:22 and John 16:19