

THE HARDEST PART

Things to Come

GROWTH GUIDE APRIL 6, 2025

The Fifth Sunday in Lent
Scripture: John 12:1-11

AUTHOR

The Gospel of John was written by John, a fisherman, son of Zebedee, who along with his brother, James, became disciples of Jesus and were part of the original 12. John wrote his gospel around AD 85-90 to prove that Jesus is the Son of God and that all who believe in him will have eternal life.

CONTEXT

In John 11, Jesus raised his friend Lazarus from the dead. Many people believed in Jesus afterwards while others went to the Pharisees to tell them what Jesus did. The Pharisees thought that if they allowed Jesus to continue like this, soon everyone would believe in him. They were also fearful that the Romans would bring additional hardships to them because Jesus' miracles often caused a disturbance. So the Jewish leaders began to plot Jesus' death. Because of this, Jesus stopped his public ministry and left Jerusalem for Ephraim and stayed there with his disciples for a while.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read John 12:1-11. What stands out to you in this passage? In the previous chapter, after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the Pharisees were trying to figure out what to do with Jesus. We might ask ourselves the same question. What are we going to do with Jesus? His way is not the easy way. Can we follow him? What does this look like in your life and what has it or what might it cost you to follow Jesus? Where are you challenged?

2. The Pharisees wanted to protect their way of life. Do we want to do the same? In this season of Lent, we are called to examine our hearts, confess any sin, and then repent or turn away from the sin we've been committing. Are there life changes you need to make in order to love Jesus more fully, to keep him as a priority? Are you willing to do this in order to be more obedient and grow closer to Jesus?
3. At the dinner given in honor of Jesus, Mary took a 12 ounce jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard, and anointed Jesus' feet. The amount Mary used was worth a year's wages. What Mary did was considered scandalous but she was willing to sacrifice to show her love for Jesus and anoint him. What might you do to show your love for Jesus?
4. Are you surprised at Judas' reaction to Mary anointing Jesus? What does he seem concerned about? What do we learn about Judas' character? Look at the contrast between Mary anointing Jesus with an expensive perfume and Judas who will betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.
5. In the devotional, "Loved to Life" by Ann Voskamp, the author says, "Mary sacrificed all her worldly security for the security of an otherworldly love." The scene of Mary anointing Jesus is especially poignant considering Jesus is nearing the end of his life. If you could anoint Jesus and thank him for his sacrifice what would you say? How could you honor Jesus right now?

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