

# *The Gospel of John*

## *12:1-11*

Welcome back to this week's study in the book of John.  
As with this study and all bible studies, remember to pray before you start.

This week we are starting in chapter 12 which is about a month after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (Chapter 11) and it's six days before the Passover and the crucifixion of Jesus.

✠ **John 12:1-2** *Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him.*

Do you remember where Jesus was?

✠ **John 11:54** *Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples.*

If you said Ephraim, then you are correct. If you will remember, Ephraim was about 12 miles North of Jerusalem and Bethany was about two miles from Jerusalem. With Bethany being so close to Jerusalem, it's possible that Jesus spent His last week there in Bethany, staying with Mary, Martha and Lazarus. So here we are in the house of Mary and Martha and once again we see Martha serving as we did before.

✠ **Luke 10:38-42** *Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." And Jesus answered and said to her, "**Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.**"*

It's not that Jesus was rebuking Martha for serving. But there is a time to serve and a time to be in God's word listening to Jesus' teaching. So what's different about the two accounts? In Luke, Jesus was invited to the house of Martha and Jesus was teaching the people as He was there.

✠ *A certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving.*

That was the purpose of Jesus being there, but Martha had other ideas of what should be done or what was more important. Once again it's not that Martha was wrong, just that her timing was off. In the account in John, Jesus was there to be fed physically.

***There they made Him a supper; and Martha served.*** Notice Jesus does not rebuke Martha for her service.

Serving is a good thing and something we should all be serving others. But there is also a time that you need to stop and be refreshed, if not then you will get burned out.

When are those times of refreshing?

It could be on Sunday at church.

It could be a weekly bible study that you attend.

It could be the studies here that you go through each week.

It could be your personal daily devotional time in the word, or a combination of all the above.

What ever it is, we all need to stop and spend time with Jesus, if we don't then how can we minister to others. If you read through the four gospels, you will read that Jesus always knew when to stop and spend time with the Father. How can you share the love of Jesus and His word if you don't experience this rest for yourself on a daily basis?

Martha had the gift of serving and she was learning how and when to use it. We all have gift(s) of the Holy Spirit, and we all go through times of learning how and when to use them. It's like buying a DVD player; you can open up the box and plug it in, but unless you read the manual it's of no use to you. Sure, by now you probably know how to hook it up to your TV, but there are usually so many other functions that you can program into a player, like something as simple as setting the clock so it stops flashing all the time, to more advanced features.

You may know the basics of your gift(s), but there may be more advanced features (so to speak) that you are missing out on because you think you can get by with just the basics.

I could just teach from the surface of the bible, or I can dig deep into the word and teach, which is usually why people come here in the first place. Because they get the basics of what the scripture is saying, but they want help in digging deeper into God's word.

This web site is a guide to help you dig deeper into God's word.

✠ ***1 Cor 2:10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.***

Now I don't know it all, in fact some of you may know a lot more than me about the bible, which is good, because it means that you are spending time in God's word.

Martha was learning how and when to use her gift, and she knew that this was the time she was to serve. But Mary also had her gift and she also knew it was time to use it as well.

✠ **John 12:3** *Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.*

Some commentaries I read said that Martha and Mary were well off financially and that's how Mary could afford such a costly gift. Others say that they were not that well off financially and this was her life's savings. I tend to agree more with the latter.

Martha and Mary did not have a lot, and Martha gave what she had, and that was to serve the Lord with what food they had and just minister to His needs.

Mary did not have this same gift but she still wanted to let the Lord know how much she loved Him. So she gave her most prized possession, *a pound of very costly oil of spikenard*. As we read on in verse 5

✠ **John 12:5** *"Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?"*

Judas wanted to sell this gift for 50 bucks (*three hundred denarii*=about \$50), but to Jesus it was priceless, because it was a gift from the heart. What do you have that is priceless? Are you willing to give it up for the Lord?

We always think of priceless things as physical things that we purchased with money. But what about your family or friends, are they priceless to you? Have you given them to the Lord? I don't mean physically where you would kill them or anything like that, but I mean have you trusted the Lord with them?

We tend to try so hard to save our families and we pray for them, giving them to the Lord. But then we take them back trying our own way to save them instead of allowing the Lord to work in their lives.

It makes you wonder how much more quickly that people would be saved if we just really trusted in the Lord and allowed Him to speak to them instead of us getting in the way all the time. Sometimes I wonder if we can even hinder the work of the Lord?

We preach to them so much that they don't want to be around us. We mail them scripture or wives even will put scripture in their husband's lunchbox trying to save them. But what we think is good can actually be annoying to the unsaved. We know that there is life in the scriptures because they testify of Jesus, Who gives life to all who will accept Him. We know that Jesus' words are like rivers of flowing water, but sometimes we tend to drown non believers in His word instead of washing them in the water of the word.

If you read through the scriptures, Jesus never forced Himself on anyone, but rather they saw His life and came to Him. We should stop trying to force Jesus on our loved ones and allow them to see the change in our lives, then they will come to Jesus.

That's just what Mary was doing; she was spending time with Jesus and as a result others knew she was with Jesus. She didn't have to go and cram Jesus down their throats, when she left the house others knew she was with Jesus and I'm sure they asked her about Him. How do we know this; read the verse again.

✠ **John 12:3** *Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.*

Not only was the house filled with the fragrance of the oil, but Mary smelled the same as well. When she and Jesus left the house and went their separate ways, others knew she was with Jesus because they smelled the same.

I don't think that anyone (other than Judas) said that she had given Jesus a great gift or put her on a pedestal because of her gift to Jesus. No, they just knew that she was with Jesus. How intimate and loving that was and they didn't know, but they knew that Jesus loved her and she loved Jesus. This was not a sexual type of love, as we tend to associate with love now-a-days. No this was pure love between God and His creation. Pure love between a sinner and her Savior, the same type of love we should be sharing with Jesus.

Anyone can read the bible, but when you read God's word and spend that intimate time with Him, that's when others know that you have been with Jesus. We call it a quiet time or a daily devotional time in God's word.

So think about it, are you spending time in God's word just reading, or are you spending that intimate time with the Lord that goes beyond just reading His word, but allowing Jesus to speak to you through His word and you talking back to Him in prayer.

✠ **John 12:4-6** *Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.*

Others may not like that you spend this time with Jesus and the world calls it a waste of time and money, just like Judas did.

We tend to think that Judas was the only one who was upset about this, because John points Judas out as the one who said this. But if you look at the other gospels it makes it clear that Judas was not the only one.

✠ **Matt 26:8** *But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste?"*

✠ **Mark 14:4** *But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, "Why was this fragrant oil wasted?"*

I think that Judas had been the one who first said this and initiated the others to think about it and complain. But John gives us a commentary on the whole situation and where Judas' heart really was.

✠ *This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.*

We need to be careful, because others may sound like they have good suggestions, but in reality their motives are for their own gain. There are many seminars on how to increase the number of people in your church. They don't really care about the lives of the people and whether they are going to hell or not. No, they are just looking at numbers and if you have a big church with a lot of people they think it means you are doing well. But if you think about it, if a church has 5000 people in it, but only 100 are saved verses a church with 500 people who are all saved, which do you think is the stronger church? Which would you rather go to?

For three or so years, Judas had thought that he was sneaky and sly and that no one knew that he was stealing from the funds. The others may not have known at the time, but Jesus did, and even though Jesus knew this, He allowed Judas to be counted among the twelve. It just goes to show you the heart of God, and that no matter how much you have been messing up or sinning that He is patient and is waiting for you to repent of your sins. He won't reject you when you do, but you must do it to be forgiven.

✠ **2 Peter 3:9** *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

We tend to overlook or try to forget about the repentance part, but scripture makes it very clear that it is something we all must do.

✠ **Luke 5:31-32** *Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."*

✠ **Luke 24:46-47** *Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."*

The Lord is longsuffering (patient) with us, and He will wait. But if you wait to long, you may be sorry.

But Jesus was quick to silence these men from their wrong accusations.

✠ **John 12:7-8** *But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."*

Jesus had been teaching that He was to die and rise from the dead after three days. No one seemed to get it except for Mary. *She has kept this for the day of My burial.*

Jesus also teaches that the poor will always be here and we should minister to their needs, but the greater need is not always the physical things, but the spiritual things.

✎ ***"For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."***

Jesus was to die and rise from the dead and then ascend into heaven and He is with the Father right now. He did this so both rich and poor could be saved.

Now by the time we got to the end of chapter 11 you may have thought that the whole Lazarus thing was done and over with. Think again.

✎ ***John 12:9-11 Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.***

The Jews had seen a miracle in Lazarus' life, and because of this miracle, some of the Jews believed in Jesus.

✎ ***Because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.***

But then there were those who didn't like this, and not only wanted to put Jesus to death but Lazarus also.

✎ ***But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also.***

Remember at the beginning of the study I said that from the raising of Lazarus up until now had been about a month? Well for a month the religious leaders had seen the fruit of what Jesus had done, and for a month the religious leaders anger swelled in them, so much that they no longer hated just Jesus, but Jesus' friend Lazarus to.

There will be those who will accept the change in your life when you turn to Jesus and will even follow Jesus because of the miracle they have seen in your life. But then there are those who will despise the change in your life and will turn their backs on you. They just don't get it, and don't know why you don't party any more. Why you don't go to the same movies they do. Why you don't talk with a filthy mouth anymore. They seem to miss the dirty jokes that you used to tell all the time. They want to know why you don't chase after men or women any more. They don't understand why church is so exciting to you, more exciting than the bar scene you used to be in. They don't understand why you can't get them any things for free from work; they don't see it as stealing but as a way to get free stuff from you. They think you are missing out on so much fun and think that their fun is better than yours. They think that when we die, that we will be sitting on a cloud for all eternity playing our harps. They think the real party will be in hell, and wonder why don't you want to go party with them there? And how could you waste your hard earned money by giving it to the church or the poor, what a waste they think.

No there will be many who wont understand or accept your new lifestyle. But you are in good company, because they didn't understand Jesus and rejected Him. The lives that Jesus had touched many didn't understand and they wanted to get rid of those pesky Christians. They tried to burn us, saw us in half, hang us, torture us, call us names, spit on us, hit us, beat us, throw us in jail, bring false accusations against us, and so on. But they can't, nor will they ever get rid of Jesus. **Because Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords, He is the Alpha and Omega the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. Jesus rules and reigns for all eternity and no one can stop His reign.** So who's side do you want to be on? The side of a loser who will burn for all eternity in hell? Or the side of Jesus who reigns for all eternity?

Jesus made the choice that He wants you with Him in heaven. Jesus made that choice on the cross two thousand years ago as He hung there thinking about you. Now, the choice is yours!

Well that's it for this week. Next week we will continue on in chapter 12, as we will read of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

May God richly bless you in His love, grace and mercy and may you make the right choice, a choice that you will have to live with for all eternity!