



Walking With the Savior

Through An Eyewitness Account of John

John, one of the sons of Zebedee, stood as an eyewitness to the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. He began his journey as a fisherman, leaving behind his nets and the future he had planned for himself to follow a teacher, a prophet, and a miracle worker. At the outset, John did not fully understand who Jesus was or what lay ahead. In faith, he aligned himself with Jesus, drawn by His words and deeds. As John walked alongside Jesus, witnessing His teachings and miracles, he gradually realized that Jesus was far more than a prophet or a remarkable teacher. John came to understand that Jesus was God in the flesh. This revelation was not just a turning point for John personally, but a moment of eternal significance. By choosing to follow Jesus, John's future was forever changed, and his decision would go on to impact the world—not only in his own time but throughout every generation to come. ***Let's embark on an inspiring journey with John as we walk alongside Jesus.***

Background Matters

THE ANOINTING

John in chapter 12 concluded his record of Jesus' public ministry with (a) the account of Mary's anointing of Jesus (which set the stage for His coming sacrifice), (b) His Triumphal Entry, and (c) the prediction of His death.

12:1–2. The time schedule now was more definite and critical: It was **six days before the Passover**. **Jesus** went back from Ephraim (11:54) to **Bethany, where Lazarus lived**, and attended a **dinner** in His **honor**. Mark wrote that the place was Simon the Leper's home (Mark 14:1–11). The dinner must have been a joyous occasion with Mary, **Martha**, and **Lazarus** there. The relationship of this family to Simon is not known, but it must have been close since Martha **served**.

12:3. The **pure nard** was a fragrant oil prepared from the roots and stems of an aromatic herb from northern India. It was an **expensive perfume**, imported in sealed alabaster boxes or flasks which were opened only on special occasions. Mary's lavish gift (a **pint**) expressed her love and thanks to



Jesus for Himself and for His restoring Lazarus to life. **The house was filled with the fragrance.** This is one of John's many side comments which indicate that he was an eyewitness of much of Jesus' ministry.

12:4–5. **Judas Iscariot ... objected** to this lavish waste (in his viewpoint). His objection—that **money** from the sale of the **perfume** should have been **given to the poor**—was not honest (cf. v. 6). According to Mark (14:4–5) the other disciples picked up his criticism and rebuked her harshly. Evil quickly spreads, and even leaders can be carried along by Satan's tools. The value of the perfume was **a year's wages** (lit., "300 denarii") perhaps a lifetime of savings.

12:6. John with the hindsight of history was able to state why Judas said **this**. Judas, evidently the group's treasurer (cf. 13:29), would pocket some of the benevolence **money** for **himself**. Whereas Mary gave openly and sacrificially, Judas wanted to hoard money for himself secretly and selfishly. He even betrayed Jesus for money—30 pieces of silver (the price of a gored slave; cf. Ex. 21:32; Zech. 11:12–13).

12:7–8. Normally anointing was something festive. But in this case the anointing was in anticipation of His **burial**. Living by God's Word, **Jesus** knew that as the suffering Servant, He must endure pain, die, and be buried (cf. Isa. 53:9).

So He immediately defended Mary's act of love and devotion. **You will always have the poor among you** is not a divine endorsement of poverty or an encouragement to do nothing about poverty. Instead, Jesus was saying that the causes of poverty are many and people will always have occasions to help the poor (Mark 14:7). But the opportunity to show love to Jesus on earth was limited. **You will not always have Me**, that is, here on earth (cf. John 12:35; 13:33; 14:3–4).

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY (12:9–19).

12:9–11. Jesus was such a controversial Person that it was impossible for Him to be near Jerusalem and remain unnoticed. From all over the country, people came to the Passover feast. Many sought out **Jesus** (cf. 11:56) and **also ... Lazarus**. Because Lazarus had been restored, **many ... Jews** believed in **Jesus**. **So the chief priests planned to kill two men—Jesus and Lazarus!**¹

This Week in "Walking With the Savior,"

Genuine worship often looks costly to those who do not understand the depth of love behind it. Judas, a thief and betrayer, saw Mary's sacrifice as wasteful, but Mary saw it as an offering worthy of the One she loved. Those gathered in the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus knew the weight of gratitude. Jesus, the Great Physician, had called Lazarus out of death and restored him to life. After

¹ Edwin A. Blum, "John," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 316.



such a miracle, how could Mary's gift be too much? Every drop poured out was worth it.

Pure nard was a rare and fragrant oil made from the roots and stems of an aromatic plant native to northern India. This costly perfume, imported in sealed alabaster jars, was reserved for life's most meaningful moments. When Mary poured out a pint of this precious oil, she poured out more than perfume. She poured out love, gratitude, reverence, and surrender at the feet of Jesus. She honored Him for who He was and thanked Him for what He had done in bringing Lazarus back to life. And as the fragrance filled the house, so did the beauty of her worship.

What does your worship of the Lord cost you? What are you willing to pour out for Him? Let's discover the answer together as we explore this passage this week.

Study Guide 38

This study guide presents daily assignments that are specifically crafted to enhance your growth in the Word. Embrace each moment to meditate and reflect, and watch as your spiritual maturity flourishes through your dedicated efforts.

THE VALUE OF PERSONAL WORSHIP

Jesus Anointed at Bethany

John 12:1–11

Topics:

Devotion, Dishonesty, Faith, Honor, Hypocrisy, Jesus Christ, Loyalty, Money, Plans, Poor, Possessions, Preparation, Value, Worship

Open It, Mondays. Open your heart and mind to the truth of the Word.

1. *When have you indulged another person with an expensive gift?



Explore It

2. When did Jesus arrive in Bethany? (12:1)

3. *What was done in honor of Jesus in Bethany? (12:2)

4. What did Mary do to Jesus? (12:3)

5. *How did Judas respond to Mary's act? (12:4-5)

6. What motivated Judas's response to Mary's act? (12:6)

7. *Why did Jesus say that Mary had anointed Him with perfume? (12:7)

Explore It, Tuesdays, keep the rhythm of personal study moving.

8. What did Jesus say about the poor? (12:8)

9. Why did the large crowd come to Mary and Martha's home? (12:9)

10. What did the chief priests plan to do? (12:10)



11. What motive did the chief priests have? (12:11)

12. How do you worship Jesus with your resources?

Push on Wednesdays; keep the rhythm of personal study moving.

13. *What concern should we have for the poor among us?

14. In what way can we help those less fortunate than ourselves?

15. Why are there poor people?

16. *How do we selfishly use God's resources for our own pleasure?

Get It Thursdays, keep the rhythm of personal study moving.

17. When have we masked our own selfishness with the appearance of concern for others?

18. *How can you worship and honor God with your resources today?



19. How can you help someone less fortunate than yourself this week?

Drive it Home, Fridays, keep the rhythm of personal study moving.

20. What impure motives do you need to confess to God and ask Him to purify?

A Journey Through The Gospel of John **2026**

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