

## UPPER ROOM ADULT BIBLE STUDY

### "The Gospel of John"

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#### Lesson 49 John 11:45-12:11 "One Dies for All"

<sup>45</sup> Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, <sup>46</sup> but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. <sup>47</sup> So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. <sup>48</sup> If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." <sup>49</sup> But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. <sup>50</sup> Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish." <sup>51</sup> He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, <sup>52</sup> and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. <sup>53</sup> So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.

- a. "If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him" – So hardened were the hearts of the Sanhedrin, they did not dispute the miracles Jesus did. Instead, they focused on what they would lose. Their "love" for the people of God had grown 'cold.'
- b. "and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." – at the heart of their desire, to do away with Jesus, was their true self-centered motivation to retain power. They believed that they, alone, were the saviors of Israel. As such, it was their duty to:
  - a. Remove the threat of Jesus as Messiah, given their beliefs that the messiah would come and overthrow the Romans – taking Israel back to its former glory.
  - b. Redouble their efforts to kill Jesus, and His followers, out of the fear that the Romans would crush them and diminish the prestige they enjoyed.
- c. "Caiaphas" – a Sadducee of high influence, actually held the post for 18 years; Sadducean arrogance showed up in "**You know nothing at all.**"
- d. "it is better that one man should die for the people..." – though Caiaphas was Jesus' enemy, and expressed the justification for killing Jesus, he also uttered a prophesy!
- e. "he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation" – reflecting back, John, recalls Caiaphas' words – perhaps related later to John by Nicodemus. John reminds his readers, that God is in charge, and will at times use enemies of the faith to pursue His ends.
- f. "also to gather into one the children of God" – As John reflects on Jesus' death and resurrection, he asserts Jesus' plan for believers: eternal life in heaven as "one."



- g. "So, from that day on, they made plans" – the die is cast; Jesus' fate is sealed, as far as the Sanhedrin is concerned.

<sup>54</sup> Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples. <sup>55</sup> Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves.

<sup>56</sup> They were looking for<sup>[a]</sup> Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think? That he will not come to the feast at all?" <sup>57</sup> Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.

- a. "Jesus therefore no longer walked openly" – Jesus knew, now, that there was going to be no turning back. Preparing Himself for what was to come, Jesus would now spend the majority of His time/energy with His Father and with His disciples.

12 Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup> So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. <sup>3</sup> Mary therefore took a pound<sup>[b]</sup> of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. <sup>4</sup> But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, <sup>5</sup> "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii<sup>[c]</sup> and given to the poor?" <sup>6</sup> He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. <sup>7</sup> Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it<sup>[d]</sup> for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup> For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."

- a. "Lazarus was one of those reclining" – Jesus was back with His friends, this time, a happier occasion! Notice that John identifies Lazarus as the one "*whom Jesus raised from the dead.*"
- a. The Bible doesn't record anything which Lazarus might have said regarding his experience of coming back to life.
- i. No "bright light" or "seeing loved ones" often described by people whose hearts stop or are in a near-death fugue.
- ii. Problematic conclusions are often drawn in these situations, especially when the individual was not a believer in Christ, and yet "sees" Jesus welcoming him/her into heaven.
- b. "Mary took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard" – spikenard is an aromatic essential oil, which was used to treat anxiety, sleeplessness, and other ailments
- c. "anointed the feet of Jesus" – her act of worship and thanksgiving
- d. "Judas...Why was this ointment not sold...and given to the poor?" –
- a. Judas' greed had corrupted his capacity to recognize the beauty of Mary's act of worship.



- i. But does Judas have a legitimate point? Is it good stewardship to spend thousands of dollars on elements of beautiful worship OR should it be given to social causes?
  1. Many people today believe in "movement" churches rather than "bricks and mortar."
  2. "Bricks and mortar" offer a place to gather to, and a place to depart from.
    - a. Require budgets to maintain and beautify.
    - b. Can become idols, as people attach to it and seek to possess it.
    - c. Can result in more pride in the "place" instead of Jesus.
    - d. Usually have rules about how to act/dress in them.
  3. "Movement" churches
    - a. "The church is people" is the battle cry.
    - b. Often attracts people opposed to 'organized religion.'
    - c. Looser in norms of how to act/dress.
    - d. Desire to not look "churchy," including clergy dress codes
    - e. Eventually evolve into "bricks and mortar," if more permanence is desired.
  4. Messiah Lutheran is a "bricks and mortar" church
    - a. Very involved in helping people in need
      - i. Congregationally
      - ii. Social Ministry: Network, etc.
      - iii. Responsible stewardship
- e. **"Leave her alone"** – Jesus snapped at Judas for his rude and disingenuous criticism.
- f. **"but because he was a thief"** – John knew the real reason: Judas' greed!
- g. **"she may keep it for the day of my burial."** – Jesus pointed her act to His death.
- h. **"the poor you always have with you"** – Jesus is not discounting the idea of assisting the poor. He is contrasting the fact that He will eventually leave them.

<sup>9</sup> When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus<sup>[e]</sup> was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. <sup>10</sup> So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, <sup>11</sup> because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

- a. **"So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, because, on account of him"** – Not only was Jesus in the crosshairs of the Jews, so was Lazarus. Jesus' (and any believer) destiny was sealed; their rejection complete!