



Study Guide

Message:

“Fighter, Fan, or Follower”

SCRIPTURE

<i>Main Text:</i>	<i>Other Text:</i>
<i>Mark 14:1-9</i>	<i>Romans 6:14; John 4:19; Luke 14:15-24; Isaiah 53:12; Matthew 26:28; 2 Corinthians 2:15; Romans 12:1; Psalm 27:4</i>

UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

*(This section focuses on understanding what the text means —
before jumping to what it means for us.)*

Read Mark 14:1-9

Main Idea:

Everyone responds to Jesus. Some fight against Him, some remain fans without fully surrendering, and some become fully devoted followers.

Commentary:

Mark 14 shows us several different responses to Jesus. The religious leaders are actively fighting against Him and want Him killed. Others are close to Jesus but respond negatively when Mary pours out her expensive perfume. Then there is Mary, who responds with extravagant love, worship, and surrender.

The story reminds us that being around Jesus is not the same as following Jesus. We can attend church, know Christian language, and identify ourselves with Jesus while still resisting Him in certain areas of our lives.

The question isn't simply, "Do I believe in Jesus?" It's also, "What is my response to Jesus?"

Discussion Questions:

1. What different responses to Jesus do you see in Mark 14:1-9?
2. Why does our response to Jesus matter?
3. What is the difference between being around Jesus and actually following Jesus?

Takeaway:

Everyone responds to Jesus. The question is whether our response is surrender or resistance.

Read Mark 14:1-2 & Romans 6:14

Main Idea:

Fighting against Jesus and insisting on our own way keeps us from experiencing the life He offers.

Commentary:

The religious leaders had seen Jesus teach, perform miracles, and demonstrate His authority, but they refused to surrender their power and position.

Jesus challenged their way of life, so they wanted Him out of the picture.

We can do something similar. We may not openly reject Jesus, but we can resist Him when His ways interfere with our plans.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus makes it clear who He is. He is the Bread of Life, the Light of the World, the Good Shepherd, the Resurrection and the Life, and the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Jesus offers freedom from the power of sin. Romans 6 tells us that sin no longer has to rule over us. Following Jesus means choosing His way over our own.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some ways people fight for control instead of surrendering to Jesus?
2. Why can surrendering control be difficult?
3. Are there areas of your life where you find yourself saying, “Jesus, you can have everything except this”?
4. How does knowing Jesus offers freedom from sin change the way you view surrender?

Takeaway:

Jesus offers freedom, but we must surrender the control we have been fighting to keep.

Read Mark 14:3-5 & Luke 14:15-24

Main Idea:

A fan can look like a follower while still keeping control of their life.

Commentary:

The people at the table were physically close to Jesus. They were eating with Him and listening to Him. From the outside, they looked like they belonged with Him.

But when Mary poured out her expensive perfume, their hearts were revealed.

They saw waste. Jesus saw worship.

The perfume was extremely valuable—worth roughly a year's wages. They believed the money could have been used for something else. But Jesus saw something greater happening.

A fan of Jesus wants to be close enough to benefit from Him but not close enough to be completely changed by Him.

We can do this too. We can attend church, say the right things, and identify as Christians while still wanting to remain in control.

Jesus isn't asking us to simply add Him to our lives. He is calling us to follow Him with our whole lives.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the difference between a fan of Jesus and a follower of Jesus?
2. Why is it easy to appear committed to Jesus while still holding onto control?
3. What areas of life are people most likely to say, "Jesus, you can have everything except this"?

4. Have you ever found yourself trying to use Jesus to justify something you already wanted to do?

Takeaway:

Jesus isn't looking for people who simply associate with Him. He is looking for people who surrender to Him.

Main Idea:

Being close to Jesus doesn't automatically mean we are surrendered to Jesus.

Commentary:

Judas is a sobering example of this truth. He spent years walking with Jesus, listening to Him, and witnessing His ministry. Yet being close to Jesus didn't produce surrender in his heart.

When Judas was confronted, he didn't respond with repentance. Instead, he continued down the same path and eventually betrayed Jesus for money.

This gives us a reason to examine our own hearts.

Church attendance, Christian friendships, Bible knowledge, and familiarity with Jesus are valuable, but none of them replace surrender.

The question isn't simply, "How close am I to Christian things?"

The question is, "**Am I allowing Jesus to change me?**"

Discussion Questions:

1. Why doesn't proximity to Jesus automatically guarantee faithfulness?
2. What can keep conviction from leading to repentance?

3. Is there something God may be asking you to surrender rather than continue defending?
4. How can our LifeGroup become a safe place to talk honestly about areas where we struggle to surrender?

Takeaway:

True discipleship means allowing Jesus to transform us, not simply allowing Him to be around us.

Read Mark 14:3-9

Main Idea:

A follower of Jesus responds to His extravagant love with extravagant surrender.

Commentary:

Mary's response is completely different from everyone else's.

She brings an alabaster jar filled with expensive perfume and pours it over Jesus. She doesn't hold some back. She gives Him everything.

Breaking the jar meant that it could not simply be resealed and saved for later. It was a total offering.

Mary's actions show what happens when someone understands who Jesus is and what He has done for them.

She had experienced His love and grace, and her response was worship.

What looked wasteful to others, Jesus called “**a beautiful thing.**”

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think Mary was willing to give something so valuable to Jesus?
2. What does breaking the jar communicate about Mary's surrender?
3. Why might complete surrender look wasteful or foolish to the world?
4. What would “pouring it all out” look like in your life?

Takeaway:

Jesus is worthy of our whole lives, not merely the parts we are comfortable giving Him.

Read Isaiah 53:12 & Matthew 26:28

Main Idea:

Mary's sacrifice points toward the greater sacrifice Jesus would make for us.

Commentary:

Mary poured out what was most valuable to her.

Jesus would soon pour out something infinitely more valuable—His own life.

Isaiah describes the suffering servant as one who would pour out His life unto death. Jesus also spoke of His blood being poured out for the forgiveness of sins.

Mary's act points us toward the gospel.

She gave everything she had to Jesus because of the love she had received from Him. Jesus gave everything He had for us because of His love for us.

We don't surrender in order to earn Jesus' love.

We surrender because Jesus has already loved us completely.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does Jesus' sacrifice change the way you think about surrender?
2. Why is our surrender a response to grace rather than a way to earn God's love?
3. What does the cross reveal about the character of Jesus?
4. How should remembering the gospel affect our everyday choices?

Takeaway:

We pour out our lives because Jesus first poured out His life for us.

Read 2 Corinthians 2:15

Main Idea:

Our surrendered lives should carry the aroma of Jesus to the people around us.

Commentary:

When Mary broke the jar, the aroma filled the room.

Paul uses similar language when he says that followers of Jesus are the pleasing aroma of Christ.

Our goal isn't simply to become better people. Our transformation should help others see Jesus through our lives.

Our love, generosity, forgiveness, humility, compassion, and obedience can become the aroma of Christ wherever God has placed us.

The love we receive from Jesus isn't meant to stop with us. It is meant to flow through us to others.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to be the “aroma of Christ”?
2. What characteristics of Jesus should people experience through our lives?
3. How can our surrender to Jesus affect the people around us?
4. What is one way you can intentionally reflect Jesus to someone this week?

Takeaway:

The love of Jesus was never meant to stop with us—it is meant to flow through us.

MAKE IT PERSONAL

Every one of us has a response to Jesus.

Maybe you've spent time fighting against Him because you don't want to give up control.

Maybe you're a fan. You enjoy being around Jesus, but there are still areas of your life where you want to remain in charge.

Or maybe you're learning what it means to be a follower—someone who isn't perfect, but continually chooses surrender.

Mary didn't pour out the perfume to earn Jesus' love. She poured it out because she had experienced His love.

Jesus gave everything for you. The question is whether you are willing to give everything to Him.

Reflect:

1. Am I fighting against Jesus in any area of my life?
2. Am I following Jesus only when it is convenient?
3. Am I trying to use Jesus to justify the way I already want to live?
4. What am I holding back from Jesus?
5. What would complete surrender look like for me right now?
6. Is there something the Holy Spirit has been asking me to surrender?
7. How can my life become a greater reflection of Jesus to the people around me?

Key Truth:

Jesus isn't looking for fans. He's looking for fully devoted followers.

LIVING IT OUT

Let this passage move you from reflection to action this week:

Surrender Control

Identify one area where you have been fighting for control. Give that area specifically to Jesus and ask Him to lead you.

Receive His Love

Spend time remembering what Jesus has already done for you. Let surrender come from gratitude rather than guilt.

Pour It Out

Look for one opportunity this week to sacrificially love, serve, encourage, or bless someone else.

Practice Obedience

Ask God what He has already told you to do. Then take one practical step of obedience.

Be the Aroma of Christ

Think about how your words, attitudes, actions, and relationships can make Jesus more visible to the people around you.

Hold Nothing Back

Ask yourself, “What part of my life am I still trying to keep for myself?” Bring it honestly before God.

For LifeGroups

ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER

Talk through these together:

1. Which description best challenges you right now: **Fighter, Fan, or Follower?**
 2. What does fighting for control look like in everyday life?
 3. What are some ways someone can be a fan of Jesus without truly following Him?
 4. Why do you think surrender can feel so threatening?
 5. What stands out to you about Mary's response to Jesus?
 6. What does Jesus' sacrifice teach us about God's love?
 7. What would it look like for your LifeGroup to become a community of fully devoted followers?
 8. What is one practical area where you want to surrender more fully to Jesus this week?
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PRAY TOGETHER

Thank Jesus for giving His life completely for us.

Ask God to reveal any areas where we are fighting for control or trying to live life on our own terms.

Confess the places where we have been fans rather than fully devoted followers.

Thank God for His extravagant grace, mercy, and forgiveness.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help us receive the love of Jesus and pour that love out to others.

Pray that our lives would become the pleasing aroma of Christ wherever God has placed us.

Ask God to help your group become a community marked by surrender, obedience, selfless love, and devotion to Jesus.

Final Thoughts

There will always be a response to Jesus.

Some fight Him because they don't want to surrender control.

Some remain fans because they like being close to Jesus but aren't willing to let Him change everything.

And some become followers—people who recognize that Jesus is worth everything.

Mary's broken jar gives us a picture of wholehearted devotion. She didn't hold back a little perfume for later. She poured it all out because Jesus was worth it.

And her sacrifice points us to something even greater.

Jesus poured out His life for us.

He took our sin, our shame, and our punishment upon Himself. He went all the way to the cross so that we could have forgiveness, freedom, and a relationship with God.

The gospel is extravagant and costly, but it is also the greatest demonstration of God's love.

The One who gave everything FOR YOU is worthy of nothing less than everything FROM YOU.

Jesus isn't looking for fans. He's looking for fully devoted followers.

“Transformation is the journey of love from Jesus to a person, through a person, to a person, through a person, to a person, and it keeps on going.” — JD Walt

The love that was given to you through Jesus was never meant to stop with you. Break open the jar. Pour it all out. Let the fragrance of Jesus fill the room.

