

LIFE GROUP LESSON

John the Life-Giving Gospel • Week of June 28

Introduction

Many of us who profess Jesus as Lord and are growing in our faith can find it hard to know how to express our love to Christ. We *want* the Lord to know how much we love him ... but our sincerest attempts to express our love falls short. Could it be because our hearts are not fully focused?

If we were standing in the very presence of Jesus, what would our deepest expression of gratitude look like? Would we even have words to utter, or would we be silent? ... would we have questions? ... or deep down would the true state of our hearts be exposed? Perhaps today you are angry with the Lord over something gone awry. Where is your heart these days?

In John, chapter twelve, six days before Passover, Mary expresses her love to Jesus as she empties a twelve-ounce jar of expensive perfume on the Lord's feet. Jesus, in Bethany at the home of Lazarus, the man he raised from death, is seated while Martha is serving. And soon, at some point mid-meal, Mary falls at Jesus' feet and pours out a rare and expensive perfume on Jesus' feet while also wiping his feet with her hair. Jesus is blessed. Others are not.

Read John 12:1-19

This is six days before *THE* Passover, the third and final Passover referred to in John's gospel. It may very well be this is the 10th day of the first month (Nissan) when the paschal lamb is selected in Jewish homes, per the LORD's word to Moses in Exodus 12:1-10. Through her faith-in-action, Mary's offering shouts: *I choose Jesus. He is the Christ, the Paschal Lamb over my heart. He is the LORD's Messiah! ... and I love him. He raised my brother to life ... I know he is Resurrection and Life. I have seen it... I love you, Jesus! My heart belongs to you.*

Discussion:

- The rare ointment and tears flow together as Mary anoints and wipes Jesus' feet. She and her family are beneficiaries of Jesus' Resurrection and Life! He is the same God throughout the ages of time. Where else in Scripture do we see stories of resurrection and life that involve tears of joy, love and deep gratitude flowing together? Read the following passages and share what the Lord reveals to you.

Genesis 33:1-4

1 Kings 17:17-24

2 Kings 4:32-37

Luke 15:17-24

- Did you notice the leading priests decided to kill Lazarus too, "for it was because of him that many of the people had deserted them (and their tradition) and believed in Jesus" (Jn 12:10-11)? What does the plotting and scheming of these religious leaders say about their hearts? What does Jeremiah 17:9-11 say about the human heart?

Each of us stands in need of a heart transplant (Psalm 51:10). Ezekiel spoke God's promise: "And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart" (Ez 36:26). We need God's Son and the gift of God's indwelling Holy Spirit because, "All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). Our sins are covered by Christ's shed blood. Trust him as Savior!

If Jesus had not taken our place in death and paid for all sin for all time, no one would be saved. If Jesus had not promised that upon his departure, the Advocate would come and live in us, we would have no indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit (Jn 16:7). If Jesus had not been raised to life – beautifully, physically released from death's grip – we would have no Savior in heaven interceding for us from the place of highest honor (Hebrews 1:3). Yet, the Lord Jesus Christ did accomplish all this! And his resurrection *and* ascension is proof that he is who he says he is, the *way*, the *truth*, and the *life* (Jn 14:6; see also Acts 1:9-11).

Read John 12:20-36

Jesus says, "Put your trust in the light while there is still time; then you will become children of the light" (Jn 12:36a). Are you placing your trust in Christ? If we refuse, then we will find ourselves walking in darkness, and sadly, children of darkness. Death and darkness are no place to live. It is interesting how John writes: "... After saying these things, Jesus went away and was hidden from them" (Jn 12:36b).

- Now is the time to put your trust in Christ the light of the world, for a time is coming when he may be 'hidden' from us. Read together the words of Isaiah:
"Seek the LORD while you can find him. Call on him now while he is near. Let the wicked change their ways and banish the very thought of doing wrong. Let them turn to the LORD that he may have mercy on them. Yes, turn to our God, for he will forgive generously" (Isaiah 55:6-7).

- Oh that we turn to the Lord while there is time, while he is near! May we not be in the camp of Judas Iscariot who was angered by Mary's offering, or the religious leaders who plotted murder in their heart. Pray—
 "Lord, give me a heart to know you as the Lord. I want to be part of your people, a child of the light. I ask you to be my God, my Savior, and my Lord. I turn to you today with all my heart. In Jesus' Name. Amen."

Read John 12:37-50

- Share together what the Lord is revealing to you in these verses (vv37-50). What especially stands out to you in Jesus' words in vv44-50?

Creed means: *'I believe; give my heart to; put my heart into.'* Like Mary, when we put our heart into something worthy (in her case, *someone* worthy), our heart follows our focus. We no longer ask: *How do I conform?* ... or *How do I fit in?* for our hearts belong to Christ. We abandon who we were, so we may live into who we now are in Christ. Our heart's desire is for all the world to know and follow Jesus.

- Close by declaring aloud the Apostles' Creed.

One Year Bible Reading

June 28: 2 Kings 13:1-14:29, Acts 18:23-19:12, Psalm 146:1-10, Proverbs 18:2-3
 June 29: 2 Kings 15:1-16:20, Acts 19:13-41, Psalm 147:1-20, Proverbs 18:4-5
 June 30: 2 Kings 17:1-18:12, Acts 20:1-38, Psalm 148:1-14, Proverbs 18:6-7
 July 1: 2 Kings 18:13-19:37, Acts 21:1-17, Psalm 149:1-9, Proverbs 18:8
 July 2: 2 Kings 20:1-22:2, Acts 21:18-36, Psalm 150:1-6, Proverbs 18:9-10
 July 3: 2 Kings 22:3-23:30, Acts 21:37-22:16, Psalm 1:1-6, Proverbs 18:11-12
 July 4: 2 Kings 23:31-25:30, Acts 22:17-23:10, Psalm 2:1-12, Proverbs 18:13



Text: John 12

PLAIN TRUTH:

A heart _____ out to _____ leaves a _____ fragrance on the hearts of _____.

1. Salvation is _____, but discipleship will _____ you.
2. If our hearts aren't _____ to Jesus, we _____ in as _____ faith wanes over time.
3. Jesus is saying you _____ - a _____ heart or I can give you a _____.