

WEEK OF AUGUST 30, 2026

**5-Day Devotional
based on Sunday's message:**

**Anointed
at
Bethany**



Anointed at Bethany
John 12:1-11

Provided by



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John 12:1-11 (NLT)

Six days before the Passover celebration began, Jesus arrived in Bethany, the home of Lazarus—the man he had raised from the dead. A dinner was prepared in Jesus' honor. Martha served, and Lazarus was among those who atea with him. Then Mary took a twelve-ounce jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard, and she anointed Jesus' feet with it, wiping his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance. But Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would soon betray him, said, "That perfume was worth a year's wages. It should have been sold and the money given to the poor." Not that he cared for the poor—he was a thief, and since he was in charge of the disciples' money, he often stole some for himself. Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for my burial. gYou will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me." When all the peopled heard of Jesus' arrival, they flocked to see him and also to see Lazarus, the man Jesus had raised from the dead. Then the leading priests decided to kill Lazarus, too, for it was because of him that many of the people had deserted theme and believed in Jesus.

Day 1: Gratitude at the Table

Devotional

Have you ever sat through a family meal where everyone came for the same reason but responded to the occasion differently? A meal held in someone's honor can reveal more than the menu. Watch the room and you will see who serves, who listens, who stays distracted, and who remembers why everyone gathered. The same is true at the dinner in Bethany. Jesus is the honored guest, but the people around Him respond in very different ways. Lazarus reclines at the table as living evidence of Jesus' power over death. His restored life quietly testifies to what Jesus has done. Martha sees what needs to be done and serves, turning gratitude into practical care. Mary kneels at Jesus' feet and pours out something precious, expressing gratitude through costly worship. Their responses are different, but each one points beyond itself to Jesus.

Going Deeper

Grace does not produce one approved personality or one expression of gratitude. Lazarus' testimony, Martha's service, and Mary's worship all turn attention toward the same Savior. Our responses do not need to look identical, but the grace we have received should become visible in a way that points beyond us to Jesus.

Quote

"Martha's service, Lazarus' presence, and Mary's gift are different responses shaped by gratitude for Jesus."

Bible Verse

"Six days before the Passover celebration began, Jesus arrived in Bethany, the home of Lazarus—the man he had raised from the dead. A dinner was prepared in Jesus' honor. Martha served, and Lazarus was among those who ate with him. Then Mary took a twelve-ounce jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard, and she anointed Jesus' feet with it, wiping his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance.." - John 12:1-3 (NLT)

Refection Question

When you remember what Jesus has done for you, where is gratitude already becoming visible? Where does gratitude need to move from a private feeling into a concrete response?

Today's Practice

Name three specific ways Jesus has shown you grace. Choose one fitting response today: serve quietly, thank someone, give generously, forgive, tell your story, or set aside unhurried time to worship.

Prayer

Jesus, thank You for the grace You have shown me. Keep my gratitude from remaining only a feeling. Let it become visible in the way I serve, worship, give, forgive, and speak about what You have done. Amen.

Day 2: Something Precious

Devotional

Is there something you own that you would not casually replace? Its value may come from its cost, its history, or what it represents. We protect it because it is precious to us. Mary brings that kind of treasure to Jesus. She brings twelve ounces of pure nard, a rare perfume worth nearly a year's wages. Mary pours it on Jesus' feet and wipes them with her hair. The gift is costly, and the posture is humble. She does not appear concerned with protecting the perfume or her dignity. The fragrance fills the house, making her devotion impossible to ignore. Mary does not offer Jesus what is convenient. She gives something precious because she sees that He is worthy.

Going Deeper

Cost alone does not make an act of worship faithful. Religious spending can be careless, self-promoting, or disconnected from obedience. Mary's gift is fitting because it is directed toward Jesus and because this unrepeatable moment stands just before His death. Her devotion carries a burial meaning she may not fully understand, but Jesus receives it as an act of love that points toward the cross.

Quote

"Mary did not give Jesus what was convenient. She gave Him something precious because she believed He was worth it."

Bible Verse

"Then Mary took a twelve-ounce jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard, and she anointed Jesus' feet with it, wiping his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance." — John 12:3 (NLT)

Reflection Question

What do your use of time, money, attention, and reputation reveal about what you consider precious? What would wholehearted devotion to Jesus cost you in this season?

Today's Practice

Choose one valuable thing you can place at Jesus' disposal today. Give Him an unhurried block of time, a generous gift, an act of obedience, or a surrendered plan.

Prayer

Jesus, You are worthy of more than what is easy or left over. Free me from protecting my comfort and reputation. Teach me to offer You what is precious with humility, wisdom, and love. Amen.

Day 3: The Heart Beneath the Word

Devotional

Have you ever used the right words while knowing your motives were more complicated? Good words can hide mixed motives. We may speak about wisdom, stewardship, compassion, or ministry while quietly protecting our comfort, influence, or control. Judas sounds concerned for the poor when he objects to Mary's gift. His argument is plausible, but John tells us that his heart is turned toward himself. Mary and Judas look at the same jar. Mary sees an opportunity to honor Jesus. Judas sees money that might benefit him. She pours something valuable out while he quietly takes for himself. The contrast warns us that correct language does not make our motives pure. Jesus sees what is happening within us, yet He exposes hidden motives so they can be confessed and surrendered.

Going Deeper

Jesus' words about the poor do not excuse indifference. He draws from Deuteronomy 15, where the continuing presence of need is joined to a continuing command for generosity. The disciples will have future opportunities to serve the poor, but Jesus' physical presence before His death makes Mary's moment unique. Worship and compassion should not be turned into rivals.

Quote

"It is possible to say the right words while being motivated by the wrong desires."

Bible Verse

"But Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would soon betray him, said, "That perfume was worth a year's wages. It should have been sold and the money given to the poor." Not that he cared for the poor—he was a thief, and since he was in charge of the disciples' money, he often stole some for himself. Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me." — John 12:4-8 (NLT)

"But if there are any poor Israelites in your towns when you arrive in the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tightfisted toward them. Instead, be generous and lend them whatever they need. Do not be mean-spirited and refuse someone a loan because the year for canceling debts is close at hand. If you refuse to make the loan and the needy person cries out to the LORD, you will be considered guilty of sin. Give generously to the poor, not grudgingly, for the LORD your God will bless you in everything you do. There will always be some in the land who are poor. That is why I am commanding you to share freely with the poor and with other Israelites in need." - Deuteronomy 15:7-11 (NLT)

Reflection Question

Where are you most tempted to use good or spiritual language to protect a selfish motive? What act of honesty, generosity, or surrender would bring your outward response into greater alignment with your heart?

Today's Practice

Before one decision today, pause and ask, "What am I protecting, and what would love for Jesus and others require?" Confess what the question reveals, then take the honest next step.

Prayer

Jesus, search my motives and uncover what I hide behind good words. Forgive my selfishness, teach me openhanded compassion, and make my worship honest. Bring my words, desires, and actions under Your gracious rule. Amen.

Day 4: A Life that Points to Jesus

Devotional

Have you ever noticed someone's life telling a story before that person said a word? Some testimonies are spoken from a stage. Others are seen across a kitchen table, in a difficult conversation, or through years of quiet faithfulness. Lazarus says nothing in John 12, yet his presence draws a crowd. People who knew he had died now see him sitting at dinner with Jesus. Because Lazarus is alive, many people are placing their faith in Jesus. His life points beyond itself to the One who gave it. The religious leaders respond by planning to kill him, exposing the tragic hardness of a heart that would rather destroy evidence than reconsider its judgment. Yet their threat cannot erase the truth Lazarus embodies that the grave does not have the final word. Jesus does.

Going Deeper

Most of us will not face Lazarus' threat, but our lives can still make grace visible. People may see it when bitterness gives way to forgiveness, fear is met with hope, or failure leads to honest repentance instead of excuses. We do not have to pretend that Jesus has made us perfect. There should, however, be evidence that He is making us new.

Quote

"We do not have to pretend that Jesus has made us perfect. But there should be evidence that He is making us new."

Bible Verse

"When all the people heard of Jesus' arrival, they flocked to see him and also to see Lazarus, the man Jesus had raised from the dead. Then the leading priests decided to kill Lazarus, too, for it was because of him that many of the people had deserted them and believed in Jesus." — John 12:9-11 (NLT)

Refection Question

Where can you already see evidence of Jesus making you new? What change in your life could make His power and grace easier for someone else to see?

Today's Practice

Tell one trusted person about a specific way Jesus is changing you. Keep the focus on His grace, not your achievement, and invite that person to pray for the work still in progress.

Prayer

Jesus, thank You that Your grace does not leave me unchanged. Replace bitterness with forgiveness, meet my fear with hope, and lead my failure into honest repentance. Make my life a clear sign of Your renewing power. Amen.

Day 5: Remember What He is Worth

Devotional

What helps you remember a story you do not want to lose: a family meal, a holiday tradition, a photograph, a song, or a treasured object? Tables can help us remember. Around them we tell family stories, celebrate milestones, and repeat words that keep shared history alive. The dinner at Bethany also holds a story of life and approaching death. Lazarus is alive because Jesus called him from the grave. Mary's perfume fills the house and points toward Jesus' burial. When this message was preached, our congregation moved from the sermon into Communion. Bethany is not the Last Supper, but it directs our attention toward the same cross. Mary gives something precious because she recognizes Jesus' worth. Within days, Jesus will give Himself because He sees our need and, in love, chooses to redeem us.

Going Deeper

Christian remembrance is more than recalling facts. At the Lord's Table, the church remembers Christ's sacrifice, proclaims His death, and awaits His return (1 Corinthians 11:23–26). Remembering what Jesus has done calls us to renewed gratitude, repentance, trust, and worship.

Quote

"Communion is not a declaration that we are worthy. It is a confession that Jesus is worthy and that we need the grace He purchased for us at the cross."

Bible Verse

"Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me." — John 12:7-8 (NLT)

"For I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it." For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again." - 1 Corinthians 11:23–26

Refection Question

As you remember the cross and resurrection, what response is rising in your heart? How can remembering Christ's sacrifice shape the way you live today?

Today's Practice

Set aside five quiet minutes with John 12:1–11. Remember what Jesus has done, name what He is worth to you, and choose one response of gratitude to carry into the day.

Prayer

Jesus, You are worthy. Thank You for giving Your body and pouring out Your blood so that I could receive forgiveness and life. Keep me near Your grace, and let remembrance become gratitude, repentance, worship, and faithful obedience. Amen.