

Misunderstood Messiah: The Gospel of John

Misunderstood King

JOHN 12:1-19

CORE TRUTH

Week of March 22, 2026

True belief receives King Jesus for who he is, not who we want him to be.

WELCOME to remind us why we're here.

🕒 Spend about 5 minutes here.

Mission – To become more like Jesus – together.

Vision – We work out our salvation side-by-side—with honesty, humility, and hope. We walk with one another, not just to talk about Jesus, but to be transformed by him. (Philippians 2:12-13)

Guidelines – Our Group Guidelines help us live out our mission and vision with kindness and humility. We encourage you to read and discuss the guidelines together regularly—they can be found on the last page.

HEAD to help us examine what the word shows and let in what's true.

🕒 Spend about 10 minutes here.

- What stands out to you as you compare Mary's response to Jesus with the crowd's response?
- What expectations do you think the crowd had about Jesus as King?

HEART to help us wrestle with what we believe and be with each other in it.

🕒 Spend about 30 minutes here.

- Where do you notice yourself wanting Jesus to meet your expectations or fix your circumstances?
- If we relate to Jesus based on what we want from him, our devotion will collapse when he doesn't deliver. When have you felt your trust in God become shaky because things didn't go the way you hoped?
- Mary's costly devotion flows from seeing Jesus clearly and responding to what she has experienced of Him. Do you know Jesus in a way that fuels devotion?

HANDS to help us live out the truth with the Spirit as we go out into the world.

🕒 Spend about 15 minutes here.

- **Meditate on the following reflection now and throughout the week:** Jesus, help me love you for the king you truly are, not just for what I want from you.
- **Use the following prayer based on Psalm 116 to close your time together:**

What shall we return to you, O Lord, for all your goodness to us?
We will call on your name and offer ourselves to you in love.. Amen.

LEADER RESOURCES

• [Weekly Leader Video](#) • [Bible Project John Part 1](#) • [Why The Gospel of John Is Special](#) • [Tim Keller Podcasts on John](#) •

NEXT WEEK'S PASSAGE

John 20:1-18

GROUPS

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SETTING THE SCENE

As Jesus approaches Jerusalem, crowds gather to celebrate him as king, believing he has come to bring victory and restore what's been lost. But just before this moment, a very different response unfolds. Mary anoints Jesus with costly perfume, recognizing something others do not—that Jesus is not only a king who will reign, but a savior who will suffer. The crowd celebrates with enthusiasm, but their expectations shape what kind of king they want Jesus to be. Mary, however, responds with costly devotion, receiving Jesus for who he truly is.

SCRIPTURE

1 Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. 3 Mary therefore took a pound 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.

4 But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, 5 "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" 6 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. 7 Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. 8 For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."

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

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12 The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. 13 So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" 14 And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written,

15 "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!"

16 His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him. 17 The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. 18 The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. 19 So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him."

DISCIPLESHIP GROUP GUIDELINES

- **Safe Group:** We strive for an environment where everyone can be open, and honest about his or her struggles and victories.
- **Confidentiality:** What is said in the group stays in the group.
- **Listen:** We want to value one another by really listening to what is being shared. Try to avoid thinking about how you are going to respond while someone is sharing.
- **Pause:** Allowing a pause in the conversation after one person shares and before the next person shares gives the person sharing a chance to finish. A pause also gives the group an opportunity to consider before responding.
- **Silence:** It is important to allow silence in the group as it provides an opportunity for people to think deeply, to gather their thoughts in order to share, and to genuinely consider what others have shared.
- **One Conversation at a Time:** Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations.
- **No Fixing:** We are not here to fix each other; Jesus does that part. Give encouragement and ask questions, but try not to solve or fix one another.
- **No Rescuing:** When people are sharing something deeply personal, please resist the tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or their situation by providing immediate condolences. This will often cause people to stop sharing.
- **Be Curious:** By asking the next question, we communicate genuine interest. We keep the conversation moving forward while building relationships and intimacy.
- **Be Self-Aware:** Be mindful of how you are personally affecting the small group environment through your words, actions, and non-verbal communication. Be sensitive about the amount of time you share, whether too much (dominating) or not enough (hiding).
- **Use "I" Statements:** It is very easy to talk about other people's issues, but, for our purposes, we want to put ourselves on the table. Use "I" statements rather than "them", "the church", "people", "you", "us", "we", etc.
- **Resolve Conflict Biblically:** As a group we commit to extend grace to one another. Conflict is not bad, it's an opportunity for growth. We are all being transformed to be more like Jesus. Conflict and change are a part of that journey. (Matthew 18)
- **Manage Technology:** Let's respect one another by silencing alerts on our devices.

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reimbursement.

