

Small Group Discussion Guide // The One Who Beckons Our Love

John 12:1–8 // Mary Anoints Jesus at Bethany

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^[a] 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^[b] 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^[c] for the day of my burial. ⁸ For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.”

Love Demonstrated

- What does it mean that Jesus 'therefore came to Bethany' knowing the cross awaited him?
- How does this act reveal the nature of Jesus' love?
- Can you think of a time when you've seen or experienced love that was costly or sacrificial?

Love Reciprocated

- Mary's response to Jesus was extravagant and deeply personal. What does her act of worship teach us about responding to Jesus' love?
- Have you ever felt moved to express love for Jesus in a way that felt bold or vulnerable? What held you back—or what empowered you?
- How do we keep our worship focused on Jesus' worth rather than our own performance?

Love Misdirected

- Judas' reaction reveals a heart 'curved inward.' What are some signs that our love might be misdirected toward ourselves?
- Why do you think self-centeredness is so natural and pervasive in our culture?
- How can we guard against spiritual hypocrisy—like pretending to care for others while serving ourselves?

Love Redirected

- Jesus redirects the conversation to what truly matters: loving him. What does this tell us about priorities in the Christian life?
- What are some 'good things' that can distract us from the 'most important thing'?
- How can we cultivate a heart like Mary's—centered on Jesus—in our daily lives?

Personal Reflection

- The sermon says, 'You can't bend your own heart back to God. Only Jesus can.' What does this mean to you personally?
- Where do you see the love of Jesus at work in your life right now?
- What might it look like for you to 'simply love him back' this week?