



Sermon Notes

Term – Spring 2018

Series – Building to Easter

Gathering & Date – 10am 4th March 2018

Title – Bethany

Preacher – Natalie and Neil Shepherd

Reading – John 12:1-11

John 12 New International Version (NIV)

Jesus Anointed at Bethany

12 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ² Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honour. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. ³ Then Mary took about a pint^[a] of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

⁴ But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, ⁵ "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages.^[b]" ⁶ He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

⁷ "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. ⁸ You will always have the poor among you,^[c] but you will not always have me."

⁹ Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ¹⁰ So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, ¹¹ for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him.

Main message of this talk in one sentence – Bethany is a place of worship, welcome and witness

Main points –

Bethany is a small village on the outskirts of Jerusalem which became a 'home' for Jesus and his disciples.

Three words that highlight the main events occurring in Bethany are:

Worship – verse 3 tells us of Mary's humble and sacrificial worship of Jesus

Welcome – verse 2 tells us that Bethany was a place of welcome to all those in need. This made it a place of welcome to Jesus and his followers as well.

Witness – verse 9 tells us that people came to Bethany to see Jesus because they had heard of the healings that had occurred, including the raising from the dead of Lazarus.

These three responses of worship, welcome and witness flow out of a centred-ness on Jesus. Our worship is in response to Jesus, our welcome flows out of Jesus' healing in our lives that means that we can have open lives to others and we are witnesses to all that Jesus is doing in our lives.

For further thought and prayer –

Each word had a focusing question:

Worship – how is Jesus inviting you to give in your worship to Him? Think about the three areas of money, time and effort.

MONEY – is God talking to you about giving financially to Him through the church giving scheme or to others who are in need?

TIME – how is God talking to you about using your time for worship to Him. During Lent, is there a new routine that God is challenging you to take on? It may be using the church readings as a daily discipline.

EFFORT – worship might not be easy in this season so how is the Holy Spirit helping you to engage with him?

Welcome – who are you opening your lives and home to?

There was a practical challenge in the talk that used the idea of eating with three people each week. One person who is a church member, one who is not a church member and doesn't know God yet and the final person is from either category. This may be a challenge you wish to take up or perhaps it may be three a fortnight. Think about work related lunch as well as meals at home.

Witness – what story do you tell others about Jesus?

Share your stories with each other and think, and pray for, the people you may speak to this next week.

Next Steps – what is my action plan because of God's word to me through this bible passage?

What will I be doing differently next week and next month? Commit the plan to God by sharing with others and praying for each other.