

Readings

Scripture

¹Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ²So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. ³Mary 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. ⁴But 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?” ⁶He 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. ⁷Jesus said, “Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.”

⁹When 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. ¹⁰So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, ¹¹because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

¹²The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³So 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!” ¹⁴And 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!” ¹⁶His 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. ¹⁷The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. ¹⁸The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. ¹⁹So the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him.”

²⁰Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. ²¹So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²²Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

²⁷“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. ³¹Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. ³⁴So the crowd answered him, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” ³⁵So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. ³⁶While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”

When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them. ³⁷Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, ³⁸so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: “Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” ³⁹Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said, ⁴⁰“He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.” ⁴¹Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. ⁴²Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

- John 12:1-43 (English Standard Version)

Sermon Outline

Divine Signposts

John 12:1-43

Table Talk in an Upper Room

Stephen Baldwin

Jesus shows that his hour had come as he interprets the signposts.

How?

By showing that he is the true Passover, the true King, and the Lord of all nations.

Jesus is the Passover (John 12:1-11)

Jesus is the true King (John 12:12-19)

Jesus is the Lord of all nations (John 12:20-36)

Reflection Questions

- Have you ever visited another country or state and discovered that you had seen but misunderstood a signpost? Do you think the disciples were confused? Why?
- Notice that John 11:54 says Jesus withdrew from his normal public ministry because of the plot to put him to death. Since Jesus had told the disciples early in his ministry that he was going to Jerusalem to die, and that was the reason he came, why did he avoid Jerusalem at this moment? (Also see verse 12:36).
- What do you make of this extravagant gesture of love for Jesus in verses 1-11? The ointment Mary used to anoint Jesus cost a fortune—its worth was a year’s wages. How do you account for people’s different reactions? How do you react?
- Discuss the way Paul describes Jesus in 1 Corinthians 5:7.
- What changed when, in verses 12 and following, Jesus now very publicly enters Jerusalem and allows the people to sing “Hosannas” to him?
- What was the crowd’s expectation of Jesus, and how did Jesus demonstrate that they had the wrong idea about his plans?
- From verse 23, what made the Greeks seeking Jesus, a signpost, so that Jesus says, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified”? [Remember we are now looking at a time several days before the upper room experience. At that earlier time John says, “Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world...” (13:1), and Jesus says, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him.” (13:31)].
- Discuss how verse 32, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” connects with verse 23?