

John 11: 55 - 12:11

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Date: 26 November 2023

Preacher: Mike Loosa

[0:00] Good morning, everyone.

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Good morning, everyone. Good morning, everyone. Good morning, everyone. 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.

[2:04] So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well. Because on the account of him, many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Heavenly Father, as Brad just prayed, Lord, we want your spirit to speak today.

Lord, this is your word, your holy word. It is perfect. It is good. It emanates from the living God who speaks, who is alive today.

God, these words that were penned by John in the first century, Lord, you want them to impact our hearts today, Lord, in this country, in this city, in this church.

And so I pray, God, that your spirit would work and move in us, Lord. And if you're not speaking, then there's no point for us to listen. But you do speak by your holy words to do that today.

[3:16] Christ, I am the Lord. Amen. Well, good morning, church. For those that don't know me, my name is Mike. I'm the elders here at Shoreline. And we are glad that you're here this morning.

We've been walking through the book of John. And just last week, we saw how the seventh and greatest sign of Christ in this gospel, raising the dead man, Lazarus, to life, right?

It became the tipping point, as it were, the last straw for the Jewish leaders who resolved to put Jesus to death. So the miraculous sign that we saw, it didn't actually end the controversy.

It only deepened it. And the dominoes would begin to fall, leading ultimately to Jesus' arrest, trial, and death. But we also saw last week how in God's sovereignty and wisdom and power, He wields even the plots of the wicked to bring about His good purposes.

And the cross of Christ is the chief demonstration of that principle. What the Jewish leaders intended for evil, God would use to bring about a good this world has never known.

[4:23] The salvation of mankind. And our text for today, which Sue just read, picks up for us in verse 55 of chapter 11. And as we walk through this text together, I want you to pay attention to the different groups of people that are represented here.

How do the people, who are they? How do they view Jesus? What is motivating them? And what should we imitate or not imitate about them?

I want you to be thinking about these things as we walk through here. So verse 55. Here we see Passover preparations in Jerusalem. Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand.

And many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. So this year, this is the third and final Passover mentioned in the Gospel of John.

And Jews far and wide would flock to Jerusalem to celebrate the Lord's Passover. This was an annual celebration that commemorated what God had done for the Israelites right back in Exodus.

[5:27] Those who had put the blood of the lamb on their doorposts, right? They would be saved from the angel of the Lord who passed over those houses. And the angel of the Lord struck down the firstborn of Egypt, but

not the firstborn of those who were covered by the blood of the lamb.

And Israel would commemorate this annually. And then following the night of Passover was the Feast of Unleavened Breads. It was a seven-day feast. And it was commemorating Israel's deliverance from Egypt by God's power and might.

And in order for the Jews to celebrate this feast or any feast, or to take part in anything of the assembly, they would have to be ritually clean. And so we see Jews coming to the temple to be ceremonially cleansed.

Verse 56 says, They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, What do you think? That he will not come to the feast at all? So as they prepare for Passover, you know, the Jews are hoping to see Jesus in the temple.

But it's doubtful, right? His appearance in the temple is doubtful. The Jewish leaders have attempted to show him multiple times. And now they put him on, you know, the top of their most wanted list.

[6:40] And we see in verse 57, you know, the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, He should let them know so that they might arrest him.

So now they've made it public, right? They've made it public to the people that they want to arrest Christ, making it all the more doubtful that he will come. And we see in verse 57 that the irony that is the Jewish leaders continues.

Because, you know, they're supposed to be preparing for Passover, right? They're supposed to be ensuring that they're right with the Lord. And even while they're presumably doing that in accordance with the law, at the very same time they're carrying out their wicked plot to kill the Lord Jesus himself, right?

Yet in this way, and this becomes a great theme in the book of John. I guess you saw from John 6, I remember Matt talking about it. Jesus would come to fulfill and even supersede the Passover itself, right?

We've seen this in John. Jesus has fulfilled and superseded the ceremonial rites of purification. Jesus has fulfilled and superseded even the temple. And we're going to see how Jesus would soon become the Passover lamb itself.

[7:53] As John the Baptist said in chapter 1, The lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Well, that's the scene going on in Jerusalem. Now I want us to look at the scene going on in Bethany.

Six days before the Passover, verse 1 of chapter 12, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. So they gave a dinner for him there.

Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. I know it's worth noting that this story we're about to read of Mary anointing Christ, it occurs in Matthew's Gospel, it occurs in Mark's Gospel, and there's another very similar story in Luke's Gospel that is not the same.

But we're going to pull some of the details today from Matthew's Gospel from Mark's Gospel. But each Gospel writer includes this story in his Gospel for a slightly different purpose.

And so, since we're walking through the Gospel of John, we want to seek to understand the purpose and meaning of this story as intended by the Holy Spirit speaking through John. Now note the intent of Jesus here.

[9:01] Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany. The Jews are seeking to kill him, and he knows this. It's now six days before the Passover, which we come to find out is the day that Jesus lays down his life on the cross.

Therefore, therefore, he comes to Bethany. Right? Remember, he had just before this in the last week's second, he had retreated to Ephraim, which is believed to be about 15 miles from Jerusalem.

And now he comes to Bethany, less than two miles away from Jerusalem. And we see here that, as we've seen all throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus is set on accomplishing the Father's will.

Right? He is set on accomplishing the mission through which he has been sent. And that would be to give up his life for the nation and for all those scattered abroad.

Now, it's kind of funny. John reminds us here, in case we had, you know, forgot one chapter later, that Lazarus is the one whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Right? At the beginning of chapter

11, we saw that Lazarus' identity was in relation to his sisters.

[10:13] He was the brother of Mary and Martha. And what's so cool here is that now his identity is in reference to Christ, and what Christ has done for him. And we see John say the same thing again in verse 9.

Okay, so here in Bethany, wanting to honor Jesus, and dinner is given for him. And we learn in Matthew and Mark's Gospel that this is at the house of a man named Simon the Leper.

We don't know much about him. But likely, it's a dinner party, right? There's some families in the community, and they all love Christ, and they want to honor Christ. And what do we do when we honor somebody? We have food together, right?

We enjoy the fellowship of a meal. And we see here, you know, Martha's assuming her typical role of serving. And this isn't downplayed in this story right here.

It's not looked down upon. Martha's serving Christ, which is a good thing. Lazarus is enjoying fellowship with Christ, which is a good thing. But then the focus becomes on what Mary does.

[11:11] In verse 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.

Now, we can learn all sorts of things through research about nard and what's going on here. But I think John gives us the details that we need. We don't really need more details.

It was a pound of ointment. A pound. Like, I don't care what perfume you're using or fragrance. A pound is a lot of fragrance. It's like if you're driving a 95 and you smell somebody with that clone, like, miles away.

A pound is a lot. And John says it was pure and expensive. That's all we need to know. This was a costly act. Right? A costly act. Now, Mary takes this costly perfume and she anoints Jesus' feet with it and wipes his feet with her hair.

I want you to stop and picture that scene in your head. Okay? Just try to picture it. Mary kneeling down at Jesus' feet.

[12:17] Now, when they were eating dinner those days, it often would recline. They had an elbow holding themselves up with the food next to them. They were reclining. So it would be very easy for her to lay at Jesus' feet in that way.

And she's letting down her hair. And she's wiping his feet with her hair. This is kind of strange, right? Kind of weird. Even embarrassing, almost.

And it certainly would have been perceived that way by everybody looking on. Now, attending to the feet was the work of servants in the first century.

And on top of that, Jewish women in those days, they didn't let down their hair in public. So for Mary here to anoint Jesus' feet and then to wipe his feet with her hair, it is an act of complete humility. It's an act of complete devotion to Christ. It's an act of adoration, an act of worship. And she was paying no regards for the taboos of her society.

[13:18] Right? Didn't care what others had to say, what others thought. She was going to honor and adore Christ. So not surprisingly then, considering she used a whole pound of ointment, 7 and a half of verse 3, it says, The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

Now this is true, of course, in a literal sense. But I think it also represents a few more things that may be more profound. It certainly represents the extravagance of Mary's love for Christ.

Right? It may also represent God's pleasure in this act. In Numbers 28, over and over again, it talks about how the burnt offerings of the faithful would be a pleasing aroma to the Lord.

We see that terminology used in the New Testament as well. So consider this. While the Jewish leaders are in the temple, preparing for Passover, and offering up sacrifices in vain because of their hearts, we see that Mary here is offering a costly offering to the Lord that is truly pleasing to Him. Right? This is a worthwhile sacrifice indeed. It's a lighting the heart of God. The filling of the house represents one more thing, at least. And that is the fragrance of Mary's act would extend far beyond herself.

[14:42] And Matthew and Mark helped make this more clear because Jesus said in those accounts, truly, this is Christ, this is His assessment of what's going on. Right? Jesus says, truly I say to you, wherever this

gospel is proclaimed, in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.

But this beautiful act of love, it's not perceived well by everybody. Right? Verse 4. But Judas Asperia, one of his disciples, he who was about to betray him, said, Why was this ointment not sold for 300 denarii and given to the poor?

Now we actually learn from Matthew and Mark that not only Judas, but the other disciples too are actually indignant over Mary's act. They pile on to the ridicule of Mary.

But in John's Gospel, he is focused particularly on Judas, and the contrast that we see between Mary and Judas. So that's what we're going to focus on today. If you have a study Bible, you might see in your notes that one denarius was a whole day's wage for labor.

So 300 denarii is basically equivalent to a year's wage. A year's wage. Just think about what you make in a year. And then think about pouring out that entire sum in one act of devotion to the Lord.

[16:05] So Judas, you know, his statement confirms for us how expensive this procure actually is. And we see here that his indignation, it arises from a heart that views such a costly sacrifice as wasteful.

He sees this as a waste. This could have been used instead to help the poor, he says, right? Now this at first, it seems well-meaning, right?

This seems like an actually righteous and generous alternative to Mary's lavish display, which is why the other disciples actually back Judas and Matthew and Mark's accounts. But John is writing many decades later, right?

John is writing with hindsight. And he knows what's really going on at the point from which he writes. And he says in verse 6 that Judas said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief.

And having charge of the money man, he used to help himself to what was put into it. So John, he exposes the wicked motivation of Judas, right?

[17:14] Judas is not motivated by love for the poor. Judas is motivated by greed. And like the Jewish leaders that want Christ dead, Judas is, he's filled with, he's blinded by his own self-interest, right?

He's blinded so much so that he would go on to betray Christ for 30 pieces of silver. Though he walked closely with Christ for three years, right? Three years of Judas being with Christ, traveling with him, hearing him speak, watching him perform miracles.

And he is shown to be a false disciple, a counterfeit disciple. So how does Jesus respond to Judas' cold objection? Verse 7, Jesus said, Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial.

For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me. Now notice, the very first words out of his mouth, Leave her alone, is the good shepherd defending his sheep from the wolf. Right? We've continued to see the good shepherd in action since John talked about it in chapter 10. Now the next phrase, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial, it's a bit confusing.

[18:29] But I think it's in response to Judas' why question, right? Why did Mary not sell the ointment and give the purposes of the poor, so that she might keep it for the day of my burial? Jesus is indicating here that his death is imminent.

Now some people think that Mary was on to this, because she was laying at his feet listening to him. Whereas the disciples were totally missing all of Jesus' words.

And the other gospels we see over and over again, Jesus is foreshadowing his death. We're not really sure if Mary gets it or not. Because all the other disciples missed it, I tend to think that maybe she did too.

And just like Caiaphas, he was unwittingly prophesying something, right, in last week's text, that he had no clue what he was saying. It's quite possible that what Mary does here is an act of devotion out of love for the Lord, but she doesn't realize the bigger picture that's going on.

But either way, what Jesus is doing, he's connecting this act to his death on the cross and his burial, which would be imminent. Now Jesus' words here, they're by no means discouraging believers from giving to the poor.

[19:37] By no means, Paul says all the time. They actually alluded to Deuteronomy 15.11, which says, For there will never cease to be poor in

the land. Therefore I command you, you shall open wide your hands to your brother, to the needy and to the poor in your land.

And God's heart for the poor, God's heart for the vulnerable is abundantly clear throughout all of Scripture. And Jesus, I mean, Jesus modeled that in his earthly ministry, right?

We saw God's heart for the poor on display through Christ. Love and care for the poor is good, and we are commanded to do it. Jesus is saying, though, that there is a love of higher priorities still.

That's what he's saying. There is a higher love than love for the poor, and that is love for me, is what Christ is saying. And time is running out for his disciples to express such tangible love.

So let me see in the next verse this dinner scene in Bethany, this intimate scene that's interrupted by the masses. 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.

[20:48] So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well. Because on account of him, many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

So we see that the controversy that's been deepening and deepening, it is continuing to deepen all the more. In John 6, we saw that Jesus, when he was saying, you know, feed on my flesh and drink my blood, that many disciples left him.

But since then, his popularity has been increasing more and more. And the Jewish leaders are seeing their control slipping away, right? And now their hatred is extending not just to Jesus, but to his followers.

We see them hating Lazarus, right? Now Lazarus is a threat too. Lazarus is a living, walking testimony of Christ. And people are coming to him, so they want him dead.

Now we must realize how futile their efforts are though, right? One commentator writes this, But Jesus raised him once. Why could he not do it again?

[21:52] Their great weapon of control is useless against the Lord of life and his followers. See, the Lord of life and his followers are drawing still more people to believe in him, right?

They're gathering more people into the fold of God. So we see that here in Bethany, you know, the true Passover preparations are being made. Not externally in the Jewish temple, but internally in the hearts of those who put their faith and trust in Jesus.

So that's walking through the text. I just want us to understand what's going on. But I want to turn now, and I want us to consider, you know, I asked you to think about different groups of people that are in this story.

Now we're going to look at four different people or groups of people in this story. And two of them are negative examples, and two of them are positive examples. And there's certainly, there's other characters in the story.

There's other things to learn. And feel free to spend more time in the text and learning what you can from these other groups. We're going to focus in on four groups and how their examples teach us something to apply today.

[23:03] So here's the first group. It's the Jewish leaders. The Jewish leaders. And it's them. Jesus is a threat to be eliminated. And we won't stay here for too long because we've talked about the Jewish leaders quite a bit, including last week.

But there are, there's two specific points of application that I want to draw from the example of the Jewish leaders. And the first thing is this, that when we, when believers lose sight of the gospel, we ourselves are in danger of viewing Jesus as a threat to be eliminated in some of the particular areas of our lives.

Like Jesus wants to grow in us spiritual desires. He's been trying to get that across all of his ministry. He's doing spiritual things. But we so often want to protect our earthly desires, right?

That's what the Jewish leaders are doing. They're protecting their earthly things, their earthly power. And Jesus' spiritual desires would not be carried out in their hearts. So functionally in the life of a believer, Jesus' presence can be unwelcome, right?

So my question for us to ponder is what areas of our lives are we holding on to, right? Unwilling to just, unwilling to yield them to Christ.

[24:18] Unwilling to let him exercise his lordship and his authority over those areas. A second thing we need to recognize is that this perspective of the world, this is the perspective of the world, right?

Jesus is the threat to be eliminated. And we need to remember that we are living as sojourners in exile in this world, right? This world is not our home.

And this kind of perspective I think is actually on the rise. I think we've seen it on the rise in our own country. Jesus is a threat to be eliminated, right? Christianity used to be more embedded in the culture.

And then for a while it was just, well, they're good people, they do good things. And it's turning more into, they're a threat, right? To our beliefs, to our ways of life. We've got to recognize that the world views Christ in this light.

We should expect this kind of opposition as Jesus' followers. And we should not be shaken by it, right? Jesus entrusted himself to the Father. He did not entrust himself to men.

[25:22] And we need to do the same thing. And realize, believers, that we're part of a kingdom that cannot be shaken. We're part of a kingdom that can't be shaken. No matter how people respond to the gospel.

No matter how much opposition we face. We belong to the Father and to Christ forever. And we see this sort of lived out in the example of Lazarus here.

So the second person is Lazarus. So for Lazarus, Jesus was an identity. It was his identity to be lived out. We noted earlier how in chapter 11, Lazarus was introduced by John as the brother of Mary and Martha.

But here in chapter 12, in both verses 1 and 9, Lazarus is spoken of as the one whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Right? His identity is no longer primarily in relation to his family, but to Christ. Such a beautiful thing here, right? Lazarus, he becomes this living, walking testimony of Christ's saving work in him, right? Drawing people to faith in Christ as we see at the end of the passage.

[26:30] And Lazarus' story, it foreshadowed the story of every single believer. Right? If you're a believer, then there was a time when you were dead. Right?

You were in the grave. But then Jesus, he lifted up his voice. He said, Tim, come out. Right? Brittany, come out. Kyle, come out. And you rose from the grave.

Right? You were risen to life in Christ. You were given a new identity, newness of life in him. And now you, believer, you are a walking, living testimony of Christ's saving work in you.

So we've got to view ourselves that way, right? We've got to be that, the walking, living testimony of Christ's work. Now we should be praying regularly that we would view our primary identity as a son or a daughter of God, right?

In Christ Jesus. We might be praying regularly that we would see ourselves as people who have been raised from the dead. So you're not primarily, you know, a cold-hearted New Englander.

[27:40] Sorry. You're not primarily a kind-hearted New Westerner or a shipbuilder or a submariner or a teacher or a Patriots fan or whatever it is, right? You're not primarily any of those things.

You are primarily a son of the king. A daughter of the king. What a beautiful example that Lazarus is, right?

And God intends that this identity would permeate every part of our lives. And then would then radiate, right, through everything that we say, everything that we do. This identity is on display, drawing people to faith in Christ.

So then it comes to the person in the story that most people would have assumed to be a Christian, right? But who wasn't at all. That's Judas.

Judas, to him, Jesus is an opportunity to take advantage of. The story of Judas is a stark warning for us today, is it not?

[28:45] Judas was part of the inner circle of Christ. Jesus had many followers, but he only had 12 that he spent three years with. Judas was one of the 12.

Living with Jesus, traveling with him, right? Setting up the tent, tearing it down, watching him preach and teach and all the miracles that he did. And yet, as one commentator writes, privilege of position is no substitute for faith and obedience.

Judas lacked true faith and true obedience. And we see that he was consumed with greed and self-interest, right?

Judas had never surrendered his life to Christ. But he was increasingly luring away the prospect of financial gain. Embezzling, think about it, he was embezzling money from the ministry fund of Jesus.

Now, presumably, Judas did not join as a disciple thinking like, I'm going to steal money from this little known rabbi, right? That wouldn't have been very weekly for him.

[29:53] I imagine Judas began with a genuine curiosity, right? And then came an opportunity. He was put in charge of the money that he was given some responsibility to have charge of the money.

And then came the temptation. Hey, how about you could just take a little bit of that money, right? Just use it for yourself. Nobody's going to know. And he does it the first time. And he probably waited for a while to see if anybody would notice, if he would get in trouble.

And then he did it again, right? And then he did it again. And then he did it again. And greed consumed him. It filled him. And so that's all he could think about. James 1, 14 through 15 says that each person is tempted when he is tempted.

When he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin. And sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death.

You all know that sin, especially life-dominating kinds of sin, doesn't present itself to us as some giant thing at first, right? And Satan doesn't show up and say, Oh, hey guys, I'm Satan.

[31:06] I want you to do this really wicked thing. Because you hate God. I don't know. What does Paul say? Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Sin starts out small.

But as the Lord told Cain, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you. Sin will always take more ground.

Sin's appetite is insatiable. It wants more and more and more and more. And it leads to death. Now church, this is why sin needs to be exposed to the light.

When sin is hidden in the darkness, it festers and grows. And Paul says, take no part in unfruitful works of darkness, right?

But instead, expose them. Expose them. What does that actually look like?

[32:09] What does it look like to expose sin? It's quite simple, really. But very hard for us to do. But it's very simple.

It's confession. We know that all of us know this. It's confession of sin before God and before our fellow believers. That's what it means to expose sin.

And it looks like humbly and lovingly confronting a brother or sister when we see sin in their lives. And this is our call.

We need to be doing this as believers. If we want to fight sin, which will always take more ground in our lives, we've got to be regularly confessing our sin before the Lord and then confessing our sin before our brothers and sisters in Christ.

And if we're doing that, if we're constantly bringing sin to light, confessing it before God, confessing it before one another, and then receiving the grace that Jesus offers, we will avoid becoming Judas's, right?

[33:13] We will avoid that. And instead, we will become Mary's. And Mary is the last person that we're going to look at in the story. Certainly the focal point of this text.

To Mary, Jesus is a treasure to be adored. She's a treasure to be adored. Now Mary, we see the picture in the Gospels as the one sitting at Jesus' feet, right?

Listening to His voice, receiving from His teaching. Mary has come to know and love Christ by spending time with Him.

And then as we saw in John 11, Jesus does the most amazing thing for her and her family, right? He raises her dead brother to life.

And no doubt this display of Christ's power and love in a personal way in her life, it heightens her affections for Christ. See, Mary's heart was filled with love for Jesus.

[34:15] So much showed that she felt this burning need to express that love in some way. So she performed this extravagant act, right? Of

anointing Jesus' feet with costly perfume and wiping His feet with her hair, even if it meant the indignation and embarrassment from others.

And while Judas views Mary's lavish display as waste, right? Mary views it as fitting, as appropriate, right? Almost as needed.

For Mary, Jesus is worth wasting her most treasured possession. Because Jesus is to her the highest and greatest treasure.

To Mary, Jesus is worthy of all of her love and devotion, of all of her adoration and worship, right?

For Mary, love for Christ trumps all other loves.

Now, we shouldn't focus much on the perfume. Because it's really not about the perfume at all.

What Mary is offering is herself.

[35:17] When she pours ounce upon ounce of fragrance upon Jesus, what she's really doing is pouring every ounce of her being at Jesus' feet. And this is why Jesus says in Matthew and Mark's account of the story that wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.

Because the kind of wholehearted devotion that Mary shows is the kind of thing that the gospel is intended to produce in the life of the believer. Wholehearted devotion, right?

Wasting our lives for Christ. Jesus being our highest and greatest treasure. Love for Jesus trumping all other loves.

Are these phrases descriptive of the saints in this room? Are they descriptive of you? I do want to say, as I was reflecting, I'm encouraged that I see examples in this church of believers who embody that kind of love for Christ.

And that's a beautiful thing. And I'm so thankful to have examples of godly, wholehearted, devoted men and women who love to Christ. But we, certainly all of us, have a long way to go, don't we?

[36:42] We've got a long way to go. And I want to ask, what is it that keeps us from the kind of wholehearted devotion that Mary displays? Could it be that our estimation of ourselves is far too high?

The answer is yes. It certainly is, at various times. Could it be that our estimation of Christ's supreme worth is vastly too low?

Could it be that while we profess to believe in the gospel with our lips, that the profession of our lives would say otherwise?

Many of you may remember the story of John Allen Chow. We talked about him a few years ago in 2018. He was a missionary and martyr for Christ.

See, John had a passion to reach a remote tribe on North Sentinel Island. It's on the Bay of Bengal, off the coast of India, between India and then Southeast Asia.

[37:55] And this tribe, the North Sentinelese, they're considered one of the most remote tribes on the face of the planet. And they have a history of violently rejecting people who tried to approach them.

And on November 17, 2018, John gave up his life, attempting to reach the North Sentinelese. And you might remember that his death sparked a flurry of responses, most of them pretty harsh, right, from around the world.

Among other things, his life was viewed as a complete waste, right? And that was by non-Christians and by Christians alike. John had written in his journal, Once I said yes to Jesus, I was committed. I was all in. I believe that the measure of success in the kingdom of God is obedience. I want my life to reflect obedience to Christ and to live in obedience to Him.

I think that Jesus is worth it. He is worth everything. And just hours before his death, while he was sitting in a fishing boat, praying and writing in his journal, he was about to go ashore one more time, he penned this final note to his family, I pray none of you love anything in this world more than Jesus Christ.

[39:16] Of course the world would view such a thing as waste, right? But shame on us Christians if we view that as waste too, right?

John Allen Chow, he was a model for us of the heart of Mary, right? A heart that is completely devoted to Christ, loving Him above all else.

And I pray that we would cultivate this kind of love for Christ. And how do we do that? How do we cultivate this kind of love for Jesus? And I think the answer is by looking at Mary's example in the

Gospels, right?

Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet. She was gazing into His face. She was listening to Him speak. And then she was watching Him display His love and His power.

The ultimate demonstration of the love and power of Christ is what? It's the cross. It's the cross. It's the cross. We cultivate a love for Christ by especially meditating on the cross.

[40:22] That sensual event in all of redemptive history. That sensual event in the Gospel. On the cross, Jesus' immeasurable and unmerited love was lavishly poured out of mankind, right?

Lavishly poured out. It was wasted on sinners like you and me. And at what cost, right? The high cost of the life of the Son of God.

On the cross, Jesus would become the final and perfect and true Passover lamb, right? Shedding His own blood to atone for the sins of the world. Church, if the King of Kings and Lord of Lords would waste His life on us, right?

If He would do that for sinners like you and me, then how could we not also offer up our lives in wholehearted devotion to Him? And that's what this text is calling us to.

That's what Mary is calling us to. In order that we would see that Jesus is worth it. He is worth it, Church. Of giving up everything for.

[41:30] It ought to be our highest and greatest love. Our highest and greatest treasure. So, Father, we pray that you would cultivate this in us. That we know. We know that we can't do this on our own.

God, I have been challenged this week. Because I didn't feel this kind of love for you. This kind of wholehearted devotion. God, would you cause our hearts, Lord, to desire you above all things. And God, when we go to your Word, when we see you and your glory and your Word, God, we see a person who is supremely worthy of our worship.

When we look at what you've done for us on the cross, God, we see a love so great it compels us to love in response.

So, God, I pray that we would be men and women who are constantly gazing upon you, who are at your feet, looking into your face, beholding all that you are.

[42:45] And God, you tell us in your Word that as we do that, you will transform us into your likeness. And your likeness is one of complete and wholehearted love, even for the unlovely.

So, God, we offer ourselves up to you. Lord, take us, all that we are, and use us for your glory, we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.