

TIPPING POINT

The life and ministry of Jesus has been on a schedule and now it begins to turn towards the conclusion. In the last section, Jesus performs His clearest and most personal miracle when He raises His close friend Lazarus from the dead. For many it was the tipping point that led them to believe. For others, it will be the tipping point to lead them to plot His murder. As we begin our study today, ask God to help you think back over the past few weeks and to give you eyes to see what He has been doing in and around your life to lead you in the next steps He has for you. Thank Him for the ways He has given you grace and mercy and the means to deal with life. Consider whether this may be a tipping point in your life to choose to follow after Him in greater obedience and trust Him for bigger things.

Pray now and commit to hear Him speak to you today.

John 11:46-53 ⁴⁶*But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them the things which Jesus had done. ⁴⁷Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. ⁴⁸If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." ⁴⁹*But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, ⁵⁰nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish." ⁵¹*Now he did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, ⁵²and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. ⁵³So from that day on they planned together to kill Him.***

- 1) Verse 45 says, "Therefore many of the Jews who came to Mary, and saw what He had done, believed in Him." What did those who were there with Mary observe? Write out as many things as you can imagine (before and after Lazarus was raised from the dead).

- 2) What do you think made so many of the Jews believe at this time?

- 3) Verse 46 starts with the word "but" and shows the contrast between those who believed and those who went to the Pharisees for a different purpose. Why did they go to the Pharisees? What do you think they reported to them? Do you think their testimony would have been different than the others who saw the same thing, and if yes, why?

- 4) Did the Pharisees acknowledge that Jesus was performing many signs? List some of the signs they would have been referring to.

- 11) Many of the Jews went to Jerusalem to prepare themselves for the Passover celebration. What was on their mind, and with the many clear signs that Jesus had recently done, what do you think they were hoping might happen?

John 12:1-8 ¹Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ²So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him. ³Mary then took a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, ⁵said, ⁶“Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to poor people?” ⁷Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it. ⁸Therefore Jesus said, “Let her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial. ⁹For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have Me.”

- 12) Jesus traveled the 13 miles from Ephraim to Bethany which was only 2 miles from Jerusalem where everyone was gathering for the Passover. Jesus went to stay with His close friends, Lazarus (resurrected just a few days prior), Martha, and Mary. Jesus felt at home here with them. Martha was always the one who focused on the task at hand and she worked on the meal. Lazarus was reclining at the table talking with Jesus. What do you think they might have been talking about?

- 13) If you were at that table, what would you have asked Jesus?

- 14) Mary was very focused on Jesus, as she was when they first met. Read Luke 10:38-42 and write down what Mary did and how Jesus commended her for it.

In this passage, Mary seems to be very aware of what is going on and what lies ahead for Jesus. She takes a pound of an ointment/perfume called nard. The passage shares that nard was very costly (about 300 denarii which was a year's wages - \$50,000+ today) and its fragrance filled the house. Judas even speaks up to say how much of a wasteful act this was for pouring it on Jesus' feet (and notes his concern was that he would not be able to use it for himself). Nard is also thought to be associated with death. Mary was both showing her love for Jesus and proclaiming His coming death by anointing Him now. Mary then humbled herself by wiping Jesus feet with

her hair. Jesus defended her actions and said that she would keep it for the day of His burial. Mary's love for Jesus was costly and intimate as well as practical in the way she served and Him.

15) Ask God for the ways He would lead you to love, worship, and serve Him in your life now. Think creatively and list as many as you can. Pick one to do today.

16) Consider how we can be like Judas in resisting giving ourselves, our time, our money, or our emotions to Jesus. We hold them back for ourselves. Are there any ways that you feel you might be resistant to love and serve God in extravagant and humbling ways?

John 12:9-11 ⁹The large crowd of the Jews then learned that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead. ¹⁰But the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also; ¹¹because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus.

The crowd heard that Jesus was close to them in the town of Bethany. They left Jerusalem to go and see Him and the resurrected Lazarus. Notice that when Jesus begins to impact your life and change your testimony, it will cause some changes in the way people look at you and respond to you. For some, Lazarus' testimony helped them come to the tipping point of belief. For the Chief Priests and Pharisees, it tipped them over to add him to the hit list.

17) Read Revelation 12:10-11 and then write down how their testimony affected their faith and their impact.

¹⁰Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. ¹¹And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

18) Has your testimony been used by God already to influence others? Where have you had to pay the price to follow Jesus and have a testimony that speaks for Him?

- 19) One last major thought that comes to light today in this passage: God made a point to give his people over 300 prophecies about the Messiah so that when He did come, the people and the leaders would recognize and receive Him. It was the responsibility for those in authority to publicly identify who the Messiah was. Do you believe that the Chief Priests and Pharisees knew that Jesus was the Messiah? Why do you think this?
- 20) Read Matthew 21:33 to 46. This is a parable spoken by Jesus to let them know that He knew what they knew and what they were going to do to Him. Does this confirm or change your answer about what the leaders knew?
- 21) If the leaders knew that Jesus was the Messiah, why in the world would they not have welcomed Him and proclaimed the Messiah had come? Why would they lie about what they knew? Write down any reasons you can think of from this passage and the parable about what their motivations and goals were in choosing to kill Jesus.

I want you to stop and ask God to search your heart and see if you are doing the same thing towards God and Jesus in your life. Jesus is not only our Savior, He is our Lord. He calls us to holiness, purity, obedience, submission. Yet we struggle greatly in our flesh to follow Him fully. Write down any area you feel you are denying who Jesus is in your life. Finish by writing a prayer to God addressing these things and asking for His help in removing them all. This could be the time and the tipping point for you to become fully devoted to the Lord.