

Date: February 3rd, 2026

John Section: John 12:1-50

Key Text: John 12:25-26

Main Idea: Jesus, the King of kings, will be either your Savior or your Judge.

Genre: Theological Narrative

Author: John

Audience: Primarily second-generation believers, Jews, and Gentiles, needing encouragement and clarity about Jesus' identity.

Setting: Likely written from Ephesus, AD 85-95, in a context of synagogue opposition and emerging false teachings.

Quote of the Week: "Faith does not ask how much it costs, but gives freely what it has. Where Christ is truly known, there the heart pours itself out without calculation." — **Martin Luther**

3:30

John Preview:

Highlight:

The Gospel of John is a unique New Testament account of Jesus' life, written by the Apostle John, the beloved disciple. John's Gospel is not merely a biography but a theological portrait, revealing Jesus as the eternal Son of God who became flesh to bring life and light to the world. Unlike the Synoptic Gospels, John emphasizes signs and discourses that unveil Jesus' divine identity and mission. From the opening words—"In the beginning was the Word"—to the climactic resurrection appearances, John presents Jesus as the one in whom God's glory is revealed, calling all to believe in Him for eternal life. This Gospel is rich with imagery (light, life, bread, water, shepherd, vine) and repeatedly centers on the theme of belief.

Focus of John:

- **Purpose of John:**
 - John tells us his purpose plainly: "But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:31).
- **Themes in John:**
 - Jesus is the Word made flesh
 - Jesus reveals God's glory
 - Eternal life is found in Him alone
 - Belief is the way to life
 - Life flows only from union with Christ
- **Our Response to this Truth:**
 - Believe in Him – Abide in Him – Live by His Word – Trust in His promises – Love as He loved

Recap:

John 12:1-19 - Noble

- As we pick up the story in chapter 12, we remember where we have just been in chapter 11. This was a pretty big event that we have just come off of. Jesus has healed Lazarus and brought him from death to life. And this is no small thing.
 - There are many mixed feelings about Jesus and who He is. Because Jesus has caused such a stir in healing Lazarus, the religious leaders want him to be dead. And we will get into this more later, but we'll see that He is threatening their power and control of the religious beliefs of the people.
 - Chapters 12-18 will be all about the final week of Jesus' life, and it is such a crucial and important part that has deep meaning not only for the people of that time, but also for us too, so we will want to dive into this deep and try to reveal some of the truth that God is showing us in His word.
- They are then having a dinner to celebrate the fact that Lazarus is alive, and Lazarus is sitting reclining at the table. They probably have a lot to talk about and be thankful for. I'm sure that Lazarus was pretty popular, but Jesus would've been getting a lot of attention, because people who saw this were genuinely convinced that this was the messiah.
 - We then start to see this very odd encounter start to happen, where Mary has a jar of very expensive oil, which was made of pure nard.
 - This was a type of ointment that had a strong, distinctive aroma, similar to an essential oil, that clings to skin and hair and continues to give off its heady perfume. It was also thought to have medicinal properties.
 - This nard (spikenard) was talked about in Song of Solomon 1:12, the bride says, "While the king was at his table, my perfume spread its fragrance." Those words imply that, despite all other fragrances in the room, only his bride's would matter to the groom. The presence of spikenard represented their passion for each other and their desire to have only the best define their love.
 - When Mary of Bethany broke her alabaster jar of spikenard (John 12:3) and bathed the feet of Jesus with the oil, she, too, wanted only the best to define her love for Him. It has been speculated that this jar may have been Mary's dowry or her inheritance. In other words, this jar of spikenard ointment may have been all she had of value, and she poured it out on Him. Her extravagant gift is a picture of how her heart was fixed on Jesus. Only the best was worthy of her Lord, and she was willing to give everything as an act of worship.
- **The response of Judas (vv. 4-6)**
- In this next section, we see that Judas has an indignant response to this act towards Jesus. He believes that this should have been sold and given to the poor.
 - John gives us insight into Judas' heart here. We were not concerned for the poor, and he did not have good intentions. He is saying something here that sounds very mature, spiritual, caring, and responsible.
 - But all he cared about was stealing for his own gain. I want us to take a closer look at the heart posture and attitude shown towards Jesus in this passage. We have two main characters in this passage. I think it would be helpful for us to compare and contrast Mary and Judas.

- Take the next few minutes to make a list of the things that we see about Mary's heart vs. Judas' heart.

Mary	Judas

Why do we think it is important that her heart was turned toward Jesus in this way? And what can we learn from this?

Lazarus is a Walking Testimony (vv. 9-11)

- People are starting to hear about this news. After all, I would say raising someone from the dead is a pretty big deal. And because of this, people were coming not to see Jesus, but to see Lazarus, and many people are believing in Jesus because of him.
 - And of course, there is always some conflict action going on with the Pharisees. They want to kill Lazarus... AGAIN... one would think the poor man had gone through enough already!
- Why do we think that they wanted to kill him? Do we see anything similar to this today?

The Triumphal Entry (vv. 12-19)

- The very next day, the large crowd heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. And they will take palm branches and begin to praise and worship Him. They want to exalt Him because they are hearing of all the miracles He is doing, and they want to exalt Him as king. (This is what we celebrate every year on Palm Sunday)
 - This might sound pretty good, but they wanted an earthly king. They wanted freedom from their physical bondage. And this is not a bad thing to want; it is just detrimental when we fail to see our spiritual need and skip straight to our physical need.
 - It is not bad to desire good things on this earth, but we must realize that they are fleeting and Jesus is the only thing that will last.
 - See Luke 19:28–44 for a more detailed account. But in doing this, he fulfilled scripture:
 - **Zechariah 9:9** *“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”*
 - This has a lot of symbolism and importance here. On that day, if a king entered a place, he would be a king who wanted to look powerful and would act as if he were ready for war. He would have soldiers and would come in with great power and authority.
 - But Jesus, on the other hand, will come in on a donkey with a much different presentation. A donkey symbolized peace, humility, and accessibility. Showing he had not come for violence, but to save the world (John 3:17)
 - The statement that says “Fear not, daughter of Zion” shows us something very radical. There is so much we could talk about with Mount Zion, but to keep it to the point, “daughter of Zion” was used to talk about how God dealt with his people. It was not referring to a person, but rather was a metaphor to show that God has a loving, caring, patient relationship God has with His chosen people.
 - Zion was a place of peace, rest, and security that was found in this new covenant that Jesus is ushering in.
 - And this was something that the disciples had knowledge about, but did not have spiritual understanding about until after Jesus had been glorified. The disciples don’t reinterpret Scripture to fit Jesus. They realize Jesus fulfills Scripture exactly as God intended.
 - Some followed because they saw a sign, others opposed because they felt threatened, but both reactions fell under the sovereign hand of God. The kingdom of Christ was advancing not because of human understanding, but because God had ordained that His Son would be glorified. And it is starting to look like the Pharisees are realizing this, but this is why they will seek to kill Him.

John 12:20-50 - Josiah

The Son of Man must be lifted up.

- The story continues, and some Greeks notice Jesus and decide they want to see him and talk to him. This incited Jesus to announce that his hour had come. Notably, before this, Jesus had only stated that his hour had not come. The Greeks seemingly initiate Jesus' hour.
- Jesus then uses an analogy using a seed, where he states, "unless a grain of wheat fall into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit"(John 12:24)
 - **In this analogy, what or who does the seed represent? How come? What is the significance?**

- Jesus goes on to say that if you love your life, you will lose it, but whoever hates his life in this world will gain life eternally.
 - Jesus sets the perfect example of this through his active and passive obedience(perfect life and perfect death). Throughout his ministry, we see Jesus say that he doesn't do anything to glorify himself, but instead, in all he does, He glorifies the Father. When the Spirit penetrates our hearts, the desires and passions of this world must be turned aside. We are called to forsake the things of this world and to set our minds on things above.
 - Not only do we see that we ought to forsake this world, but we also must look to Christ (verse 26). The difference between being outside of Christ and in Christ is binary; you cannot have little bits of both; it is one or the other.
 - Sin and Christ are two sides of the same coin. When we turn to Christ, we must be turning away from sin; we are missing who Christ is. Likewise, if we turn away from sin, we must turn to Christ; we aren't truly turning away from sin. Faith in Jesus is transformative. This is not a call to merely be better, but a call to look to Christ in faith, so that you can put to death your sinful desires and bear good fruit.
- We then see Jesus showing great emotion. He is troubled over his looming torture and death. Similar to last week, we see Jesus demonstrate human emotion that the human brain cannot compute. Is Jesus hesitating? Doubting the Father? Is he concerned the disciples will not follow through? Jesus is showing his humanity in ways we cannot understand, yet the gravity of this situation cannot be diminished. His hour has come, and the light of the world will suffer a horrific death at the hands of darkness. The moment that was set before the beginning of time, the pivotal event in the covenant of redemption, the event that all of Christianity hinges on, is approaching. Jesus recognizes this, and he says, "What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this purpose I have come to this hour."(John 12:27)
 - This statement is less of a question and more of a prayer to the Father, knowing his ministry and mission will ultimately be fulfilled in this key moment.

- The Father then speaks down from heaven, saying, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”(John 12:28). Many of the bystanders heard thunder, and some thought they heard the voice of an angel. Then Jesus says that this was for their sake.
 - **If this was for their sake, how come they did not understand the Father’s words? What purpose would it serve?**

Jesus draws all people to himself.

- We seemingly get to the point in which Jesus addresses the Greeks who came to see him.
 - “Now is the judgment of this world.”
 - The cross represents the beginning of the final judgment. The light of the world wages war against sin and death on a cross. Through Christ, the world has been judged, yet we live in a moment and time in which we still await final judgment, in which all things will be glorified. Jesus has declared that death has no hold, though while we will suffer from its consequences, it will have no final hold on anyone who is in Christ.
 - “Now will the ruler of this world be cast out.”
 - On the cross, Satan unleashes his most evil and violent form ever seen, and Jesus takes the full weight of the power of Satan by dying. The most illogical demonstration of power, through humility, he sacrifices himself to be the atonement of sins in death. But through this death, he banishes the ruler of this world so that all who believe in him may have eternal life.
 - “I am lifted up from the earth.”
 - We saw a glimpse of this power through the resurrection of Lazarus, but God demonstrates his complete power in raising Jesus from the dead to rule at the right hand of God forever. He is raised into ultimate glorification. His glorification is not a reward for his death; they are intertwined. The Son of Man had to be crucified to be glorified.
 - “I ... will draw all people to myself.”
 - Jesus is the bringer of the New Covenant. The effect of his glorification is that all people are drawn to him. Notice that this does not mean every single person (see verse 37); instead, it means all kinds of people. This is his word to the Greeks who wanted his attention; through his work on the cross, he breaks every cultural boundary, and he welcomes all those who believe in him into his kingdom.
- The observers are confused and note two things: Jesus claims to be the Son of Man, and he is going to die. They cannot put these two together because they know in the scripture that it says that the Son of Man will last forever.

- Jesus responds in a familiar way, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest the darkness overtake you.”(John 12:35).
 - Jesus is encouraging them to cling to him in faith and “walk in the light”, he is hinting at his transformative power. But he is also warning them against the alternative, darkness, and ultimately spiritual death.
- John inserts his own editorial note, showing the unbelief of the people hearing Jesus. John explains that this unbelief fulfills the prophecy made by Isaiah in chapters 53 and 6. They are unable to believe because their hearts are hardened towards Jesus, they are spiritually blind, and unwilling to follow Him.
 - “For they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.” - John 12:43

Jesus’ Call and Warning

- This chapter concludes with Jesus calling people to himself. He explains the purpose of his ministry: to be light so that whoever may believe will not remain in darkness. He is calling people to experience his transformative light, but he also brings a warning. He clarifies that he did not come to judge the world, but there is a judge, and anyone who doesn’t receive and believe in the light will be judged in eternity.
- **In light of Jesus’ warning about final judgment, should believers be frightened? If not, what should our response be?**

Upcoming Events

- Christian Worldview class is available, 6 pm at Waukesha Bible, all are welcome.
- Mac and Cheese Cook Off at WBC is on February 7th, this Saturday at 5 pm, everyone is welcome, whether or not you bring a dish.
- Brotatotine's Day next week!

Other Helpful Resources:

- He Must Increase Podcast by Connor Shady & Adam Tredeau (Official Podcast of 3:30!)
- Waukesha Bible Church John 11 Sermons (Find on YouTube)

Other Reminders:

- Get involved with a church - **Specifically WBC!**
 - **Adam is teaching: 9 AM Class on the Book of Romans at WBC prior to service.**
 - WBC service is at 10:00 AM every Sunday!
 - Check out our Website: Threethirtyministry.com
 - Join the 3:30 GroupMe chat to stay up to date on everything 3:30 Ministry.
 - Also check us out on Instagram: @three.thirty.ministries and @three.thirty.mens.ministry
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The Gospel: *We Can't, God Can, Jesus Did!*

- **Sin.** None of us can escape it. Because of it, we are spiritually dead and in need of life. Our debt before God is insurmountable. It is the biggest problem any of us has, since there is nothing we can do ourselves to pay that debt. God's standard is perfection, so no amount of good works or religious activities is enough.
 - 1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience - 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. (Ephesians 2:1-3)
- **But God...** These two words are some of the most powerful words in the Bible. God is merciful and loving. He did what we could never do in and of ourselves. He saved us by grace alone and gave us new life in Christ.
 - 4 **But God**, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved - 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:4-7)
- **Jesus saves.** He is God's gift to us. He paid our debt before the Father. And through his death and resurrection, we are raised to eternal life. There is nothing we can do to earn it. It is only through Christ that we live a life pleasing to God.
 - 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

ANOTHER WAY TO GO ABOUT THIS IDEA: THINK BASEBALL

- When preparing and studying scripture, our focus is to always stay true to the scripture.
- In order to best do this, we use a method called the Simeon Trust method, which simply lays out a process to faithfully discern the Bible.
- FIRST:
 - Understanding who the text was written to. (The Audience)
 - Understanding why the text was written. (The Purpose)
 - Understanding the structure, genre, context, emphasis, and melodic line of the text.
 - In a nutshell, the first step focuses on understanding what the text meant to its original audience.
- SECOND:
 - Once we have done this, we must filter it through the Gospel.
 - This means understanding when and why this text was written in reference to the cross. → Is it pointing to the coming of Christ (OT), is it pointing to Christ and what Christ has already done (NT), is the text speaking of law, is it speaking of the Gospel, etc?
- THIRD:
 - Once we've understood the text's original meaning/audience and have filtered it through the Gospel lens, we are able to determine what it means to us now. Without this process, the proper application of the Bible is essentially impossible.
- COMING HOME: Once we understand the appropriate application of the text, our legwork essentially stops, and we become fully reliant on the Holy Spirit to work in us.

