

Sermon Palm Sunday: John 11:47-John 12:8

29 March 2026

BREAKING THE ICE

How do you typically react when something you deeply value feels threatened—do you tend to protect it, control the situation, withdraw, or confront it? What does that response reveal about your heart?

UNDERSTANDING THE TRUTH

Read the Passage: John 11:47-12:8

1. Look at John 11:47-48.
 - a. What event prompts the chief priests and Pharisees to gather together?
 - b. What are they concerned will happen if Jesus continues His ministry?
 - c. What does this reveal about their priorities?
2. John 11:49-52.
 - a. What solution does Caiaphas propose?
 - b. What does he mean when he says it is better for one man to die for the people?
 - c. According to John, how is Caiaphas' statement prophetic beyond what he realizes?
3. What decision do the leaders make about Jesus? (vs 53)
4. What is happening in Jerusalem as Passover approaches (vs. 55)? During this preparation time, what are the people doing? What are the religious leaders doing?
5. In John 12:1, where is Jesus? (Note: Bethany is less than 2 miles outside Jerusalem) What does this say about his concern over the plot to kill Him?
6. What does Mary do in verse 3? Detail her actions (cost, fragrance, posture). What makes her act significant or unusual?
7. Who objects to Mary's actions and what reason does he give (vs. 4-5)?
8. What does John reveal about Judas' true motives (vs.6)?
9. How does Jesus respond to Judas' criticism?
10. What does Jesus mean when He says, "You will not always have me?" What will happen in 7 days?
11. Consider how this statement points to the deity of Jesus.

SEEING JESUS CHRIST

In this passage, we see Jesus as both **courageous and worthy**. He does not hide, even though He knows there is a plot against His life. Instead, He goes to Bethany—to the home of Lazarus, the very man everyone is talking about because he was raised from the dead. Jesus sits at the table, reclining and sharing a meal, giving the picture of someone who is not anxious or threatened by the schemes of the religious leaders. At the same time, He fully receives Mary's extravagant act of worship. She recognizes who He is—Lord and King—and He affirms her response. Jesus is not only unafraid in the face of opposition, but also completely worthy of wholehearted devotion.

- During this Holy Week, take time to reflect: where does your life need to shift from self-protection or reservation to wholehearted devotion to Him? Ask yourself, *what truly has my heart? What would it take to give that away?*

MAKING IT MATTER

1. Mary's actions are costly, humble and socially undignified. What would it look like for your worship (time, money, affection, surrender) to become more costly (extravagant), humble, and undignified (vulnerable)?
2. How do Judas' words sound spiritually reasonable on the surface? In what ways can we use "good reasons" to mask selfishness or resistance to true worship?
3. What are the key differences between Mary and Judas in how they approach Jesus? Is how you approach Jesus (in worship, in prayer, in solitude) led by your heart or by your mind and will?
4. The religious leaders chose self-preservation over truth. How do you see the pull toward self-preservation—especially within today's political climate—tempting people (or even yourself) to prioritize security, identity, or being "right" over truth? What would it look like, in that context, to choose surrender to Jesus instead?

PRAYING FOR GOD'S POWER

"This is the confidence we have before him: If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have what we have asked of him." - 1 John 5:14-15 When we pray according to God's will, it engages the power and guidance of God to bring about our transformation. If we apply these truths in our own strength, it becomes legalistic obedience. But when we humbly ask God to change us and empower us according to His will and by His Spirit, it becomes transformational and glorifies Him.

- Share one specific application from today's lesson you would like to see transformed in your life. Take time to pray that God would transform you as you trust Him in this area.