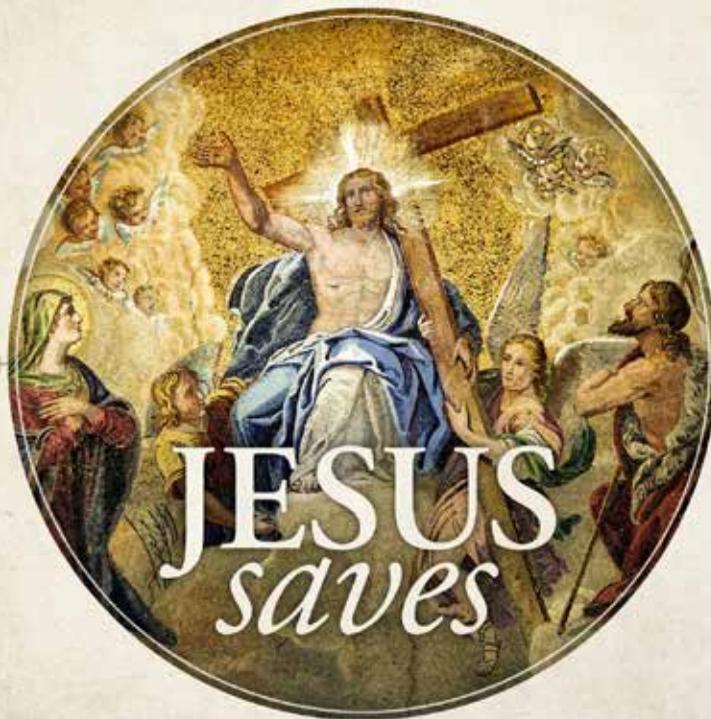


THE
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CHRONOLOGICAL



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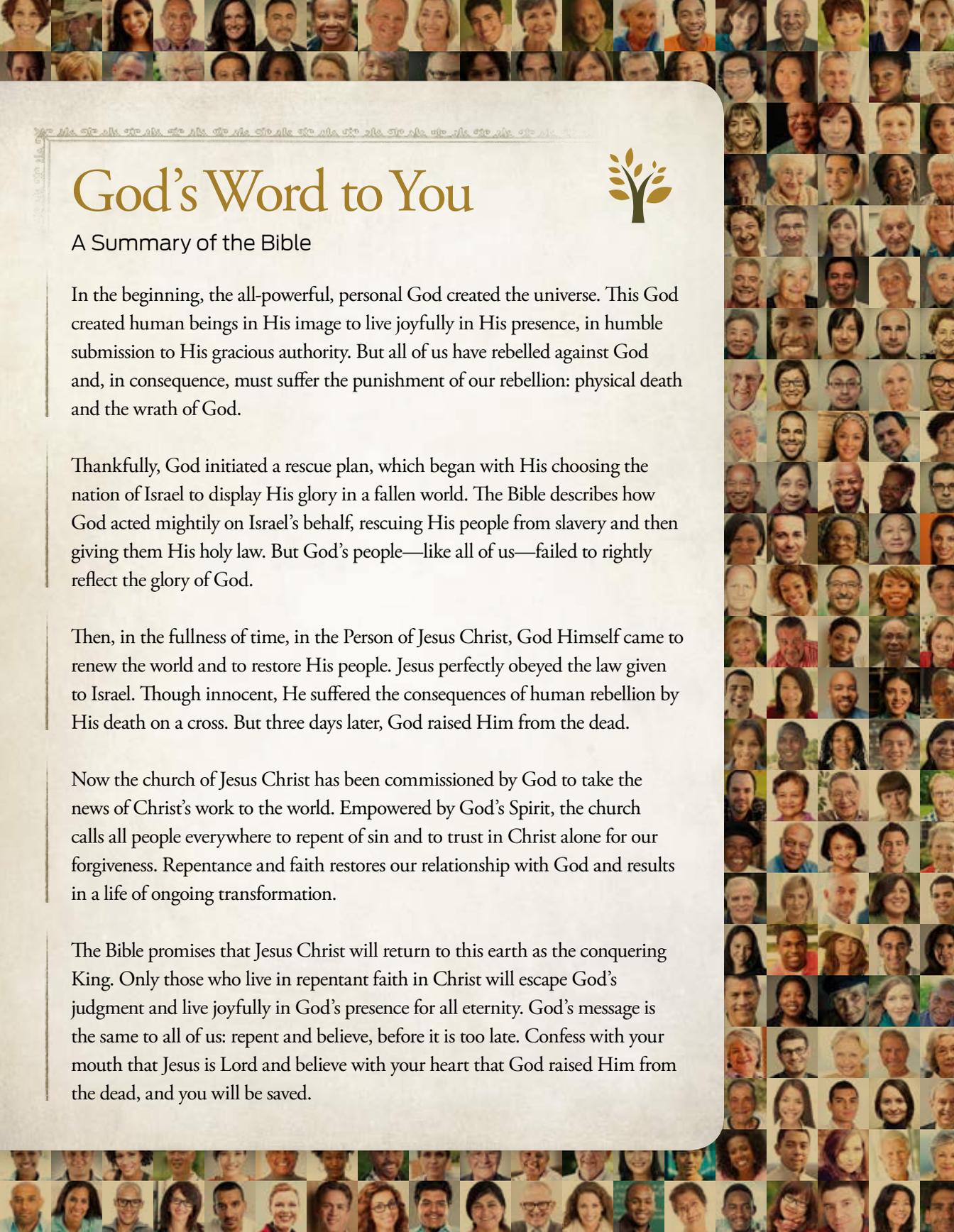
Volume 9

FALL 2017: *Personal Study Guide ESV*

Ed Stetzer & Trevin Wax GENERAL EDITORS

Brian Dembowczyk MANAGING EDITOR

LifeWay | Adults



God's Word to You



A Summary of the Bible

In the beginning, the all-powerful, personal God created the universe. This God created human beings in His image to live joyfully in His presence, in humble submission to His gracious authority. But all of us have rebelled against God and, in consequence, must suffer the punishment of our rebellion: physical death and the wrath of God.

Thankfully, God initiated a rescue plan, which began with His choosing the nation of Israel to display His glory in a fallen world. The Bible describes how God acted mightily on Israel's behalf, rescuing His people from slavery and then giving them His holy law. But God's people—like all of us—failed to rightly reflect the glory of God.

Then, in the fullness of time, in the Person of Jesus Christ, God Himself came to renew the world and to restore His people. Jesus perfectly obeyed the law given to Israel. Though innocent, He suffered the consequences of human rebellion by His death on a cross. But three days later, God raised Him from the dead.

Now the church of Jesus Christ has been commissioned by God to take the news of Christ's work to the world. Empowered by God's Spirit, the church calls all people everywhere to repent of sin and to trust in Christ alone for our forgiveness. Repentance and faith restores our relationship with God and results in a life of ongoing transformation.

The Bible promises that Jesus Christ will return to this earth as the conquering King. Only those who live in repentant faith in Christ will escape God's judgment and live joyfully in God's presence for all eternity. God's message is the same to all of us: repent and believe, before it is too late. Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe with your heart that God raised Him from the dead, and you will be saved.



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*This Is Our Time: Everyday
Myths in Light of the Gospel*

In this volume of *The Gospel Project*, we get to the very heart of our faith—the cross and resurrection of Jesus the King. We’ve seen how Jesus lived a perfect life of obedience to the Father. We’ve seen how He proclaimed and demonstrated the glory of the coming kingdom of God through His authoritative teaching and amazing miracles. But all of Jesus’ words and deeds were building to the greatest demonstration of God’s glory—Christ’s willingness to die on the cross in our place for our sins. The perfect Son of God chose to lay down His life in order to save sinners like you and me and give us eternal life as adopted sons and daughters of God. “Christ crucified.” This is our message for a world in need of salvation.

But the story doesn’t end with the cross. Not only did Jesus lay down His life, but He also took it up again and now reigns as the King of kings. The Gospels show us Jesus in the week leading up to the cross but also in the weeks following His resurrection. We see Him appear again and again to His followers, giving them blessing and benefit as they see the risen Lord.

Before returning to the Father, the risen King appeared to His followers and gave them the Great Commission and promised them the Holy Spirit to fulfill it. This is a great story—this is the best story—and by faith in Jesus, we are part of it. Our prayer for you is that this volume of *The Gospel Project* will empower you to share the good news of Christ crucified and raised so that Jesus the Savior may gather even more brothers and sisters into His holy family.



Brian Dembowczyk

Managing Editor
AUTHOR OF *Gospel-Centered Kids Ministry*

For the past three years, I have had the privilege and joy of serving as *The Gospel Project for Kids* team leader, and now I am grateful to transition and serve as *The Gospel Project* Managing Editor. Before coming to LifeWay, I served in local church ministry for nearly 17 years, as a senior pastor or discipleship pastor during much of that time. One of my passions in ministry was to come alongside others, dive into God’s Word, and experience gospel transformation together. That’s why I was a small group Bible study leader then and why I continue to be one today.

In this volume of *The Gospel Project*, we have the opportunity to point one another to the core of the gospel message—the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ Jesus. My hope and prayer is that God uses the sessions in this volume to deepen your awe, love, and gratitude for who God is and what He has done through Christ and that hearts are stirred to live each day on mission meaningfully so that others may come to be part of God’s people through Christ.

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The Gospel Project[®]
 Adult Personal Study Guide ESV
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 salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture
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**Suggested for
the week of**

Unit 1: Jesus the Savior (Gospels)

September 3	10	<i>Session 1</i>	The Savior Is Anointed for Burial
September 10	19	<i>Session 2</i>	Jesus in Jerusalem
September 17	28	<i>Session 3</i>	The Last Supper
September 24	37	<i>Session 4</i>	The Savior Is Arrested
October 1	46	<i>Session 5</i>	The Savior Is Crucified
October 8	55	<i>Session 6</i>	The Savior Is Raised

Unit 2: Jesus the Risen King (Gospels, Acts)

October 15	65	<i>Session 7</i>	The Risen King on the Emmaus Road
October 22	74	<i>Session 8</i>	The Risen King Sends His People
October 29	83	<i>Session 9</i>	The Risen King and the Doubter
November 5	92	<i>Session 10</i>	The Risen King Forgives and Restores
November 12	101	<i>Session 11</i>	The Risen King's Commission
November 19	110	<i>Session 12</i>	The Risen King Ascends
November 26	119	<i>Special Session</i>	A Song of Thanksgiving



THE GOSPEL PROJECT CHRONOLOGICAL

A Journey Through the Storyline of Scripture

Fall 2015

The Story Begins

God the Creator (Genesis 1–11)

God the Covenant-Maker (Genesis 12–50)

Winter 2015-16

God Delivers

God the Redeemer (Exodus)

God the Lawgiver (Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy)

Spring 2016

The Promised Land

God the Savior (Numbers, Joshua)

God the Judge (Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel)

Summer 2016

A Kingdom Established

God the King (1–2 Samuel)

God All Wise (1 Kings, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes)

Fall 2016

Prophets and Kings

God the Revealer (1–2 Kings, Isaiah)

God the Pursuer (Prophets, 2 Chronicles)

Winter 2016-17 *Exile and Return*

God the Sustainer (Daniel, Ezra)

God the Provider (Esther, Nehemiah, Malachi)

Spring 2017 *The Rescue Begins*

God the Son (Gospels)

God Among Us (Gospels)

Summer 2017 *Stories and Signs*

Jesus the Storyteller (Synoptic Gospels)

Jesus the Miracle-Worker (Gospels)

Fall 2017 *Jesus Saves*

Jesus the Savior (Gospels)

Jesus the Risen King (Gospels, Acts)



Winter 2017-18 *The Church on Mission*

The Spirit Who Empowers (Acts)

The God Who Sends (Acts)

Spring 2018 *Letters to God's People*

The God Who Directs His People (Epistles)

The God Who Changes Us (Epistles)

Summer 2018 *Come, Lord Jesus*

God's Prisoner (Acts, Epistles)

The God Who Makes All Things New (Epistles, Revelation)

Unit 1

JESUS THE SAVIOR

Gospels

Memory Verses

You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.

—JOHN 13:13-15

Writers

Matt Chandler is the Lead Pastor of Teaching at The Village Church in Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas, and the president of the Acts 29 church-planting network.

Geoff Ashley serves as pastor at The Parkway Church in McKinney, Texas, after having served for ten years of ministry at The Village Church.

The Savior Is Anointed for Burial

THEOLOGICAL THEME: Our heart's condition is revealed either by our giving or by our greed.

Not much can compete with the joy of a young child on Christmas morning. For days or even weeks she has seen wonderfully wrapped presents under a lit and decorated tree. Her anticipation has built until it is nearly ready to erupt in joyful consummation as paper and bow fly through the air in an unwrapping frenzy.

Not much can compete with that feeling, except perhaps the joy of the parent as unbridled childhood anticipation collides with the patient longing of the parents to see joy's consummation in their child.

In those moments, it is abundantly clear that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Still, we all have within us the struggle to gratify ourselves, the struggle of greed.

Voices from the Church

"Authentic worship always involves *obedience* and *sacrifice*."¹

—Herbert W. Bateman IV

 In what areas of your life do you feel as though you are generous?

 What compels your generosity?

In this session, we will see a contrast between the generosity of a woman and the greed of Judas as manifested in the account of Jesus' anointing at Bethany. In their respective responses to Jesus, we see the importance of giving Him priority and honor over everything in our lives. The distinction between these two people serves as an opportunity for us to consider our own hearts in light of the opportunity we have to express our devotion through visible acts of worship.

1. Mary prepares Jesus for His coming death and burial (Matt. 26:6-7).

⁶ Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, ⁷ a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table.

At first glance, it is hard to appreciate what is happening in this scene. First and foremost, who among us would be at all honored by someone sneaking up behind us and pouring an entire bottle of canola oil or Chanel No. 5 on our heads? Rather than honored, we would be humiliated if not extremely confused.

Second, we miss the social boundaries from a historical perspective. Here we have a woman who is interrupting a feast of men. In this particular cultural context, this would have been quite the cause of confusion and conversation.

We know that the culture of a people determines what is socially acceptable and permissible, but throughout the Scripture, we find that the kingdom of God turns expectations upside down. We see this evidence of upside-down expectations even from the beginning of the scene with Jesus eating in the home of a man identified as a “leper” (see Lev. 13–14 for the requirements of the Mosaic law as it relates to leprosy).

Voices from the Church

“Matthew’s unnamed woman is Jesus’ invitation to all women, and men and children, to come to the table of Christian *koinonia*...There is no hierarchy of holiness upon entrance, and there is no pedigree and no degree requirement for entrance. The only prerequisite is faith in Jesus. All who have faith in Jesus can come for a meal.”²

—Sean Douglas O’Donnell

 What are some other evidences you can think of from Scripture of the kingdom of God reversing expectations?

 How does seeing this context help us better appreciate who Jesus is and what He does?

From the parallel account in John 12, we learn that this woman who anointed Jesus was Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. Mary's original intentions are not entirely clear. Was she expressing in this act of devotion her belief that Jesus is the *Christ*, meaning the anointed One of God?

Or perhaps Mary was one of the first in the Gospels to really understand that the messianic mission would march through a tomb. Whether Mary was initially and intentionally aware of the significance of her action or not, Jesus clearly saw the act as stretching beyond the present into the future. In this simple glorious act, she has prepared Jesus for His upcoming burial (Matt. 26:12).

99 Essential Christian Doctrines

59. *Christ as Sacrifice*

There are several signs, symbols, and pointers in the Old Testament that foreshadowed Christ as being the sacrificial Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. However, unlike the sacrificial system of the Old Testament, whose sacrifices were unable to take away sin (Heb. 10:4), Christ's sacrifice on the cross was able to permanently, "once and for all," take away sins.

 What feelings do you think Mary might have experienced as these events unfolded?

 How have you faced humiliation and shame for devotion to Jesus?

2. Jesus praises Mary's extravagant gift of love (Matt. 26:8-13).

⁸ And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste?"⁹ For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor."¹⁰ But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. ¹¹ For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. ¹² In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. ¹³ 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."

"Why this waste?"

A simple question from the perspective of the disciples. For them there was no compelling reason to empty an entire bottle of valuable oil upon the head of Jesus. Regardless of their true motivations, they missed the significance of this act of devotion and expressed their belief that her gift was wasted. But in demeaning this woman and the value of her act, the disciples unknowingly demeaned Jesus and His coming death and resurrection.

This was an extravagant gift. Matthew described the perfume as "very expensive"; both Mark and John include that it was an expensive oil valued around 300 denarii (Mark 14:3,5; John 12:3,5). Considering that a denarius was roughly equivalent to a day's wages, this jar was worth nearly one year's salary. Imagine someone today taking \$50,000 and setting it on fire and you will understand the confusion of the disciples.

Now imagine someone giving her life savings for the sake of Christ and you will understand the devotion of Mary. Since women generally were not able to have jobs that would provide such income, this was probably a family heirloom with sentimental value in addition to its monetary value.

In return for her devotion, she was met with disdain by the disciples. They were indignant in their response and sought to scold her. But their anger was motivated more by love of their own kingdoms than love for the kingdom of God.



Voices from Church History

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."³

—Jim Elliot (1927-1956)

But the condemnation from the disciples is juxtaposed with Jesus' incredible commendation.

“Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me.”

This “beautiful thing” that she has done bears hints of Jesus' earlier commendation of the widow's offering (Mark 12:41-44). Though on opposite ends of the spectrum in regard to the intrinsic value of their individual gifts, both acts share the common denominator of wholehearted devotion, thus demonstrating that an act of sacrifice has value by virtue of motivation and intent, not inherent worth.



How do you measure the value of your giving?

“You always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me.”

The desire to provide for the poor is a noble desire as well. After all, the Bible commands it and the apostles exemplified such a longing (Prov. 21:13; 22:9; Gal. 2:10; 1 John 3:17). But the Bible also suggests that there is a time for all things (Eccl. 3:1-8). There is a time to give your oil to the poor and there is a time to pour your oil on Christ.

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

Not only did Jesus praise her action, but He declared that it would be forever etched in the narrative of the gospel as an example of devotion and love. Likewise, the people of God are compelled by love to give to the work of God's kingdom (Acts 4:32-35).



Why do you think Jesus singled out Mary's act of devotion as an enduring example?

3. Judas plans the betrayal of Jesus for 30 pieces of silver (Matt. 26:14-16).

¹⁴ Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and said, “What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?” And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶ And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him.

When Don Richardson, a missionary to New Guinea, first began to share the gospel with the Sawi tribe, he became aware of the extreme cultural divide that separated the tribe from a Christian understanding of the last days of Jesus’ life. In particular, the Sawi understanding was distorted by their cultural commendation of betrayal. For the Sawi, treachery was a virtue to be celebrated.

As Richardson progressed through telling the narrative of the gospel, the narrative tension and suspense increased until the events of Judas’ betrayal, at which point the Sawi began to celebrate. Rather than seeing the betrayal as the wicked rejection of the King, Judas was viewed as the hero of the story, given his skillful duplicity and infidelity.⁴



What are some forms of betrayal that are common in our culture?



What underlying motivations can fuel the betrayal in these cases?

Matthew’s Gospel immediately moves from the anointing by Mary to the betrayal by Judas, and what is implicit in his account is made explicit in John’s Gospel. According to John 12, it was Judas who led the chorus of condemnation of the woman’s anointing, and it was not from love of man but love of money. Thus, when he went to the chief priests and asked for payment, his motivations had already been exposed. Judas was not driven primarily by religious or theological conviction but by greed.

The contrast between Judas and Mary could not be more striking. Mary was willing to forfeit wealth for Jesus. Judas was willing to forfeit Jesus for wealth.

The contrast between Judas and Jesus is even more stunning. Judas sacrificed others for his own gain. Jesus sacrificed Himself for the gain of others.

This was no last minute and accidental betrayal in the heat of the moment. Judas was not cornered by the priests, nor did he just give in to his fleshly desires in a moment of passion and weakness. He walked two miles (the distance from Bethany to Jerusalem) over a mountain and through a valley in the middle of the night in order to seek out someone who might meet his craving for money.

The chief priests were more than happy to oblige, as they had been seeking an opportunity against Jesus for quite some time. Judas' arrival and willingness represented the open door they needed.

Furthermore, Scripture testifies that Judas' actions were influenced by Satanic desire (Luke 22:3-6), and it was Satan who had previously left Jesus until an "opportune time," according to Luke 4:13. The desires of the chief priests, Judas, and Satan all converged in this one opportunity for betrayal.

It is doubtful that anyone doing this study is compelled by the exact same motivations as Satan or the chief priests. Even the most hardened pagan is hardly actively seeking to crucify Christ. None of us has ever betrayed Jesus in exactly the same manner in which Judas did. Yet we are all creatures driven by desire; our cravings and longings are reflections of our loves and lusts. And the Bible teaches that our hearts are naturally inclined toward our own kingdoms and glory apart from the work of the Spirit to grant us new hearts and desires.



Voices from Church History

"If we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."⁵

—C. S. Lewis (1898-1963)

As we close out this section, let us make the most of the opportunity we have to consider the condition of our own heart before the Lord. Reject the greed of Judas; strive to be like Mary, who gave her most precious possession for Christ; but even more so, strive to be like Christ, who gave Himself fully and freely to set us free from bondage to greed and lust.



How might you begin to cultivate a greater love for Christ that compels you toward generosity and sacrifice?

Conclusion

If our motivation for giving is to receive praise from others or something in return, that is nothing more than greed. If our outright greed moves us to withhold generosity, then we have revealed that God's call on our lives is secondary to our comfort. It also shows that we treasure things other than God and long for our own glory over Christ's.

The Bible is clear: the people of God are marked by their joyful giving (2 Cor. 9:7). Even when our complex hearts reveal the deadly mix of generosity and greed, the convicting power of God's Spirit moves us to repent and honor God. As God has given His Son for us out of the overflow of His heart, so He calls and compels His people to express their devotion through visible acts of worship. Let us follow the example of Mary, exemplifying love and devotion to our Savior in our generosity.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Pouring expensive oil on Jesus was not a waste but an act of worship. By allowing Mary to anoint Him, Jesus showed that He is more valuable than anything. This act of devotion foreshadowed Jesus' death and burial.

HIS MISSION, YOUR MISSION

MISSIONAL APPLICATION: God calls us to treasure Christ above all wealth and to express our devotion through visible acts of worship.

1. How can we grow in our understanding and thankfulness for Jesus' crucifixion and burial? How should this impact our witness for Jesus?

2. How can our acts of generosity honor Jesus and serve as an example for others?

3. What are a few practical steps you can take to begin to practice generosity as an overflow of devotion and worship?

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SESSION 11

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1. Henry Martyn, quoted in *The Bible Exposition Commentary: New Testament*, vol. 1, by Warren W. Wiersbe (Colorado Springs: David C Cook, 2001), 456.
2. Corrie ten Boom with Jamie Buckingham, *Tramp for the Lord: The Story That Begins Where the Hiding Place Ends* (Fort Washington, PA: CLC Publications, 1974), 63.
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SPECIAL SESSION

1. Louisa M. R. Stead, "'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus," in *Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville: LifeWay Worship, 2008), 502.
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4. Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 1–39*, vol. 15a in *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: B&H, 2007), 284.



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- "Risen"—Covenant Worship
- "The Cause of Christ"—Kari Jobe
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