

## **Jesus Anointed at Bethany Small Group Guide**

**Warm-up Question:** (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. Who is someone whose opinion matters deeply to you? Why does their opinion carry so much weight?
2. Have you ever done something meaningful or important that others didn't understand or even criticized? What was that like?

**Read the following passages:** Mark 14:1-11, Galatians 1:10

In this passage, we see a powerful contrast in how different people respond to Jesus. Religious leaders reject him, the disciples, and an unnamed woman offer Him extravagant devotion. While others evaluate Jesus from a distance or protect their own interests, this woman responds with wholehearted worship, pouring out something incredibly valuable in an act that many consider wasteful.

At the center of this story is a key question: Who is Jesus? How we answer that question directly shapes the kind of devotion we offer Him. If Jesus is merely a teacher or an option, our response will be cautious and calculated. But if He is truly our Savior, the one who has healed, forgiven, and made us whole, then nothing we give Him will feel like too much.

This story challenges us to live free from the opinions of others. The woman's devotion drew criticism, yet she was focused on Jesus, not the crowd. In the same way, knowing Jesus as Savior frees us from people-pleasing so that we can offer Him the devotion He deserves, even when others don't understand.

**Questions for Discussion** (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. In this passage, different groups see Jesus differently (religious leaders, disciples, the woman). Which perspective do you most relate to right now? Why?
2. How would you personally answer the question: Who is Jesus to me? What experiences, beliefs, or influences have shaped that view to believe?
3. The woman's act of devotion is described as extravagant and even "wasteful" by others. What are some ways that devotion to Jesus might look "wasteful" or excessive in today's culture?
4. Reread Mark 14:3-9. Why do you think Jesus calls what the woman did "a beautiful thing"? What does this teach us about what kind of devotion honors Him?

5. Knowing Jesus as our Savior frees us from needing others' affirmation. Where do you feel most influenced or held back by other people's opinions?
6. Read Galatians 1:10. What does it look like in practical terms to live for God's approval rather than people's approval?
7. The woman acted in a timely, Spirit-led moment, even when others didn't understand. How can we grow in sensitivity and obedience to the Holy Spirit, even when it feels uncomfortable or misunderstood?
8. Which of these areas of devotion feels most challenging or "costly" for you right now: time, money, honesty, forgiveness, reputation, or commitment? Why?
9. What would change in your daily life, priorities, or decisions if you surrendered everything in your life to Jesus?

**Pray**