



Discussion Guide – September 20, 2026

Kingdom Victory

Matthew 26:1-16

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HOW TO PREPARE

Begin preparing by reading the full passage a few times. Then answer the questions for yourself. Then think about how your Small Group might answer them. Try re-wording the questions to fit you and your Small Group. Don't feel tied down to the discussion guide, just be sure to discuss the main point of the text in your conversations.

RESOURCES

<https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/plot-kill-jesus>

<https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/anointed-burial>

<https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/she-has-done-a-beautiful-thing>

<https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/judas-wicked-scheme>

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-would-judas-do>

DISCUSSION GUIDE OUTLINE

Matthew 26:1-16

1. The Pharisees Feared Men More Than God. Vv. 1-5
2. Judas Loved Money More Than God. Vv. 6-9, 14-15
3. Mary Showed Her Love and Fear of God Through Her Anointing of Jesus. Vv. 10-13



SCRIPTURE (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE 1995)

MATTHEW 26:1-16

THE GOSPEL EXALTED

1 When Jesus had finished all these words, He said to His disciples,

2 "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man is to be handed over for crucifixion."

3 Then the chief priests and the elders of the people were gathered together in the court of the high priest, named Caiaphas;

4 and they plotted together to seize Jesus by stealth and kill Him.

5 But they were saying, "Not during the festival, otherwise a riot might occur among the people."

THE PRECIOUS OINTMENT

6 Now when Jesus was in Bethany, at the home of Simon the leper,

7 a woman came to Him with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume, and she poured it on His head as He reclined at the table.

8 But the disciples were indignant when they saw this, and said, "Why this waste?

9 For this perfume might have been sold for a high price and the money given to the poor."

10 But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you bother the woman? For she has done a good deed to Me.

11 For you always have the poor with you; but you do not always have Me.

12 For when she poured this perfume on My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial.

13 Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her."

JUDAS'S BARGAIN

14 Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests

15 and said, "What are you willing to give me to betray Him to you?" And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him.

16 From then on he began looking for a good opportunity to betray Jesus.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Ask a volunteer to read Matthew 26:1-16.

INTRODUCTION AND MAIN IDEA

In Matthew 26:1, we see Jesus concluding his earthly ministry and transition to preparing for his death. A death put in motion by betrayal. A death his disciples refused to acknowledge was coming even though he told them at least three times before, and which he reminds them of a fourth time in Matthew 26:2. A death which one obedient woman sacrificed much to anoint him for. Here we see how various other lesser loves got in the way of people experiencing the fullness of Christ and what he was to do on the cross. Here we can learn much from how God used Mary to anoint Christ.

1. Have you ever given a “grand gift” to someone, something of extraordinary value (monetary or time) above and beyond any other gift you’ve given? What motivated you to do so? Were they worth it?

UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION

These questions should help your Small Group dig deeper into the text and then apply it to your lives today.

I. The Pharisees Feared Men More Than God. Vv. 1-5

2. Read Exodus 12:12-14. What did God do for the nation of Israel during the first Passover? What was the purpose of the annual Passover celebrated by the Israelites in the time of Christ? What is the significance of Jesus being crucified during Passover?

3. Historically, many revolts broke out during Jewish festivals when large crowds were in Jerusalem. The Roman Empire was quick to put these revolts down violently. The high priests wanted to kill Jesus because His messianic mission might draw the ire of Rome, but they wanted to delay His execution lest they provoke the people to rise up against them. (v. 5). Did the Pharisees fear men more than God? Are the Pharisees remembered positively for fearing men more than God, or negatively?



4. How might the fear of men more than God drive people to either disobey God or miss out on Him completely?

II. Judas Loved Money More Than God. Vv. 6-9, 14-15

5. Read John 12:1-7. The oil Mary uses to anoint Jesus's feet is "worth a year's wages" (v. 5). Matthew records that multiple disciples objected to this as a waste (Matthew 26:8-9) and John records that it was Judas who objected (John 12:4-5). It is possible Judas raised the objection that other disciples then thought was reasonable, as helping the poor was a good thing to do. But John makes clear that Judas "did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief." (John 12:6). Why is money such an enticing temptation?

6. The love of money leads to destruction, regret, disgrace, and even death. How do we see that play out in Judas's life? Consider John 12:6 (thief), Matthew 26:14-15 (destructive ends), Matthew 10:4 ("who betrayed him"), Luke 6:16 (traitor), Matthew 27:3 (regret), and Matthew 27:5 (death).

7. A popular phrase of the 1990s was "What would Jesus do?" In this we found a positive example to evaluate our life choices. Have you considered "What would Judas do?" How might asking that question help us avoid loving money more than God?



III. Mary Showed Her Love and Fear of God Through Her Anointing of Jesus. Vv. 10-13

8. Consider 1 Samuel 10:1 and 1 Samuel 16:13. How was oil used to anoint the Kings of Israel? Did Mary perhaps think anointing Jesus was to honor His messianic purpose as King?

9. Consider Matthew 10:12. What did Jesus say was the effect of her anointing? To prepare His body for burial? What does this reveal about where Jesus's mind was at? Was He preparing for His passion?

10. As modern Christians, we have the benefit of the full Bible. We know the rest of the story. We know that Jesus had to raise from the dead to defeat sin and death, and that He would charge His disciples—and us, with sharing the Gospel for now thousands of years. What is more important, ministering to the physical needs of the poor and sick, or saving souls?

11. How does Mary's act of honoring Jesus contrast with Judas's act of betraying Jesus? How is Mary remembered today as compared to Judas?

12. What are some practical ways you can be on guard against fearing men or loving money (or anything) more than honoring God?



COMMENTARY (FROM ESV STUDY BIBLE)

Matt. 26:1–27:66 The Crucified Messiah. Matthew narrates the events leading to Jesus' death: (1) the Passover and Lord's Supper and events in Gethsemane (26:1–46); (2) Jesus' arrest, trials, and conviction (26:47–27:26); and (3) Jesus' flogging, crucifixion, death, and burial (27:27–66).

Matt. 26:1–16 Plot, Anointing, and Betrayal to the Religious Leaders. Jesus predicts his arrest and crucifixion, plotted by the religious leaders (vv. 1–5). Matthew then recounts how Jesus was anointed at Bethany (vv. 6–13) and how Judas arranged the betrayal (vv. 14–16).

Matt. 26:2 The Passover was celebrated annually in remembrance of Israel's exodus from Egypt under Moses' leadership (see notes on Exodus 12). Son of Man. See note on Matt. 8:20. This is the fourth and final time that Jesus predicts his arrest and crucifixion (cf. 16:21; 17:22–23; 20:17–19).

Matt. 26:3–4 chief priests and the elders of the people. Representatives of the Sanhedrin, the ruling body in Jerusalem, but not the full assembly. palace. The private residence of the high priest. Caiaphas (high priest A.D. 18 to 36, and son-in-law of Annas, the previous high priest; see note on John 18:24). Archaeologists discovered in 1991 an elaborate ossuary (a box for reburial of the bones of the dead) in a burial cave in Jerusalem with slightly varied inscriptions that read, "Joseph son of Caiaphas."

Matt. 26:5 feast. Thousands of pilgrims annually made the journey to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover, and nationalistic fervor ran high as they recalled the liberation of their ancestors from bondage in Egypt. uproar. Popular uprisings were increasingly common especially during such feast periods, and the chief priests and elders were reluctant to arrest Jesus openly because of his popularity with the people.

Matt. 26:6–13 Matthew thematically organizes this account of Jesus' anointing at Bethany, while John (John 12:1–11) places it chronologically on Saturday night before Jesus' triumphal entry.



Matt. 26:6 Bethany. See note on 21:17. Simon the leper had most likely been healed by Jesus, since the meal is hosted in Simon's home even though lepers were required to live apart from the general population.

Matt. 26:7 a woman. Identified in John 12:3 as Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus. expensive ointment. "Pure nard" (cf. Mark 14:3; John 12:3), a perfume oil used for solemn acts of devotion. More common household oils were used to anoint guests, for medicine, and for other purposes (see note on Mark 14:3–5).

Matt. 26:8–12 given to the poor. What seems like a waste to the disciples, Jesus calls a beautiful thing. If the disciples' real concern was for the poor, there would always be an opportunity to care for the poor because they will always have the poor with them (v. 11). There would not be much opportunity, however, to demonstrate their love for Jesus. Given his impending death, the anointing of Jesus' body becomes a dramatic foreshadowing of the events to come. prepare me for burial. In her act of devotion, Mary unknowingly prepares Jesus' body for being laid to rest in the tomb.

Matt. 26:9 large sum. The perfume was valued at "more than three hundred denarii" (Mark 14:5), approximately a year's wages for the average worker. poor. Poverty was widespread in Israel.

Matt. 26:14 one of the twelve. The treachery of Judas's deed is heightened by the fact that he is one of Jesus' chosen apostles.

Matt. 26:15–16 thirty pieces of silver. In the OT, this was the penalty paid by the owner of an ox that gored a slave to death (Ex. 21:32). Equivalent to about four months' wages for a laborer (about \$7,500 in modern terms), this meager sum suggests the low esteem in which Jesus was held by both Judas and the chief priests. opportunity to betray him. Judas's treachery reveals that he was not a true believer (cf. Luke 22:3–4).

