

Sunday School Notes for 16 April 2023: A great love and a great betrayal

After Lazarus was raised from the dead, we can be sure that the family celebrated. We don't know what they did, but I am sure the burial-bandages came off double-quick and that Martha gave him a good meal and that Lazarus had a thorough wash. He was starting again! However, the family probably felt that they hadn't thanked Jesus enough so they planned a special supper with Jesus as 'guest of honour'.

Lazarus sat at the table with the guests, Martha rushed around and served – and Mary planned her own special thank you. She had a precious jar of perfumed ointment - we have no idea how she got it, but it was so special she hadn't even used it for Lazarus' body. Now she went into the front room where the guests were and broke open the jar – no lids in those days so she had to use it all and couldn't keep any for herself to use later. She poured it out to soothe Jesus' weary feet. As soon as she broke open the container, everyone could smell the perfume. She was thanking Jesus for all his kindness.

But Judas objected! He muttered about waste – it should have been sold for a year's salary and the money could have been used for the poor. John points out that Judas was better at speaking about the poor than helping them! In fact, John states that he used to steal money which was given for Jesus and his disciples..

And then?

- a. Jesus defended Mary. He appreciated her over-the-top thank you.
- b. Judas went off to the high priests to negotiate with them to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. He made himself a god of money! (Matt 26:14)
- c. The priests decided to put Lazarus to death too. It was inconvenient having a living reminder of Jesus' power around. (We have no idea if this happened or not!)
- d. The crowd decided to celebrate Jesus and his miracles. They didn't really understand very much. When Jesus rode into the city on a donkey, they ignored the sign of humility and thought he would rescue them from all their problems. Most of them were confused because they hadn't really listened to what the Scriptures had said about Jesus.

But the best truth out of all of these is that, even though Jesus was soon going to die, nothing was happening outside of God's planning.

Even though God knew that people hadn't listened properly, he still loved the world so much that he was prepared to give his Son, Jesus, to die for their sin so they were no longer kept separate from God's great love and plans.

We are fortunate as, thanks to John, we have even more proofs about Jesus. How sad it would be if we didn't accept his gift of love and joy.