

**Worthy is the Lamb**  
**Responding Rightly to the Worthy Jesus**  
**John 11:45-12:11**

**INTRODUCTION**

The show Shark Tank is a show based on a panel of successful business people who ostensibly know how to assess value and determine worth.

Having successfully put their personal discernment and techniques in the practice they now invite new entrepreneurs to “pitch their products” hoping the Sharks will deem them worthy of investment.

Sometimes the (sales) pitch is good but the product is bad. Sometimes the pitch is bad but the product is good. Sometimes both are good and other times both are bad but the issue always comes down to “is this worthy of my trust?” “Is this worthy of my investment?”

In John’s Gospel Jesus has made his “pitch” as though it were. John has recorded seven signs revealing that Jesus is the Christ worthy to be believed on. By believing one will have life. The raising of Lazarus was the climactic sign, but not everyone reacts to the sign rightly, and not every one responds to Jesus’ worthiness rightly.

Our text this morning will look at the right and wrong reactions to Jesus’ work, particularly the raising of Lazarus from the dead. We will also see right and wrong responses to Jesus’ worth.

**What will you do with Jesus?**

- What will be your **reaction to his works?**
- What will be your **response to his worth?**

**Right and Wrong Reactions to the Works of Jesus (11:45-54)**

**The Right Reaction of Faith (45-46)**

<sup>45</sup> Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, <sup>46</sup> but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

- Jesus is a divider.
- He is not divisive, but he divides.
- In John's Gospel his words and deeds divide people into believers or unbelievers.

*"Many of the Jews" "who had seen what he did" "believed in him."*

In John this does not always mean "authentic faith" but here it is believed that a measure of true faith is in view since:

1. **"Many"** is set in contrast to the **"some"** of v. 46.  
***"but some went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done."***

Perceiving the Pharisees to have the power  
Perceiving the Pharisees to have the authority  
They go to the Pharisees and SNITCH!

*(They had never heard the saying, "Snitches get stitches!")*

2. **"Many"** - These are witness *"who had come with Mary and had seen"*
  - a. **11:4** – Jesus projected that Lazarus' death was for God's glory.
  - b. **11:42**- At the tomb when Jesus prayed he said that Lazarus' raising was: ***"that they may believe that you sent me."***

This "many" who saw the sign of raising Lazarus believed in Him

Not much time or space devoted to the reaction of "belief" here but it is here nonetheless. It explains the momentum Jesus is gaining. It also explains the panic of the religious leaders who see this momentum and feel threatened by it.

*In 12:9 – a large crowd were gathering (to see him and Lazarus)*

*In 12:13 – a large crowd lays palm branches out shouting "Hosanna!"*

*In 12:17 – the Lazarus crowd, "...continued to bear witness"*

*In 12:19 – the Pharisees grumbled, "Look, the world has gone after him."*

### **True Belief / Believers**

1. True belief draws you toward Jesus not away.
2. You don't drift from, but rather follow after Jesus.

3. You don't down play Christ's work or work, but rather cry out "Hosanna Blessed is He."
4. You bear witness of Jesus—his works and words
5. You get identified as one of those who have "gone after him."

## IDC

- **Have you believed?**
- **Have the words/works of our Lord led you to place all confidence in Christ.**
- **Where do you stand this morning?**

## Non-Christian

- **Have you believed on this Lord Jesus Christ?**
- **Are you being drawn to him?**
- **Do you side with him?**
- **Do people say of you, "She has gone after him."**

Since others have been said to "believe when they saw the signs" only to later stop believing John's Gospel may not necessarily be holding the previously mentioned kind of belief up as in the highest form of faith, but it is certainly better than no faith. That is what we come to next:

## The Wrong Reaction: The Final Rejection of the Religious Leaders (47-54)

### Chief Priest and Pharisees

*<sup>47</sup>So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. <sup>48</sup>If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."*

### **"the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council"**

- The religious leaders led by the "chief priests" rally up to discuss Jesus.
- Pharisees - Jesus' most known antagonists during his ministry had religious influence, but not judicial power.  
(They will play less of role in Jesus' passion, the chief priest play the greater role.)

- So they call together the Sanhedrin which was the top legislative and judicial body of Israel.
  - These were 70 religious leaders of Israel + the high priest
  - The “chief priests” – were the high priest close relatives of the high priest

### **They acknowledge the work of Jesus.**

*“What are we to do? For this man performs many signs.”*

**Irony:** What are we doing?—**NOTHING!**

What is he doing?—**EVERYTHING!**

“For this man performs many signs.

- Healing men who haven’t walked in 38 years (Ch 5)
- Healing men born blind (Ch 9)
- Raising men from the grave (Chp 11)

### **They acknowledge his impact and influence; His persuasiveness and popularity.**

*<sup>48</sup> If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”*

### **They skip over people concerns and God concerns.**

They do not applaud the benefit Christ has been to people. They are consumed with concerns that are political. Messianic fervor would be perceived as a threat to Rome

“our place” – temple

“our nation” – our autonomy

They don’t react to this as though it proves that Christ’s their King.

They react like Christ is their competition.

**Irony:** He is the place of worship! (John 4)

- He is the true and better Israel!

**Irony:** In stopping Jesus they neither preserved the temple, power, nor their “national” freedom. By 70 AD these were no more!

**Carson**

“And so he died—but the nation perished anyway, not because of Jesus’ activity but because of the constant mad search for political solutions where there was little spiritual renewal.”

**Their conclusion: Jesus may be good for “them” [people] and pleasing to Him [God], but he’s bad for us, and therefore NOT pleasing to us.**

### High Priest and a Prophecy

**In comes Caiaphas**, the ultimate pragmatist and undercover prophet!

*<sup>49</sup> But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all. <sup>50</sup> Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.” <sup>51</sup> He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, <sup>52</sup> and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.*

John looking back would remember “Caiaphas” who was high priest “that year.” That was a year like no other in history when Christ was tried and crucified! He assess the situation and adds insult to the injury: “You know nothing at all.” (“You do nothing!” – “You know nothing!”)

*<sup>50</sup> Nor do you understand that it is **better for you** that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.”*

Here and in v. 48 the emphasis is placed on the “our” and “you.”

- Our leadership is in jeopardy
- Our follow-ship is in peril
- Our personal political agenda is at stake
- Our particular advantages may cease if Jesus goes on like this .

It is better if he dies!

### **The Problem with Jesus**

- He trumps Personal Agenda
- He trumps Particular advantages

### Some reason to themselves:

- I'm not ready to stop sleeping with my girlfriend or boy friend. —away with this Jesus
- I am not ready to stop clubbing and having a good time—away with this Jesus.
- I am not ready to live the “religious life” —away with this Jesus.
- I am not ready for “them” to come in to our church, they may outnumber us—away with what Jesus wants.

Caiaphas is “rational” and “wretched.”

He actually puts forth the idea of “substitution” as the key to their human predicament.

**Substitution is One standing in the place of another.**

### Illust. Movies -Rescuing through substitution.

**Substitution** is the key to the human predicament.

Greater than all are our temporal needs, is a need of a sacrifice for our sins.

We have sins we must pay but we cannot pay for.

There is a God that must be satisfied and without shed blood will not.

An offering for sin must be made and the gospel is, in words of Abraham to Isaac in Gen 22:

**“God will provide for himself the lamb” (Gen22)**

### Here John informs us . . .

*<sup>51</sup> He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, <sup>52</sup> and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.*

*<sup>53</sup> So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.*

More than he realized Caiaphas just spoke a word! The human mouth was a conduit for the divine word. Caiaphas was talking, and God was talking. Caiaphas said more than he knew; God was up to more than any one knew. This exposes the true nature of the cross of Christ and the central essence of the Christian faith. The death of Christ is both the result of a human plot and a divine plan.

## The Plot and Plan to Kill Jesus

- Human Perspective: men's plot
- Divine Perspective: God's plan
  
- Human Perspective: a sinister plot
- Divine Perspective: a sovereign plan
  
- Human Perspective: evil plot (inglorious and repulsive)
- Divine Perspective: eternal plan (infinitely glorious; great rejoicing)

## Christ's Death Human or Divine?

- Was It was a human plot that led to the death of Christ?
- OR Was a divine plan that led to the death of Christ?—**YES!!!**
  
- Did the Jews conspire and Rome crucify Him?
- OR Did God send him and sentence him to a tree?—**YES!!!**

## The Cross of Christ: Human and Divine

### Isaiah 53:9-10

*9 And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death. —Human*

*although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.*

*10 Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief. . . —**Divine***

### Acts 2:23

*This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, - **Divine***

*you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. —Human*

### Acts 4:24-28

*24 "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them,*

*25 who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, "Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain?"*

26 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed' —**Human**  
27 for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, —**Human**  
28 to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. —  
**Divine**

## Piper

The death of Jesus was not primarily a tragic set of events that God turned into good, it was a loving set of events that God planned for God.

**Atonement was for us . . . in our place and for our benefit.**

## Isaiah 53:4-6

4 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned-every one-to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

**Caiaphas was right—“Better for you” if he die**

## The Cross of Christ was Universal and Definite

<sup>52</sup> and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.

- Offered to all without reservation
- Sufficient for all without exception
- Definite for all who come to him in repentance faith.

**John the Baptist told us: “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. 129**

## Non Christian

- **Will you let him be your substitute?**



- **It's either you or him.**
- **It's either the sinner or the substitute.**

### John Owen

If he fulfills not justice I must. If he underwent not wrath I must, to eternity.

### If so...

#### John Owen cont.

My faith in Christ is God's own gift to me. Given in virtue of Christ's own death for me. That is the cross procured it. Christ's death for me guarantees my preservation to glory. Christ's death for me is the measure and pledge of the love of the Father and the Son to me. Christ's death for me calls and constrains me to trust, to worship, to love and to serve.

### Conclusion

<sup>54</sup> Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples.

- 12 miles away from Jerusalem Jesus went
- like the glory that departed the temple the glory departed Jerusalem.
- He's away enough to save, close enough to come back to save.

### **Right and Wrong Responses to the Worth of Jesus (11:55-12:11)**

#### Technically vv. 55-57 serve as a pivot from chapter 11 to 12

**The ironies: yet again are abundant.**

- The resurrection and the life (11) – Will now be anointed for death (12)
- The Savior of Lazarus (11) – Will be the Substitute for Lazarus (12)

**It's Passover:** <sup>55</sup> Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand,

- Jesus is now revealed to be the Passover Lamb.

**Note: Many are going Jerusalem to purify themselves (v. 55)**

*...and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves.*

**NOTE:** Jesus, a stickler for law-keeping, sees no need to “purify” himself for Passover. He is clean enough to observe Passover, and he is about to be anointed as the Passover centerpiece.

**Messianic “Buzz”**

*56 They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, “What do you think? That he will not come to the feast at all?”*

**The Leaders in Jerusalem are the epitome of stained (v. 57)**

*57 Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.*

**The Worshipful Actions of Mary (11:55-12:3)**

- The Lavish Love for Jesus**

*12 Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup> So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. <sup>3</sup> Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.*

| <b>“Jesus’ Anointing Stories” in the Synoptic Gospels</b> |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Matthew (26:6-13) &amp; Mark (14:3-9)</b>              | <b>Luke (7:36-50)</b>                     |
| the anointing is in Bethany (at Simon the lepers)         | dinner at a Pharisees house (Simon)       |
| toward the end of Jesus’ public ministry                  | women is sinful – “woman of the city”     |
| Woman anoints Jesus’ head with nard,                      | She learns of Jesus’ presence at the meal |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| The nard is from an alabaster jar             | Brings an alabaster jar (not called nard) |
| Disciples were indignant; Jesus defends her   | Weeps & dries feet with her hair.         |
| Jesus relates her act to his death and burial | No mention of burial, or the poor         |
| Jesus mentions the poor                       | Concludes w/ focus on the Pharisee        |

- A Passover Meal for and with the Passover Lamb
  - A week away from crucifixion

*Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.*

- He's Now less than two miles from Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup>*So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table.*

- This is an occasion of honor for Jesus.
- These are those who recognize the worth of Jesus and rightly respond to it.
- Still he is the guest of honor at a Passover dinner, headed rapidly for a Passover death.

### **At His Table.**

- According Mk 14 there were at the house of Simon the Leper (cleansed by Jesus)
- Martha, is there characteristically serving Jesus.
- Lazarus is there having been raised by Jesus
- Mary is about to lavish Jesus.

Isn't this the church?

Isn't this the sweet unity that can nourish us while evangelizing a onlooking world?

- Those who fellowship in Jesus
- bound to each other because of Jesus
- rallied up by mutual affection and honor of Jesus.

## Mary vs. the Others

- Contrasted with the Cold-hearted, closed-hearted religious leaders – **Mary's commitment**
- The Leaders want to kill him **Mary wants to consecrate him**
- Many seek his demise (snitches and religious)—**Mary want to show her devotion.**

### The extravagance of the gift

*<sup>3</sup>Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.*

- This is very expensive—probably and heirloom or and investment
- Judas- good with the numbers estimated it to be 300 denari (a years wages)
- Pure nard – oil extracted from a plant in India
- 11 oz. – It's potent – a little dab will do ya!

### The Humility of heart

- John focuses on her placing this fragrance on his feet
- **She felt unworthy** having experienced his grace, his love, his kindness.
- Her hair was a symbol of her glory.
- She says, “My glory is only worthy of magnifying your glory.”
- Her hair was one of her best assets.
- Feet were one of people's lowliest aspects.

**Mary is saying:** “The least of Jesus is worthy of the best of me!”

**John the Baptist:-** I unworthy to untie his sandal.

### The Lavishness of Her Love

- **She poured it all on him.**
- **Matt and Mk tell us she broke the bottle to get it all out**

Worship is always about the heart of the giver, and the reflection of their view of his worth.

## Examples

- Abel - fat portions
- David - won't offer that which costs me nothing.
- Widows mites - gave all she had
- Mary - her inheritance
- Abraham - leave the familiar
- Disciples - leave families

## **This kind of love does not stay private.**

*"The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume."*

She Shouted to the world the value of Jesus.

## **What do you have?**

You have strength or wisdom? Pour it out for his service.

You have a skill? Employ it to his glory.

You have a business? He is worthy to have it

You have a stage? Let him eclipse you on it.

You have a pulpit? Let him and only him have it.

## **The Despicable Reaction of Judas (12:4-8)**

### **• The Faulty Love of Judas**

One person's worship is another person's waste

*<sup>4</sup> But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, <sup>5</sup> "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" <sup>6</sup> He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it.*

Judas had love, just the wrong kind.

- He loved money
  - He will love 30 pieces of silver more than the worthy Lamb.
  - Mary will love worthy Lamb more than 300 denarii.
- 
- Sanhedrin loves seats. Mary loved Jesus' feet.
  - Sanhedrin loved their privilege, their politics.
  - Mary loved the Lamb who was worthy!

## IDC, Who/What Do you Love?

- Car
- Career
- Materials
- Ministry
- Ambitions

- **The Welcomed Love of Mary by Jesus**

<sup>7</sup> Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial.

<sup>8</sup> For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."

- More than Mary knew!
- This was for Mary a crowning moment.
- This was a anointing for burial.
- This was an expression of lavish love an deep devotion
- Jesus rebukes Judas
  - She is rightly valuing me. – you are NOT
  - She is rightly prioritizing me. – you are NOT

<sup>8</sup> For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."

- Yes, take care of the poor because you rightly value me.

## **The Further Aggression of the Religious Leaders (9-11)**

- **The Murderous Intentions of the Religious Leaders**

<sup>9</sup> When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. <sup>10</sup> So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, <sup>11</sup> because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

## **CONCLUSION**

**Spurgeon**

“Every firstborn creature must be the Lord’s, but since the ass was unclean, it could not be presented in sacrifice. What then? Should it be allowed to go free from the universal law? By no means. God admits of no exceptions. The ass is his due, but he will not accept it; he will not abate the claim, but yet he cannot be pleased with the victim. No way of escape remained but redemption—the creature must be saved by the substitution of a lamb in its place; or if not redeemed, it must die. My soul, here is a lesson for thee. That unclean animal is thyself; thou art justly the property of the Lord who made thee and preserves thee, but thou art so sinful that God will not, cannot, accept thee; and it has come to this, the Lamb of God must stand in thy stead, or thou must die eternally. Let all the world know of thy gratitude to that spotless Lamb who has already bled for thee, and so redeemed thee from the fatal curse of the law. Must it not sometimes have been a question with the Israelite which should die, the ass or the lamb? Would not the good man pause to estimate and compare? Assuredly there was no comparison between the value of the soul of man and the life of the Lord Jesus, and yet the Lamb dies, and man the ass is spared. My soul, admire the boundless love of God to thee and others of the human race.”