

Series: Jesus, At Night #1671

Title: Various Scriptures

Where Jesus Rested at Night

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. When last we met Jesus was in Bethany, in the home of Simon the (former) leper, where our Lord was enjoying a meal prepared in His honor by reclining at the table with His friends. I am reading our passage, John 12, verses 1-4 (at least the first part of verse 4). John 12.

“Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ² So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining *at the table* with [Jesus]. ³ Mary then took a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴ But Judas Iscariot...” Let’s pause there.

Jesus and His disciples are on their way to Jerusalem for the last Passover of Christ’s earthly ministry, and they stop (as they so often did) at this village Bethany. The Lord is among friends. Martha, Mary, and Lazarus (the former dead man whom Jesus raised from the grave). John 11 told us how much Christ loved them. We assume Simon the (former) leper is there (this was his house), and of course the disciples are at this supper as well. Mary busts out the perfume and soaks the Lord’s body with her loving and worshipful act. This scene takes place after dark as we continue to follow Jesus, at night.

How meaningful this gathering must have been, because this is the eve of the final week of Christ’s life. By Friday He will be dead. Knowing this was coming, this fellowship among friends must have been heartening to the Lord. It must have brought Him great comfort and joy. Friendship was (and is) important to Jesus. In His humanity, He needed friends. He built strong relationships with people. And He lived in community with others. In this way He is like us. As people we have been made by God to live in relationship with one another. And part of what we do together is we eat! With our friends, we enjoy each other’s company. I am very thankful for my friends as I am sure you are for yours. As is Jesus. They help us along through what are often the painful and difficult moments of life, and death.

I must point out, here they do something we do not do, or at least do not do enough of. They reclined with one another for hours *and...they talked!* Oh how we must lament (and repent!) that in this digital age with the mobile phone obsession we do not cut off all the technology, look one another in the eye, and talk as we eat *for hours at a time!* Not most of us. We are rushed. We cram down food and drink while we watch the TV, the internet, and mindlessly scroll through our phones. We live in our virtual worlds, all the while paying no attention to real family and friendships in the *real* world. I hope that a passage like this will be challenging and convicting to us and will help us to change even tonight’s dinnertime.

Well, here is our Lord, in the evening hours, in the comfort of friends. Ack! But then there is this ugly interruption. Verse 4 begins, “But Judas Iscariot...” Judas and what he says and will do casts a dark shadow across these precious moments of love, safety, and friendship. I won’t take the time to read the next verses, just summarize them. Judas issues a complaint that the alabaster vial of perfume was not sold instead and the money given to the poor. And he did not say this because he was an advocate for the poor, but rather because he was a thief. He pilfered from the money box. Judas was an advocate *for* himself. Jesus scolds Judas, telling him to leave Mary alone. This is Judas, the one who will soon betray Christ. And we’ll mention him again.

Moving on, John tells us that “**On the next day...**” (John 12, verse 12) “**Jesus was coming to Jerusalem...**” The Apostle John then describes Jesus’ so-called triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Here, I want to make one more connection to Bethany, and the time the Lord spent there. Related to this same account of the entry to Jerusalem, listen to Matthew chapter 21, verses 17 and 18, “**And [Jesus] left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there. ¹⁸ Now in the morning, when He was returning to the city...**”

That is how Matthew describes what Jesus does at night, at the end of the day of the procession into Jerusalem. He leaves the city, spends the night in Bethany, then returns to the city the next morning.

And listen to Mark 11, verses 1 and 11 and 12. This is Mark chapter 11, verses 1, 11, and 12, **“As they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives...”** Jesus then enters Jerusalem on the colt as the crowds shout **“Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord...”** And then listen to verses 11 and 12, **“Jesus entered Jerusalem and came into the temple; and after looking around at everything, He left for Bethany with the twelve, since it was already late...”** You heard it. Jesus left for where? He left for Bethany to spend the night, because it was late. Capture this. Jesus spent significant nights in Bethany with His friends before His arrest, sham trials, crucifixion, and resurrection.

Remember that Christ was a homeless man. Jesus Himself said, **“The Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”** So, as He travelled He used Bethany as one place to spend the night. And on this last week of His life I will insert here another place where He retreated to when darkness came. That was a garden with the name Gethsemane. This was located on the Mount of Olives or Olivet, and you probably recall that Jesus prayed in this garden on the night in which He was arrested. We’ll look at those texts soon, but listen to what Luke and John say about Gethsemane at night.

Luke chapter 21, verse 37, **“Now during the day [Jesus] was teaching in the temple, but at evening He would go out and spend the night on the mount that is called Olivet.”** And Luke 22, verse 39, **“And [Jesus] came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him.”** John says this, in John chapter 7, verse 53, **“Everyone went to his home.”** And then immediately John 8, verse 1, **“But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.”** Friends, where was Jesus at night during the Passion Week? He was resting in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives.

I trust you are with me, and now keeping up our faster-than-usual pace, I invite you to continue with me. In John 12, verse 23 Jesus says, **“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.”** That is, the time has come for Jesus to be put to death, followed by the resurrection. And so we enter now with Christ to these last hours before He gives up His life. And there are several events, worth our full and complete study, that take place on the night before and during the overnight of the crucifixion. Let me spell these out for you.

Jesus died on a Friday afternoon. On Thursday night Jesus and His disciples eat what we call the “last supper.” During this meal the Lord washes the disciple’s feet. He institutes the Lord’s Supper (Communion). And Christ announces Judas as the one who will betray Him. The Lord teaches His disciples and prays for His disciples and then the Lord enters that garden I told you about, Gethsemane, where He cries out to His Father in heaven about His forthcoming death. Not long after those prayers, in that same garden space, Christ is arrested, then led to His middle-of-the-night sham trials before the Jewish religious leaders Annas, Caiaphas, and the whole Council (the Sanhedrin). All of this throughout that very long Thursday night into Friday morning. During the day on Friday He endures trials before the Roman political rulers. Still, no sleep. No rest. He’s been up all night. Then the crucifixion. And, after He breathed His last breath, He is taken down from the cross and buried in the tomb on Friday night by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (who, by the way, Jesus first met *at night*, John chapter 3).

Now, you know me. There is nothing I would like more than to teach each of these key events in detail. Alas, that is not our purpose in this series. So, I will select only some of this on which to comment. And that brings us to Mark 14. I am reading Mark chapter 14 at verse 32, **“They came to a place named Gethsemane; and [Jesus] said to His disciples, ‘Sit here until I have prayed.’³³ And He took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled.³⁴ And [Jesus] said to them, ‘My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch.’³⁵ And [the Lord] went a little beyond them, and fell to the ground and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by.”** (Mark 14:32-35.) This is where we will begin when you join me and all these other listeners next time, as we again meet Jesus, at night.

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