

## Season 10: John 6-12

### Episode 11: Jesus the Promised Saviour (John 11:46-12:11)

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**Felicity:** This season is sponsored by Crossway. A praying church by Paul Miller is a vibrant and inspiring book that is full of wisdom, real life testimony, and is clearly written by someone who practices what he preaches. I've been challenged by Miller's evident dependence on the Lord in prayer and inspired to pray more personally, while also seeking to bring that prayerful culture more into the women's ministry that I'm involved in. It's a rewarding read and one that would benefit from being discussed afterwards with people from your church. Do grab a copy wherever you get your books.

**Sarah:** Welcome to two sisters in a cup of tea. My name is Sarah. I live in the UK. This is my sister Felicity. She lives in the States. And today we're in our penultimate episode of season ten as we go from John, chapter eleven, verse 45, down to twelve, verse eleven, cups of tea in hand. But flisty, we've been talking so much in this season about how Jesus has been fulfilling the Old Testament promises, and I just wondered whether you could share a little bit of what your process has been for how you've discovered that he has done that, if that makes sense.

**Felicity:** Yeah, good question. Good. Is it true? Is that think. Because it can sound a bit like the rabbit's being pulled out the hat, isn't it? All right, so somehow you know that you're supposed to go back to Exodus or whatever. I think what has helped is kind of a familiarity with different parts of the Bible. So I've just been fortunate that through our Bible study at church, we have been in exodus. And so I've spent a bit of time in the Old Testament and that's really helped because then you just begin to. Oh, that sounds a bit familiar. I'm going to just dig into that a bit more. So that's been one aspect really helpful footnotes in the Bible. I mean, what a gift they really do point you to. Often they point you to where you need to just go. And my temptation is I read the footnote and then I just go back and check that is really what it says and then come back, but actually going back to where it's taken me and then reading around a bit and working out like, well, what's that got to do with this? Where is this in the Bible story? And how does that relate to where we are in the Bible story when we're in John? And then I have a couple of books that are really helpful. It's a big kind of doorstep of a book. It's called commentary on the New Testament, use of the Old Testament. I mean, it kind of does what it says on the tin snappy title.

**Sarah:** Yeah.

**Felicity:** You look up your New Testament bit and then it points you back to the Old Testament. So that's been a helpful thing. But I think it is something that I'm growing in the more I'm sort of familiar with things then. Yeah. What about you, Sarah? What's your process? How has it happened for you?

**Sarah:** That's just super helpful to hear what you said. And we'll link to that book in the show notes, actually, if anyone's interested in that. I've not seen that book before and it sounds.

**Felicity:** Is. It's not like a page turner in any sense, but it's really helpful, a.

**Sarah:** Helpful reference point, I think. Just, I can't underestimate the value of reading through the whole Bible. And that's how I'm choosing to spend my own time with the Lord in the mornings. And I just think the more that I do that and the more that I commit to that, I'm not only benefiting from seeing the whole and reading the whole council of God, but I'm benefiting because I'm investing in a wider biblical theology. Each time I go back and start again, each time I get to judges, each time I get to chronicles, I'm like, oh, okay, this feels more familiar. And, oh, hang on a second. What do we see in John's gospel and how does that link? And I think, not that my brain is a brain that remembers all the details by any sense, but I'm gradually building and deepening a much broader scope of the Bible story just by simply reading the whole. Committing to reading the whole Bible. Also, Bible Gateway is a goldmine type in the word shepherd and then just see what pops up.

**Felicity:** Yes, so true, so true. That's really inspiring, actually, Sarah, on getting into the Bible as a whole. That's encouraging to see the fruit of that because it can feel a bit like, oh, it's just one of those things I'm supposed to do. But actually, you explaining how it's helped in this.

**Sarah:** See, and the more that you see the connections, the more it spurs me on to keep doing it because I'm like, wow, I'm really, really benefiting both being in the Old Testament at the moment, but also seeing the connections forward and then taking them back to the Old Testament as well and wholeheartedly recommend it. Let's read, though. Let's get into this final chunk. Flisty, you're going to read for us from verse 45. Yes.

**Felicity:** Here we go. Therefore, many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary. And had seen what Jesus did. Believed in him. But some of them went to the Pharisees. And told them what Jesus had done. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees. Called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. What are we accomplishing? They asked. Here is this man performing many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him. And then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation. Then one of them, named Caiaphas. Who was high priest that year. Spoke up. You know nothing at all. You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people. Than that the whole nation perish. He did not say this on his own. But as high priest that year. He prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation. And not only for that nation. But also for the scattered children of God. To bring them together and make them one. So from that day on, they plotted to take his life. Therefore, Jesus no longer moved about publicly among the people of Judea. Instead, he withdrew to a region near the wilderness. To a village called Ephraim. Where he stayed with his disciples. When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover. Many went up from the country to Jerusalem. For their ceremonial cleansing. Before the Passover. They kept looking for Jesus. And as they stood in the temple courts. They asked one another. What do you think? Isn't he coming to the festival at all? But the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that anyone who found out where Jesus was. Should report it. So that they might arrest him. Six days before the passover. Jesus came to Bethany. Where Lazarus lived. Whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus'honour. Martha served. While Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took about half a liter of pure nard. An expensive perfume. She poured it on Jesus'feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot. Who was later to betray him. Objected. Why wasn't this perfume sold. And the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages. He did not say this because he cared about the poor. But because he was a thief. As keeper of the money bag. He used to help himself to what was put into it. Leave her alone, Jesus replied. It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor among you. But you will not always have me. Meanwhile, a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came not only because of him, but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, for on account of him, many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him.

**Sarah:** Thank you, Felicity. Well, it's not a surprise to see the continuing varied response to Jesus, is it? And we get that in the first couple of verses here that many believed because of what they'd seen Jesus do. But some of them went to the Pharisees and a big meeting is kind of brought together. And, yeah, there's a significant plot that develops here to then take Jesus'life. And the trajectory is kind of set from this point, isn't it?

**Felicity:** Yes, very much so. It feels like, yeah, this is the trigger, isn't it? Like, the more people believe, the more the sort of panic is setting in amongst these religious bigwigs. And this kind of pow wow is like the catalyst. Okay, this is it. We're heading towards, essentially, we're heading towards the cross, aren't we? And it's like, as if that the trajectory of the action is most definitely going to end up there. I think it's interesting. It literally is just a counter life kind of powwow. They're like, how can we just destroy life? How can we kill this man? And at the end of the passage, just, like, skipping on to the very end of the passage, they want to kill Lazarus. As, like, everything about this is just like, squash the thing and the fact that it's come after the moment that we've just heard Jesus declare, I am the life and

the resurrection. We've seen Lazarus brought back to life. This is a death party going on here.

**Sarah:** It's really sobering that, isn't it? It's really sobering. I think there's kind of two big instances here that we've got the Caiaphas and this kind of extraordinary prophecy that he proclaims, and then we've got the kind of Judas Mary interaction with Jesus as well. So should we head to the Caiaphas situation first? Yes.

**Felicity:** It is just amazing what he says. If you take it out of the mouth of Caiaphas, he is literally saying, what is going to happen? Jesus is going to die for the sake of the nation and the gathering of God's children. And we would expect him to. He's a man who's versed in the scriptures. He knows he's been in the Old Testament, in the Torah. He knows what it's all pointing to.

**Sarah:** Was living and breathing the sacrificial system, isn't he? Like that is his very job like that. Everything about his role would be that atonement, that sacrifice in order to appease the wrath of God and the need, the inbuilt knowledge of need of salvation. And so he's prophesying this extraordinary statement, and yet we're not given any evidence that he then repents and believes, are we? We're not given any evidence that he inclines his heart towards Jesus. His heart is set on making this death happen, actually.

**Felicity:** Yeah. So it seems he's kind of arguing with them, saying this is the best thing that could happen, is that this man, Jesus, should be squashed for the sake of the nation and the temple. It seems there's a fear factor there. Like the Romans are going to somehow kind of swipe us away. There's maybe a power hunger there, like we like things to be as they are. He's the high priest. That's a very important role in this kind of situation. So it seems like if we just get rid of Jesus, then everything, the status quo, will remain. And that is better, in his view.

**Sarah:** Well, it's just so interesting, isn't it, that John adding his own editorial comments on this, where Caiaphas just doesn't get what he's just said, does he? John chooses to add this wonderful phrase in verse 52 and 53, that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation, but also for the scattered children of God to bring them together and make them one. And just that kind of the joy of John kind of, just kind of adding weight to what has been said by Caiaphas. And then also what I really enjoyed was just seeing John doesn't make it any secret that it's the Passover. It's time for the Passover. It's repeated three, four times in this passage, and that we just cannot fail to see the connection between the prophesied savior that Caiaphas is saying and the time. John's been very specific on time all the way through this section, six to twelve, hasn't he? Onto what's happening at various different points. And this is no coincidence that the Passover is this time where this prophecy is happening. And I just think that's really cool alongside Lazarus being around, being there, just.

**Felicity:** Lazarus being around, just, I'm alive, but here I am. I'm alive. I was dead, but I'm alive. I love that. I love that. And you can imagine, like, people traveling from all over. This guy, really.

**Sarah:** He was dead.

**Felicity:** I know about him. Yeah, I love that. And it just all the more kind of hammers home. Like, Jesus brings life, like Lazarus is sitting there, is a walking example of Jesus brings life. And I feel like it's really hopeful, isn't it the power of Christ who does bring life despite the weight of the religious authorities being against him? Like, the death plot is in action, but Jesus is still the person who brings life. And it is such a contrast, isn't it, the way in which Mary responds to Jesus, comparison to how Caiaphas speaks of him? And isn't this just one of the most beautiful moments in the New Testament, just the hearts of Mary on show? Let's just get into the details of it. That half a liter of pure nard, I mean, it's equivalent to a year's worth of wages, really, isn't it? So she is breaking open just such value on Jesus.

**Sarah:** It's sheer extravagance, isn't it? You can't even describe in words the overflow of her heart into this situation and in worship of him. And no doubt some of that will be because she's seen him raise her brother, and some of that will be because she really grasps who he is. She's been listening to him, she's been watching. She worships him as her lord and savior. And there's no expense spared in this, is there? And whether she realizes it or not, Jesus kind of infers what the perfume is doing in terms of actually significant, is preparing him for burial. This is where he's headed. And she has kind of, in

another kind of sense, is prophesying that in kind of this kind of immersive experience that's going on.

**Felicity:** Yeah, I think that's so in that verse seven, as Jesus, it was intended, so in God's sovereignty. This is how it has come about. Mary is demonstrating whether she's fully aware of what's going on or not, but it is demonstrating the absolute preciousness of Jesus and the sacrifice that is about to happen, the Passover fulfilling sacrifice. And so as he mentions his burial, immediately, his death is brought to mind, tying in with that passover context. And so there's no doubt that Jesus and what he is about to do is this is an exactly right response. I think that's what we're supposed to see, isn't it? That Mary has got it right, Judas has 100% got it wrong, which is interesting. You and I were talking about this, and you think, Judas, you've been with Jesus for a long time. Surely you get it. And he's blind. He's blind to who Jesus is.

**Sarah:** But isn't that what we've been seeing the whole way through this section? That actually, however much you've been around Jesus, however much you've seen his miracles and you've heard his words, it's a matter of the heart, isn't it? And he is so blind. And yet your kind of intimacy in the presence of Jesus does not determine your heart. It does not determine how you necessarily respond to Jesus. And that actually, yeah, I think it can be easy to kind of throw all the blame on the Pharisees and religious leaders and Caiaphas in this moment of, how can they be so calloused? And yet here is a man who spent three years with Jesus, walking closely, being his friend, being in that intimate group of friends with Jesus. And here in this moment, he shows just nothing. No grace in his heart and no sight of who Jesus is and how extraordinary this moment and the next few days will be. Actually, his heart is turned against from this moment, isn't it? So that's very sobering, I think. And it's very challenging on our own heart. Like, I think I've been challenged to not see the seed. We all have seeds of that in our heart, don't we? We all have seeds of rejection of Jesus as our savior, thinking, I don't need a savior today, or, I don't need a savior ever, or whatever it is, and just being challenged that actually, but for the grace of God, my heart would be in the same state as anyone else who's rejecting, we all need the promised savior.

**Felicity:** Yeah. And I think I've just been so encouraged in this passage to run to Jesus, to want to adore him. I see Mary. I see that she's got the right response, and I desperately want to have her response. I think having been in these chapters for a while, this picture of Jesus is just so substantial, and so it rings so true, and we're being shown so much of who he is, and I feel like I want to worship him. I want to give my all of that. I think the challenge then is, well, what does it look like to respond with wholehearted adoration, worship, like giving of myself, giving of my resources. He is totally worth it. And it's remembering that and praying that my heart would be inclined that way, even when I'm not sitting here in the Bible talking about it with you. But actually, in my everyday life, I think that's, yeah, just something that I've been mulling on and praying into, actually, as to what that looks like.

**Sarah:** Yeah, it's good, isn't it? It's really challenging, isn't it? I think, yeah, we kind of get to the end of this section in John's gospel, and it is challenging as to what's my response? What is my response to Jesus in all that we've seen of him? Am I just going to lay the Bible down and go, right, okay, on with my day, or is this really going to stir my affections and stir my heart and stir my actions to greater worship, to greater adoration and to greater kind of obedience to him and what he says as well? And that is a challenge at the end here, isn't it?

**Felicity:** Isn't it something to pray for? Do you want to pray for us in that? Sarah?

**Sarah:** Yes. Heavenly Father, we just thank you so much that the promised savior is so clearly needed for our own hearts and for everyone. We thank you that he was willing to move towards us for the purpose of saving us. Lord, thank you for all that we've seen about Jesus, not only in these final verses, but in the whole section of John's gospel. And Lord, would you stir our hearts to worship you as a result, to adore you, to bow down and humbly obey what you say because it is worth following your ways. Father, please keep stirring that heart of affection and that heart of worship in us that we would be like Mary. Lord, have mercy on us and help us we pray. Amen.

**Felicity:** Amen. Ah, good stuff. Good stuff as ever. Sarah. Well, we are very much enjoying being in John's gospel. You'll have noticed that we recommend books numerous times, most of these episodes. You can find all our book recommendations for each

season@tenofdows.com. Partners twosisters we have our own kind of storefront there. All the recommendations are there. Do give it a visit and go and grab some good resources for yourself. And we'll look forward to seeing you next week as we round up season ten and John's gospel.

**Sarah:** See you then. Bye.

**Felicity:** This season is sponsored by Crossway.