



An Invitation to:
the **Table**

*You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
You have anointed my head with oil;
My cup overflows.*

*Surely goodness and lovingkindness
will follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

Psalm 23:5-6

week **06**

welcome

An Invitation to Respond

This week, we gather at the table of Christ with Mary, Martha, Lazarus, and others just after Jesus called Lazarus back from death. We watch as Mary kneels before Jesus and pours costly perfume over his feet, anointing him for his death. She wipes his feet with her hair, and fragrance fills the air.

Mary is not acting out of religious duty or obligation. This is even deeper than gratitude for the redeemed life of her brother. Mary is seeing Jesus in a way no one else at the table sees him. She has glimpsed, in some small part, his surrender to death. She may realize the life of her brother will be paid for by the life of her friend. She sees the extravagance of his love, and she responds by pouring out all she has to him. She has embraced his path of descent in the abundance of love.

As we come to the table, we are invited to respond not just to what Jesus has done for us, but to who he is. Jesus is the invitation. May we truly see Jesus. May we glimpse some fullness of his way. May we see the invitations in his suffering and death. As we stand in the abundance of his love, may we embrace the invitation to respond — pouring out all we are in extravagant surrender at his feet.

Meditation

We encourage you to start or end your days this week by spending a few slow, quiet moments reading this verse. Invite the Lord to speak to you anew each day through this scripture, and allow your heart and mind to rest in the faithfulness of his word.

**“Then the father said to him,
‘Son, you are always with me,
and all that is mine is yours.’”
Luke 15:31**

always with me

John 12

In the Word

As you contemplate the idea of response this week, we encourage you to spend time in the story of Mary anointing Jesus in John 12:1-8. On your own or with others, use the questions from Every Home's Be Fruitful and Multiply discipleship curriculum to help guide your study:

- Read the story once to get familiar with it. Who are the characters in the story? What are their actions? What other details does the text provide? Allow the story to “come to life” in your imagination. (Imagine sitting at this table among Jesus and some of his closest friends. How does everyone respond to Mary’s action? How does the room smell? What might you find in the eyes of Jesus as he watches Mary?) Pause to invite the Lord to make your heart attentive to his voice as you spend time in his word.
- Read the story a second time. This time, try to put yourself in the story by “stepping into the shoes” of each character. For each character, ask: What emotions might the character be experiencing?

What choices does the character make? What motives might the character have for each choice? (Why does Mary pour perfume over Jesus’s feet? Does Jesus ask or tell her to do this? What motivates Judas’s response? Considering all the ways Jesus could respond to Judas and Mary, what might motivate him to respond the way he does? How would it feel to be someone else at the table? What might Martha and Lazarus be thinking or feeling? How does Mary feel under Judas’s judgment? How does she feel when Jesus defends her?)

- Consider what truth the story speaks to you about loving God, others, and yourself (Luke 10:27). Reflect on any ways the Lord might invite you to respond to this truth. Who do you most identify with in the story? Spend time in this story simply *seeing Jesus*. What did Mary see in him? What do you see in him? Pay attention to any invitation for your response. Allow Jesus to see and validate you in your responding.

* **For Further Reading:** John 17:9-10,
Luke 5:1-11, Acts 9:1-20

In Your Journal

As you feel led, engage this prompt in your journal this week. If you are able, discuss the questions with your spouse or a trusted friend.

Spend time this week simply seeing Jesus. If it helps, make a list of things you have experienced to be true about him. Prayerfully ask the Lord to highlight any truth that might be relevant to your life presently. What does his love mean for you and for your life in this moment? As you meditate on the person of Jesus, imagine sitting at an actual table with him. How does he look at you? How do you feel inclined to respond?

At Your Table

Over a meal with family or friends this week, talk about ways you have felt drawn to respond to the Lord throughout your life. To what were you responding? What did your response look like? Do you feel any present invitations to respond to Jesus in your life?

*May the Lord restore your soul
as you spend time at his table
this week.*

