

# LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

## GO IN WITH NOTHING TO LOSE

Pastor Mingo Palacios – December 28, 2014

When we recognize Jesus for who He is, our response is one of worship and obedience. This week, Pastor Mingo challenged us to respond to this question: ***“What is keeping you from Jesus that ultimately needs to be given over to Him?”***

### DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Have you ever been pulled over for a traffic violation? Share your experience with the group.
- What is your general attitude towards authority?

### STUDY QUESTIONS

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

→ **Read Mark 14:3**

- John’s account of this story (John 12:1-8) reveals that it was Mary who anointed Jesus. What do you know about Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, from other Gospel accounts? How does her act of obedience in this passage compare or contrast with those other stories?

From what we know about Mary in Scripture, her life is a picture of obedience and worship. In the two occasions other than Mark 14, Mary is seen seated at the feet of Jesus listening attentively to His teaching (see Luke 10:38-42), and she is seen grieving the death of her brother, Lazarus. But even in that grim scene, she acknowledged Jesus’ power to heal (see John 11:17-45).

- In Mark 14, how did Mary choose to show her obedience to Jesus? What was significant about her action?
- What message does Mary’s example of lavish obedience to God hold for us today?

Mary took an alabaster vial of very costly perfume, snapped the vial’s neck, and poured the contents on Jesus’ head. The costly perfume Mary used was nard, an expensive fragrant oil derived from the roots of an herb found mainly in India. The perfume’s value and its identification as nard may indicate that it was a family heirloom. Mary’s action expressed her



complete devotion to Jesus and her gratitude. She saw an opportunity to be obedient through generosity and worship.

- If you were to give your very best to God, what would that include?
- What would you find the most difficult to freely hand to God without further claim to it?

→ **Read Mark 14:4-9**

- How did those present respond to the situation? How did their response compare with Mary's?
- When have you faced criticism for worshiping God through obedience in a way others didn't understand?

Mark did not identify those who reacted so indignantly over the use of the costly perfume. Matthew identified them as the disciples (see Matt. 26:8), and John referred specifically to Judas Iscariot (see John 12:4-5). The disciples again revealed their lack of understanding in their responses. The enormous value of the perfume prevented them from appreciating the unselfishness of the woman's gift. The disciples' response shows their insensitivity in comparison to the great love Mary had for Jesus. Mary shows that Jesus deserves our best. The more we love Jesus, the more we will show it by what we offer to Him.

- What was Jesus' response to Mary's anointing Him with costly perfume? Why did Jesus respond in that way?
- What does this event teach us about obedience?

The selfless act of Mary challenges us to give our best to Jesus. God will not overlook any service for Him. We should not allow others' critical attitudes or our own self-consciousness to hinder us from expressing our love for the Lord. Ultimately, the example of lavish, immediate obedience that we follow is not Mary's, but Jesus' own example. By leaving heaven and coming to earth to be a sacrifice for us, Jesus demonstrated that obedience is rooted in love for God and worship of Him. When we obey God, we follow Jesus' lead.

→ **Read Philippians 2:5-8**

What do you think it was like for Jesus to leave heaven and become human? What did He give up in doing so? What did we gain from His action?

In what ways did Jesus' obedience to the Father convey and require strength?

In Philippians 2:1-8, the apostle Paul reminds us that Jesus submitted to the Father's will in humbling Himself in order to rescue us, even though it brought Him great shame. Jesus had all



the privileges that came with being God. Yet in submitting to the Father's will, He set those privileges aside in order to become human for our salvation. Jesus did not empty Himself of deity; He took on a lowly status and position as He took on humanity. Jesus had to step out of the glories of heaven, become a servant, and take on flesh. According to the Father's plan of redemption, Jesus had to become like us in order to rescue us.

- What does a believer's life look like when he or she is focused primarily on obeying God, regardless of the cost?
- Why does obedience to God develop humility?
- How did Mary demonstrate humility in her act of worship? Why do you think God values our humility?

Paul pointed to Christ's love for others and His obedient service to God as examples for his Philippian friends. When we obey God completely, we follow Christ's example of self-sacrificial love and humility.

## PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

- Are you someone for whom obedience comes easily, or are you more likely to rebel? How have you seen this help or hurt your spiritual growth?
- What is keeping you from Jesus that ultimately needs to be given over to Him?

Close by praying that your group would worship by giving God your very best. Ask Him to reveal areas that need improvement so each of you can glorify and honor God through each area in which you're called to be obedient.

