**Advent 2020: Hospitality: Week 3: John 12:1-8, Blue Christmas**

**During Advent this year we are spending a few short weeks looking at the theme of hospitality. As we think about being welcoming to one another in various ways, we can also remember the birth of Jesus, both God and man. He both received hospitality, first from Mary and Joseph, then from many others and now the wonder of it all is that God wishes to live with, in and through us. So, we extend hospitality to God by inviting Him into our lives just as He extends hospitality to us by offering us adoption into His family.**

**A Session Outline - 40 mins total, but can be longer or flexible if you wish**

**Introduction - 10 mins (longer if you’re in a group I suspect!)**

1. How are you?
2. What notable things have happened recently?
3. Is there anything distracting you from focusing on God today? If yes, think or talk about that and then pray and give it to God as you begin.

**Time With the Bible - 15-20 mins**

*What does this passage tell me about God?* To answer this question, you might want to think about whether the passage speaks about God directly or indirectly. Is there a prophecy quoted, or does the passage remind you of another part of scripture? If so, spend some time following the leads. How does the passage remind you of what you’ve known about God before? Does it make you think differently about God than you have done before?

*What does this passage tell me about myself?* To answer this question you might want to ask how you felt as you read the passage and how you feel as you reflect on it now. Do you identify with a particular character? Does it make you feel happy or sad, hopeful, excited, confused or any other emotions?

If you feel challenged, or as if something in the passage is really speaking to your or feels personal to you today, spend a few minutes thinking: what is it? What about it feels important to you?

*What is this passage inviting me to do differently?*

As Christians we are meant to live according to the truth that is in Jesus and to not be the same as before we knew him (Ephesians 4:20-24). As we learn the good news of Jesus and the truth about his love we are bound to change.

Spend time thinking about things in your life you might want to be or to do differently as a result of today’s study and pray about those things.

For each session, we will also provide a few questions to pick out the key elements of the passage and try and help you to be guided through the study.

**Time in Prayer - 10 mins**

Each time you meet or spend time reflecting alone, make sure you leave plenty of time to pray. You could pray about:

The Church and its leaders, both ours, Churches nearby and the worldwide Church

Situations locally or in the world around us

Things shared by people during your time together

Those who are afraid, sick or those who are bereaved

Committing to God that you will follow through on what you’ve been invited to do by today’s study.

Your neighbours and the street you live in. Those who govern us locally, nationally and internationally.

**Study Questions**

1. Do you find Christmas an easy, positive, joyful time of year or does it cause other feelings in you?
2. In this passage we see a dinner given in honour of Jesus, seemingly in the house of Lazarus, Mary and Martha. Why do you think this dinner was given? What do you think those there wanted to say to their guest of honour?
3. What do you think of what Mary does in v3?
4. The reasoning Lazarus gives for why Mary’s act is wasteful seems sensible. So sensible in fact it has to be explained in v6 that his motives were not good. Do we ever run the risk of sounding ‘righteous’ but living with bad motivations? How can we avoid this? How might we help one another to do so?
5. Verses 7 and 8 are interesting. How do you interpret them?
6. What do you think this passage has to say to us about hospitality?

**Something To Do This Week**

Who do you know who finds Christmas a challenge? Do something to help that person this year. If it’s you, take the step of faith and ask someone to help you make your Christmas better this year.