



Week Three: Cannonball Celebration Weekend

Opening Prayer

Jesus, thank you for the opportunity we have to connect with you and each other. Please use today to help us transform and grow. Amen.

Talk It Over

During this series, we have been looking at some key stories from the life of Jesus through the eyes of the Apostle John who traveled with Jesus. This week specifically, we also celebrated the conclusion of our two-year Cannonball generosity initiative and looked at ways we can embrace a cannonball lifestyle.

- Out of all the things we celebrated from our Cannonball generosity initiative, what was it that stood out the most to you? Why was that so meaningful to you?
- Describe what you think a generous lifestyle looks like.
- In what ways have you grown in your generosity these last two years?
- Core to our Cannonball generosity initiative was a commitment to remain a church focused on reaching new people. In your own words, describe why you think it's important for a church to not lose sight of reaching new people.

This week we looked at a story in John 12. To help us gain some context for this story we looked back at John 11. As a group, consider reading through John 11 or reading this simple recap below:

Option One — Read John 11

Option Two — Read John 11 Recap

Jesus is family friends with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. They financially helped Jesus and his disciples for the sake of supporting the work Jesus was doing and the good news he was spreading. Based on the information we have, we know they were a wealthy family.

In John 11 we see that Lazarus had gotten sick. Mary and Martha, Lazarus' sisters, had sent word to Jesus asking him to come and help their brother. By the time Jesus made his way to Mary and Martha, Lazarus had died and his body was already placed in a tomb. While Jesus hadn't rushed back to heal Lazarus, the story says that Jesus was moved to tears by all the grief — his own grief and the grief of the family. And as John 12 tells us, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead.

John 11 ends by letting readers know things were starting to get tense surrounding the physical safety of Jesus. Jesus safety is coming under question.

Read John 12:1-8 (NLT)

- How did reading John 11 impact how you processed John 12?
- What details of the story jump out to you personally?

Lessons for living a Cannonball Life from Mary in John 12

While there are a lot of notes and observations we could take from this story, today we will be looking at three lessons she embodies.

A Note for Everyone — Conversations about generosity can easily spark guilt and shame in people. The goal of our time is not to make anyone feel bad or to put pressure on anyone in any way. At EastLake Church, we believe we are in process and our journeys are connected but unique. The hope for today is that we can be honest — not necessarily transparent — about what is being stirred in us and where the stirring is coming from. The dream would be for each of us to be open to say ‘yes’ to whatever it is Jesus is inviting us into.

Lesson One — Know your ‘why’.

Even though Mary valued Jesus before John 11, we can assume that what happened in chapter 11 motivated Mary to wash Jesus’ feet with her expensive perfume. Mary was grateful for what Jesus had done for her brother and family.

- Looking at your own life, what are your biggest ‘why’ motivators? Where does your day-to-day inspiration to live well come from?
- Consider your most generous moments or habits. What is the ‘why’ that motivates those generous actions?

Read Matthew 6:21(NIV)

When we love something, often times our flow of money shows it.

- Based on how you spend your money, what would your habits say you love? *This is not intended to create judgment, but rather, an honest conversation amongst friends who are looking to grow in their own ways and in their own journey.*
- Financially giving to the church is intended to be a response to what God has done for us and a sign of hope and trust that God and his people will impact others the way we have been personally impacted. In what ways has God used a church to help you in your life?

Lesson Two — Give what you can.

From what we know about cultural context, washing feet in and of itself was a practical necessity due to matters of basic cleanliness. Beyond the practicality of washing feet prior to entering a home, it was normal enough for people to wash someone else's feet as a sign of humility and an act of love. Mary, however, turned this common enough action into a radical act of gratitude by using her jar of expensive perfume.

- Generosity is not about an amount, but rather, it is about sacrifice. Generosity says “I want to give my best; I want to give what I can”. In your own life, how have you been a recipient of someone’s generosity? If you cannot think of your own story, feel free to share a meaningful story you have observed.

Lesson Three — Give while you can.

Days after this story took place, Jesus would be arrested and crucified. Had Mary waited to show Jesus her gratitude, she likely would not have had a chance to worship Jesus the way she did. A Cannonball lifestyle gives what it can — not the minimum, but the maximum.

- Tell us about a time you missed a great opportunity because you were waiting for the perfect circumstance.
- Tell us about a time you displayed a loving action even though it wasn’t the perfect time.

Read Mark 14:9 (NIV)

- In your own life, how do you feel led to grow in your generosity? What is your next right step?
- In what ways do you want to get more comfortable with living a cannonball lifestyle?
- When it comes to growing in your generosity, what would be your dream?

Closing Prayer

God, thank you for meeting us here today. Thank you for inviting us to dream big, to live generously, and to be people of radical love and appreciation. Help us to align ourselves with all that you are for our sake and for the sake of being people who live on mission for your good, generous Kingdom. Amen.

How To Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create space to grow in friendship and faith. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, consider reviewing the guide before your group to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content or to hit all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help foster friendship and faith in your specific group.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead.