

The Gospel of John Series

**The Many,
The Murderers,
And The Multitudes
John 11:45-57**

5-Day Devotional Companion

A 5-Day Journey Through John 11:45–57

Welcome To The Journey

Something remarkable has just happened.

A man who had been dead for four days walked out of his tomb. This happened in front of a crowd of witnesses who came expecting to grieve and left confronted with glory. The raising of Lazarus is one of the most breathtaking moments in all of Scripture, and it forces every person who encounters it to make a decision.

That's exactly where this week's devotional guide picks up.

In John 11:45–57, we don't watch the miracle, we watch the response to it. And what we discover is both fascinating and sobering: the same miracle, the same moment, and the same undeniable evidence produced three completely different kinds of people. Some believed. Some plotted. Some lingered in the crowd, curious but uncommitted.

This guide is designed to help you go deeper into God's Word throughout the week. Each day focuses on a specific portion of the passage, inviting you to sit with the text, reflect honestly, and respond in faith.

How to Use This Guide

Set aside 15–20 minutes each day in a quiet place. Begin by reading the Scripture passage for the day. Then work through the devotional reflection, the questions, and the prayer at your own pace. Don't rush. The goal isn't to finish, it's to encounter God in His Word, and let Him speak to you.

The action step at the end of each day is meant to be taken seriously. Spiritual growth happens when we take what we read and put it into action.

This guide works well for personal devotion or small group discussion. If you're going through it with others, the reflection questions are a great place to start your conversation.

Opening Prayer

Father, as we open Your Word this week, we ask that You do what only You can do, open our eyes to see clearly, soften our hearts to respond honestly, and give us the courage to surrender fully. We don't want to simply observe what Jesus has done. We want to trust who He is. Speak to us through this passage, and may the same power that called Lazarus out of the grave call us into deeper faith and obedience.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 1: "The Weight of What You've Seen"

Scripture Reading:

John 11:44–45 "The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, 'Take off the grave clothes and let him go.' Therefore, many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him."

Daily Devotional

Have you ever witnessed something so undeniable that it demanded a response?

The people standing outside that tomb had come to mourn. They weren't searching for a miracle; they were expecting a funeral. They had watched Lazarus get buried. They had sat with his grieving sisters. They knew the situation was hopeless, because hopeless was the only word that made sense when someone had been dead for four days.

And then Jesus called his name. And the dead man walked out.

John is very intentional about how he describes what happened next. He doesn't say these people heard about what Jesus did. He doesn't say they were told about it. He says they saw it. They were eyewitnesses. They saw the stone moved. They heard Jesus pray. They watched a man bound in burial cloths shuffle out of a tomb under his own power.

And John tells us the result: many of them believed.

That word "believed" carries more weight than simple agreement. In John's Gospel, belief is never just a mental nod. It is trust. It is the act of placing your confidence fully in who Jesus is, not just in what He can do. These people didn't just walk away impressed. They walked away changed, because they recognized that the One standing in front of them was exactly who He claimed to be.

But notice, that John says "many," not all. Every single person in that crowd saw the same miracle. They had access to the same evidence. And yet they didn't all respond the same way. Verse 46 tells us that some of them walked away from that tomb and went straight to the Pharisees to report what had happened.

The same miracle and moment. But two completely different responses.

So, the issue was never the evidence. It was their hearts.

You can stand next to a chair all day long and say you believe it will hold you. You can study it, examine it, even recommend it to someone else. But you haven't truly believed in that chair until you sit down, until you put your full weight in it. Real belief rests.

That's exactly what the people in verse 45 did. They rested their lives on Jesus. That's what it means, in a practical way, to believe.

You and I may not have stood outside a tomb in Bethany, but we are not without evidence. We have the full testimony of Scripture. We have the resurrection of Christ, attested by hundreds of eyewitnesses. We have the witness of transformed lives, all around us, perhaps including our own. John tells us at the end of his Gospel why he wrote every word of it: "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31).

The evidence is not in question. The evidence is sufficient. The question is, have you truly responded to the evidence?

You may know the stories. You may understand the gospel thoroughly. You may have sat in church for years and watched God work in the lives of people around you. But knowing about Jesus and genuinely resting in Jesus are two very different things.

Seeing Jesus clearly leads to trusting Him, if the heart is willing.

The Scriptures present Jesus clearly, but what have you done with it?

Reflection Questions

- What have you clearly seen God do that calls for a deeper response of trust?
- Is your belief in Jesus still mostly theoretical, or have you placed the full weight of your life on Him?
- What might be keeping you from moving beyond knowing about Jesus to truly resting in Him?

Prayer

Father, thank You for the evidence You have so graciously given us: Your Word, Your works, and the risen Christ Himself. Forgive me for the times I have seen what You have done and walked away unchanged. I don't want a belief that only observes from a distance. I want a faith that rests in who Jesus is. If I have held back, draw me forward. If I have been a spectator, make me a believer.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Today's Action Step

Think of one specific thing God has clearly shown you about Jesus through Scripture, a sermon, a season of life, or answered prayer. Write it down. Then honestly ask yourself: Have I responded to this with real trust, or have I simply filed it away as something I know? If your belief has been more theoretical than transformational, use that awareness as an invitation. Talk to God about it today, and take one concrete step, however small, toward resting your full weight on Him.

Day 2: "The Danger of Seeing and Still Walking Away"

Scripture Reading:

John 11:46–48 "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.'"

Daily Devotional

One word changes everything.

Yesterday we stood at the tomb and watched many people respond to the raising of Lazarus with genuine faith. It was a beautiful moment, eyewitnesses resting their lives on Jesus in response to undeniable evidence. But John doesn't let us linger there. He shifts immediately with a single, sobering word: "but."

"But some of them went to the Pharisees."

These individuals left the scene and walked in the exact opposite direction, not toward faith, but toward the very people who had been working to silence Jesus.

What makes this so shocking is that they didn't deny the miracle. They didn't question whether it was real. They carried an accurate report straight to the religious leaders. And when the Sanhedrin gathered in response, they didn't dispute it either. In fact, their own words in verse 47 amount to a quiet admission: "Here is this man performing many signs."

They knew the evidence was real. They simply refused to let it lead them where it was supposed to lead, belief in Jesus as the Messiah.

Unbelief is not usually about a lack of evidence. It is almost always about the condition of the heart.

Notice the question the Sanhedrin asked when they assembled: "What are we going to do about Him?" They didn't ask, "Could this man be the Messiah?" They didn't ask, "What do these signs mean?" They didn't even ask, "Should we believe?"

They're not searching for truth; it's a discussion about control. They weren't evaluating Jesus. They were strategizing about how to manage Him. So we can easily see where their hearts truly were.

Jesus had already diagnosed this condition earlier in John's Gospel: "Light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil" (John 3:19). What you see in the Sanhedrin's chamber is not confusion; it is resistance. Deliberate, calculated, self-protective resistance.

If they had accepted the miracle, then they would have to accept Jesus' authority. Jesus demands surrender. Jesus confronts pride. Jesus changes everything. And they had built their entire lives around the very things He would dismantle.

That is still how unbelief works today. People don't usually walk away from Jesus because the evidence failed them. They walk away because surrendering to what the evidence means would cost them something. They recognize it would cost them comfort, control, reputation, and independence. It is far easier to ask, "What are we going to do about Him?" than to fall on your knees and say, "What do You want me to do?"

Ask yourself this question: Is it possible to be close to what Jesus is doing and still miss Him entirely? The people in verse 46 were right there. They saw everything. They had more evidence than most people will ever encounter. And yet instead of moving toward Jesus, they moved away from Him.

You can hear truth regularly and remain unchanged. You can watch God work powerfully in someone else's life and walk away unaffected. You can be surrounded by spiritual things, and still not truly trust Jesus. The difference always comes down to the same question: Are you willing to

surrender to what you see, or are you still trying to stay in control of what you have?

Seeing is not the same as surrendering. And the gap between those two things is where many people spend their entire lives.

Reflection Questions

- Have you ever been close to what God was clearly doing and still walked away unchanged? What was happening in your heart in that moment?
- What is the difference between actually surrendering to Jesus and simply trying to manage Him from a safe distance?
- Are there areas of your life right now where you are asking "What will this cost me?" instead of "Lord, what are You asking of me?"

Prayer

Father, forgive me for the times I have seen Your hand at work and still walked away on my own terms. I confess that my resistance is not really about evidence, it is about surrender. Search my heart today and show me where I am trying to control things instead of trusting You. I don't want to be someone who stands close to Your power and misses You entirely. Break down whatever pride or fear is keeping me from full surrender, and draw me toward You.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Today's Action Step

Spend a few quiet minutes honestly examining your heart. Is there an area of your life where God has been clearly at work, speaking through His Word, through circumstances, through other people, and you have been responding with strategy instead of surrender? Write it down. Then, instead of asking "What am I going to do about this?" try asking "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then sit quietly, long enough to listen for an answer.

Day 3: "What Are You Afraid to Lose?"

Scripture Reading:

John 11:48–50, 53 "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.'... So from that day on they plotted to take his life."

Daily Devotional

Fear is a powerful thing. It can drive a person to do what they never imagined they were capable of, including rejecting the very Son of God standing right in front of them.

Yesterday we saw the Sanhedrin gathered in an emergency session, not to seek truth, but to strategize. Today we hear what was underneath all of that strategy. And it turns out to be something painfully familiar: they were afraid of losing what they had built their lives around.

Verse 48 lays it bare. Their concern wasn't theological, it was personal. "The Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation." In other words: We will lose everything. Our position. Our authority. Our influence. Our security. Everything we have worked for, everything that defines us, gone.

And so they made a calculation. One man's life weighed against the preservation of their world. Caiaphas, the high priest, stepped forward with the cold logic of a man who had already made up his mind: "It is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish."

He meant it as ruthless political pragmatism. But John pauses to point out one of the most remarkable ironies in all of Scripture, Caiaphas was speaking more truthfully than he knew. Because Jesus would die for the

nation. And not for the nation only, but for the "scattered children of God" everywhere, to bring them together as one. The high priest's cynical calculation became, in God's sovereign hand, an unwitting prophecy of the greatest act of redemption in history.

But don't let that irony cause you to miss the tragedy. These men saw the truth clearly, and then chose fear over faith. They looked at Jesus and, instead of asking "Who is He?" they asked "What will following Him cost us?" And that question swallowed them whole.

The Apostle Paul knew exactly what they were afraid of losing, because he had been afraid of losing the same things. He was a Pharisee of Pharisees, a man of status, credentials, and influence. But then he encountered the risen Christ, and everything changed. He wrote in Philippians 3:7–8 that whatever had been gain to him, he now counted as loss for the sake of knowing Christ Jesus his Lord. He called it all garbage, not because those things had no value, but because they had no value compared to Jesus.

That is the freedom the Sanhedrin never found. They were so afraid of losing their place that they missed the One who said, "I am the resurrection and the life."

This ancient council chamber becomes a mirror for us. Because the fear that drove Caiaphas and his colleagues is not unique to first-century religious leaders. It lives in every human heart today.

What are you afraid to lose if you fully surrender to Jesus? Maybe it's control over your own plans. Maybe it's a relationship that you know isn't honoring to God. Maybe it's a reputation you've carefully constructed, or a comfortable life you're not ready to let go of. Maybe it's simply the right to be in charge of yourself.

Jesus spoke directly to this fear: "Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it" (Matthew 16:25). The Sanhedrin tried to save everything, and by doing that, they lost the only thing that truly mattered.

The fear of loss is real. But it is built on a lie. Because you never actually lose when you surrender to Jesus. You find what you were made for.

Reflection Questions

- What are you most afraid of losing if you fully surrender to Jesus, status, comfort, control, approval, or something else?
- How does the fear of losing what we have built prevent us from receiving what God wants to give?
- Can you think of a time when what felt like loss in following Jesus actually led to something far greater?

Prayer

Lord, I confess that I am sometimes more afraid of losing what I have than I am eager to gain what You offer. Forgive me for the times I have made the same calculation as Caiaphas, weighing You against my comfort and choosing myself. Today I open my hands. Whatever I have been holding too tightly, I release to You. Replace my fear with faith, and help me trust that nothing surrendered to You is ever truly lost.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Today's Action Step

Write down one thing you have been holding onto too tightly, something that may be keeping you from full surrender to Jesus. It might be a plan, a relationship, a habit, or simply your need to stay in control. Then pray a specific, honest prayer of release over it. If it helps, open your hands physically while you pray, a simple but powerful reminder that you are choosing to hold loosely those things that once had a grip on you.

Day 4: "Curious But Not Committed"

Scripture Reading:

John 11:54–56 "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 people 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?'"

Daily Devotional

There is a third kind of person in this passage. Not the ones who believed. Not the ones who plotted. But the ones who simply wondered.

The scene shifts in these verses. Jesus has quietly withdrawn from public life, staying in a small town near the wilderness with His disciples. Meanwhile, Jerusalem is filling up. Passover is approaching, and pilgrims are pouring in from across the region, going through their ceremonial cleansing, preparing their hearts for one of the most sacred seasons on the Jewish calendar, the Passover. And they are talking about Jesus.

Standing in the temple courts, the very center of Jewish worship, the crowds are buzzing with one question: "What do you think? Isn't he coming to the festival at all?" His name is on everyone's lips. People are curious, anticipating, watching. There is a growing sense that something significant is about to happen.

But these people weren't following Jesus. They hadn't committed their lives to Him. They were only looking for Him, and talking about Him. And those are two very different things.

Jesus was on their minds. But He wasn't necessarily in their hearts.

It's like someone standing at the edge of a swimming pool. You're thinking about jumping in. You're watching other people swim. You might even dip your toe in occasionally. But you never actually take the plunge. You stay right there on the edge, close enough to feel the water, but dry enough to walk away at any moment.

That's a picture of a lot of people's relationship with Jesus. They are genuinely interested. They show up to church. They find the stories compelling and the teachings admirable. They talk about Him with others and wonder what He might do. But somewhere between curiosity and commitment, they stall out, and that's where they stay, sometimes for years, sometimes for a lifetime.

It's ironic. These people are standing in the temple courts, the place where sacrificial lambs were brought and offered, preparing for a Passover feast that was itself a memorial to God's great act of redemption. Everything around them was pointing to what Jesus was about to do. The symbols, the rituals, the sacrifices, all of it was a shadow of the reality walking toward Jerusalem at that very moment. And they were discussing whether He would even show up.

They were preparing for the feast while missing the fulfillment of everything the feast pointed to.

That irony exists today. It is entirely possible to be in the right place, going through the right motions, asking the right questions, and still not truly know Jesus. Religious activity and genuine faith are not the same thing. Curiosity and commitment are not the same thing. Being interested in Jesus and actually surrendering to Him are not the same thing.

Jeremiah 29:13 applies here: "You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart." The crowd in Jerusalem was seeking Jesus, but were they seeking Him with everything they had, or simply keeping one eye on the door?

How about you? Is Jesus just on your mind, or is He truly the Lord of your life? Do you think about Him on Sundays and wonder about Him occasionally, or have you actually stepped off the edge and given Him everything?

Delayed commitment is still a decision. And the edge of the pool is no place to live.

Reflection Questions

- Would you describe your relationship with Jesus right now as curious, committed, or somewhere in between? What does that look like practically?
- What is it that keeps people standing at the edge instead of fully stepping in?
- Is there a specific area of your life where you have been interested in what Jesus says but not yet willing to do what He asks?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, I don't want to be someone who talks about You without truly knowing You, or wonders about You without ever fully trusting You. Forgive me for the ways I have kept You at a comfortable distance, close enough to feel good about, but far enough for me to stay in control. Today I ask You to move me from the edge into the deep. Whatever is holding me back, I surrender it to You. You are worth more than my hesitation.

In Your name I pray, Amen.

Today's Action Step

Take five minutes today to be completely honest with God, and with yourself, about where you actually are in your walk with Him. Write a single sentence that describes your current relationship with Jesus as honestly as you can. Then write a second sentence describing where you want to be. If there is a gap between those two sentences, bring that gap to God in prayer today, and ask Him to show you the one next step He is calling you to take.

Day 5: "No More Neutral"

Scripture Reading:

John 11:57 "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."

Daily Devotional

All week long, we have been watching people respond to Jesus. Some believed. Some plotted. Some lingered in the crowd, curious but uncommitted. And now, in the final verse of this passage, the atmosphere changes. A public order has been issued. And with it, the possibility of staying neutral quietly disappears.

The chief priests and Pharisees have moved from private deliberation to public enforcement. This is no longer an internal conversation happening behind closed doors; it is an official command reaching into the streets and temple courts where ordinary people are gathered. The message is clear: if you know where Jesus is, report it.

Suddenly, everyone has to decide. You can't stay neutral anymore.

Think about what this meant for the people standing in that crowd. Just one verse earlier, they were asking one another, "What do you think? Will He come to the feast?" It was the kind of question you could ask without committing to an answer. Wondering about Jesus carried no cost. Discussing Him was safe. But now the leaders have drawn a line, and standing in the middle of it is no longer an option.

If you see Him, what will you do?

That is the question this verse leaves hanging in the air. And it is, in many ways, the question the entire passage has been building toward.

This moment is so remarkable. While the religious leaders are issuing arrest warrants and positioning informants throughout the city, Jesus is not hiding in a panic. He withdrew to Ephraim not out of fear, but out of

timing. He was not running from the cross; He was walking toward it deliberately, on His own terms, in His own time. He had already made this clear: "No one takes my life from me, but I lay it down of my own accord" (John 10:18).

The leaders believed they were seizing control of the situation. But the sovereign God of the universe was orchestrating every single moment. What they intended as an arrest was, in God's hands, the pathway to redemption. They thought they were closing in on Jesus. But in reality, Jesus was moving toward them, and toward the cross that would change everything.

The pressure of this moment is about us. Every step Jesus took toward Jerusalem, every deliberate movement toward Calvary, was taken for the sake of people who needed saving, and that included you and me.

And that is exactly why this verse will not allow us to remain spectators.

All week, you have been reading about three kinds of people. But here, at the close of the passage, John makes it plain that there are really only two responses that matter: you either move toward Jesus, or you move away from Him. You either stand with Him, or you distance yourself from Him. Jesus Himself said it plainly: "Whoever is not with me is against me" (Matthew 12:30).

The pressure the crowd felt in Jerusalem may look different for us today. No one is likely to issue a public order demanding that you report your allegiance. But the choice is no less real. Following Jesus still costs something. It may cost comfort, or reputation, or the approval of people whose opinions matter to you. And in those moments, when faith becomes visible and discipleship becomes inconvenient, what you do reveals where you truly stand.

Romans 10:9 reminds us that salvation is not just a private, internal transaction: "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Faith that cannot be seen is worth examining. Does your faith show in your everyday life? Can it be easily seen in your actions and attitudes?

Five days ago, we stood at an empty tomb and watched a dead man walk out. We have spent this week watching people respond to that moment. Now the passage turns and looks directly at us.

The evidence is clear of who Jesus is. The invitation to believe in Him is open. Neutrality is no longer available.

What will you do with Jesus?

Reflection Questions

- When following Jesus has carried a cost or created discomfort in your life, what did your response reveal about where you truly stand?
- How does knowing that Jesus went to the cross willingly, and for you specifically, change the way you think about surrendering to Him?
- What would it look like for your faith to become more visible in your daily life this week?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, I am undone by the truth that You walked toward the cross on purpose, for me. You were not a victim of circumstances. You were a willing Savior moving deliberately toward the moment that would make my redemption possible. I don't want to waste that. I don't want to stand in the crowd, curious but uncommitted, safe but unchanged. Today I choose You, openly, fully, and without reservation. Where my faith has been private, help me make it visible. Where I have been hesitating, give me courage to move forward. You are worth every cost.

In Your name, Amen.

Today's Action Step

Take one visible, intentional step of commitment this week. It doesn't have to be dramatic, but it should be real. Share what God has shown you this week with a friend or family member. Have a conversation with someone you've been meaning to talk to about faith. Join a small group. Write a letter to God laying out exactly where you stand and what you are choosing today. Whatever that step is for you, take it. Don't leave this devotional guide the same way you came into it.

The Journey Continues

Thank You

Thank you for completing this 5-day journey through John 11:45–57. We hope that sitting with this passage day by day has done more than inform your mind. We pray it has stirred something deep in your heart. You have spent this week watching people respond to the most dramatic miracle Jesus ever performed, and somewhere along the way, the passage stopped being about them and started being about you.

That is exactly what God's Word is designed to do.

The Next Step

Spiritual growth is never really a single dramatic moment. More often, it looks like faithful daily steps, listening for His voice in the quiet, and slowly, steadily learning.

As you continue your walk with Christ, we encourage you to:

- Return to John 11 regularly, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal new depths each time.
- Follow through on the action steps you committed to during this study.
- Share what God has shown you with someone who needs to hear it.
- Stay close to a community of believers who can help you lay down whatever still binds you.

Stay Connected

We are committed to walking alongside you as you grow in your relationship with Christ. We would love to see you and hear how God has been working in your life.

- Join us for **Sunday Morning Bible Study** at **9:30 a.m.**
- Join us for **Sunday Morning Worship** at **10:30 a.m.**

- Subscribe to our YouTube channel for more sermon videos:
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- Reach us by email at **CBCMorrilton@gmail.com**
- Or give us a call at **501-354-2117**

We would genuinely love to hear how God has used this guide in your life. If you have questions, a prayer request, or simply want to share what He has done, please don't hesitate to reach out. That is exactly why we are here.

You don't have to walk this journey alone.

In Christ's love,

Pastor Scott McDonald

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