***John 12:9-11 9Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus’ sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. 10But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, 11because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.***

 Last week, we were with Caiaphas and the Council as they plotted to kill Jesus – the Sinless Witness, the Son of God. Passover is approaching. The Sacrificial animals are being chosen. Tombs are being whitewashed. The Temple is being prepared. Jerusalem and the surrounding towns are filling up and crowded, busy preparing to observe the Passover.

Within that clamor of activity, Jesus comes. He raises Lazarus from the dead. People hear. Excitement is building. “Have you heard? There was this man named Lazarus. He died. They buried him! Then, a man named Jesus came and called him out of the tomb!” “You’re making that up!” “No, my aunt, among many others, was wailing with Mary in the house. She saw it! They all saw it! He came forward and the Jesus told them to loose him and let him go!” “I’ve never heard of anything like that!” “Me either!” “Where did this happen?” “In Bethany.” “Do you reckon this Lazarus is at home? Let’s go see if we can get a glimpse of him… and Jesus!” Off our two friends go. We’ll walk with them this morning.

Jesus is indeed in Bethany, six days before the Passover. He’s come to supper at the home of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. Martha is busy with much serving… I think we had probably already guessed that one. Mary is preparing a pound of oil of spikenard. Spikenard, taken from a plant akin to honeysuckle, comes from the Himalaya mountains between China and India. It was expensive to get and smelled wonderful – imagine the sweet smell of honeysuckle, strong and concentrated in your house. We’re peeking in the door and there’s Lazarus sitting at the table.

Verse 9 *Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus’ sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.*The Jews came to see Jesus, but not only to see Jesus. They also wanted to see Lazarus. A curiosity. He was a living, breathing witness to the power of Jesus, the Christ. His life had been restored, literally! They didn’t come for Jesus’ sake only, but also to see a witness, receive a witness.

The same is true today. How my heart yearns for the day when people come into this building, any gathering of Christians, for Jesus’ sake only! Knowing He is here! Only for the Joy of finding Jesus. But people need to see the power of Jesus to change lives! To restore lives literally! Lazarus didn’t come out of the tomb perfected. We don’t come out of Baptism perfected. We come out witnesses to the life changing, heart changing, thought changing, tongue changing, Grace unto Works, Busy for the Gospel power of Jesus Christ.

But Verse 10 tells us something about anyone who becomes a powerful witness for Jesus. Jesus has already warned us in John 15:18 *If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.* Those who walk in darkness hate. Verse 10 *But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also****.*** If you can wish death upon someone, gossip death upon someone, secretly plot death on someone there is a four alarm emergency sounding in your soul. The chief priests are seeking to put Jesus to death and now we find out they want to put Lazarus to death as well. This is the very spirit of antichrist. People want to make the spirit of antichrist mysterious, hard to understand. It’s not. Remember, we talked about the chaotic, hateful works of the flesh and the harmonious fruit of the spirit. Antichrist is in the flesh. Christ is in the Spirit. Not hard to understand. If it is not clearly of Jesus, it is clearly anti-Jesus, anti-Christ.

Why did the chief priests want to kill Lazarus? Verse 11 *because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.* Why did this worry them? John 11:48 *If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.* When you are a light, when I am a light, shining in the darkness, a witness for the life giving, life restoring, life changing power of Jesus, people see and many, notice it does not say all, many go away believing, wanting to know more, looking to learn, finding hope. There are many who will hate for that. Antichrist always seeks to kill the witness. It can’t kill Jesus, so those who witness in His name become the target.

Notice, the chief priests had plotted to kill Jesus. Now, here He is in Bethany! Why not seize Him now and kill Him? God is always in control. Jesus’ hour had not yet come. Nothing will happen 1 second sooner or 1 second later than God has ordained. True of Jesus. True of us.

This week, let’s prepare our hearts and minds for the Resurrection. Look inside. Root out anything that is antichrist. Look closely. Seek revelation of the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to reveal anything that is killing the witness – your witness or the witness of others. What is revealed to you is antichrist. If it’s not Magnifying Jesus, it is Crucifying Jesus. 1 Cor 10:31 *Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* This week, may we root out anything killing witness and find our Faith, Hope, Joy, and Peace resurrected this coming Sunday morning.