

## **2. Jesus Anointed**

**Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8**

### **Matthew 26:6-13**

Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, <sup>7</sup> a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table. <sup>8</sup> And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste? <sup>9</sup> For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.” <sup>10</sup> But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. <sup>11</sup> For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. <sup>12</sup> In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. <sup>13</sup> Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.”

### **Mark 14:3-9**

<sup>3</sup> And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head. <sup>4</sup> There were some who said to themselves indignantly, “Why was the ointment wasted like that? <sup>5</sup> For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.” And they scolded her. <sup>6</sup> But Jesus said, “Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. <sup>7</sup> For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me. <sup>8</sup> She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. <sup>9</sup> And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.”

### **John 12:1-8**

Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup> So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. <sup>3</sup> Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. <sup>4</sup> But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, <sup>5</sup> “Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” <sup>6</sup> He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. <sup>7</sup> Jesus said, “Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup> For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.”

1. **Read the passage in all three Gospels and list some of the details below that each Gospel adds to this event.**

**Matthew:** The house of Simon the Leper; alabaster flask; anointed Jesus head; the disciples were indignant (not just Judas?); the ointment was poured on Jesus head.

**Mark:** The ointment was worth over 300 denarii – (300 day's wages)

**John:** Mary (Lazarus' sister) is the woman in the story. Judas is a thief. The ointment was used to wash his feet. Mary wiped them with her hair.

2. **Read the following passages (below) and discuss the setting in which this event occurred. Describe the sentiment of the crowds and the chief priest and the Jews.**

The Chief Priests and Pharisees wanted to kill Jesus. They were allowed under the Romans to maintain their leadership position in the community. If there was unrest, the Romans would have removed them from authority, and instituted their own middle management to govern the communities. They were afraid that the people would follow Jesus, create unrest, and the Romans would see this as weakness on their part and replace them.

**Matthew 26:3-5** - <sup>3</sup> Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, <sup>4</sup> and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. <sup>5</sup> But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."

**Mark 14:1-2** - It was now two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him, <sup>2</sup> for they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people."

**John 11:53-54** - <sup>53</sup> So from that day on they made plans to put him to death. <sup>54</sup> Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples.

**John 12:10-11** - <sup>10</sup> So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, <sup>11</sup> because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

3. **The perfume (or ointment) that Mary used is described (by Judas) as being worth 300 Denarii. This was about a year's wages. How is this extravagant display of**

**affection and worship misunderstood by Judas and the disciples? Does Judas have a point in saying that this could have been sold and given to the poor?**

Judas, and some of the disciples (Matt 26:8) were indignant at the waste. They lived in a modest society. They were not wealthy (although some of the disciples may have had some financial resources.) This type of extravagance would have been utterly foreign to them. They were indignant at the seeming waste of the display. Judas mentions that this could have been sold and given to the poor – which seems right - except John tells us that he said this because he was the treasurer of the group and was skimming off the treasury. Jesus is not telling His disciples that there is no need to worry about the poor, or that our money should be invested in church before poor. I don't believe the point of this dialogue is to display for us the needs of the poor, rather to display the worth of Jesus. Jesus was allowing this rare display of worship to emphasize his worth, and the give them a visual of his death. The death and resurrection of Jesus is the treasure that is beyond worth. It is the treasure that is worth more than this whole world.

**Mark 8:36-37** - <sup>36</sup> For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? <sup>37</sup> Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

**4. Describe the hearts (as viewed by their actions) of the following characters in the story.**

**Mary** – Sees Jesus for who He is. He is worth more than anything in this world. She has experienced the loss of her brother, and his subsequent resurrection. She realizes that if Jesus can raise the dead, then He is much more valuable than anything in this life. Jesus is the key to meaning and purpose in Mary's life.

She adores him, and is not afraid of anybody's reaction to her love for Him. She is a great model of love for Christ that we should aspire towards. She is not embarrassed, ashamed, bashful, or even discreet about her love for Jesus, and she does not wait to show Him her love. She risks everything to show him – in a seemingly insignificant and wasteful way.

We can see in her the importance of things that for many of us would seem unimportant. How often do we rationalize, and “choose our battles” and let the name and reputation of our Savior get dragged through the mud? Do we take EVERY opportunity to shout his greatness to those around us, or are we ashamed and pragmatic so as not to offend?

**Judas** – No doubt, he is viewing this from the eyes of the world. He is not a Christian, although he has followed Jesus for over 3 years, he is stealing from the money bag. He is following Jesus for personal gain rather than for Heavenly fortune. He likely believes that Jesus will come into his kingdom on earth soon, and wants to have a place in that kingdom. He learns the talk of a follower, and when he condemns the anointing of Jesus, he sounds like a follower. He mentions the poor as the benefactor of his request, likely echoing Jesus repeated cries to love your neighbor and to care for those around you.

The scary thing about Judas is that he looks, and sounds like a believer. He even gets some of the disciples to agree with him. He makes a case for the selling of this ointment and distributing to the poor – sounds good right? But Jesus knows his heart, and tells him to leave Mary alone because she sees the worth of Jesus and is giving up money in exchange for his honor. Judas is looking at worship from an earthly, pragmatic perspective, not from a heavenly perspective.

**1 Corinthians 2:14** - he natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

**The Disciples** – some seem to agree with Judas, none or outspoken in support of Mary. The disciples are a great visual for us - they seem like strong believers one minute, then bicker and argue about who is going to be more important in the kingdom. They stand strong and confess their belief in Jesus one minute, but in less than a weeks' time they all will run and hide. They don't stand upon their beliefs and the power of God they view things in a very earthly manner. This is a common thread with the disciples until the Holy Spirit descends in Acts 2.

The disciples made this mistake throughout Jesus ministry. From the lack of belief at the feeding of the 5000 to the fear of the Chief Priests expressed in the return to raise Lazarus

**John 11:16** - So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

**Matthew 17:14-21** - <sup>14</sup> And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and, kneeling before him, <sup>15</sup> said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly. For often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. <sup>16</sup> And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him."

<sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me." <sup>18</sup> And Jesus rebuked the demon,<sup>[b]</sup> and it<sup>[c]</sup> came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly.<sup>[d]</sup> <sup>19</sup> Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" <sup>20</sup> He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you."<sup>[e]</sup>

5. **After this feast, the crowd that had heard about Lazarus came to see Jesus. They were excited because Jesus had returned to Bethany and they wanted to see him. Read the following passages and note the motivations for the crowd.**

**John 12:11** - because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

**John 12:18** - <sup>18</sup> The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign.

**John 12:42-43** - <sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, many even of the authorities **believed** in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; <sup>43</sup> **for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.**

It is hard to read John 12:18 and not see a little bit of false belief, or incomplete devotion in the people who “believed” at this point. They believed that Jesus was an amazing teacher, and that he had the ability to heal and to create food. What more would you need in a leader? They followed him for what He could offer them, or for worldly rewards, but possibly missed the point that He was not here to liberate the Jewish people from the Romans, but rather to liberate them from their sin.

### **Do we act the same way sometimes as the crowd in John 12:42-43?**

Mary did not fear the disciple’s mockery, or the crowd’s indigence at this display. She did not do this in secret, or try to be normal around Jesus so that the crowd did not see her as a “Jesus freak.” She loved Him more than anything else and did not care who knew, saw her, or made fun of her.

### **6. How does this story of extravagant worship vs. valuing worldly riches apply to us today? Read the following passages and comment on their relation to this story.**

**Matthew 13:44-46** - <sup>44</sup> “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field <sup>45</sup> “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, <sup>46</sup> who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

**Luke 14:25-33** - <sup>25</sup> Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup> “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup> Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. <sup>28</sup> For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? <sup>29</sup> Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, <sup>30</sup> saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ <sup>31</sup> Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. <sup>33</sup> So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

**Do we love Jesus more than the world?**

**Do we tell others about Him regardless of the mockery, the ridicule, the laughter?**

**Do we stand up for Jesus when His name is being used as a curse word?**

**Do we share with others the good that Jesus has done in our lives?**

**Do we share the Good that we do for Jesus with others?**

- **Matthew 5:16** - Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.
- **1 Peter 3:15** -But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: