

“Extravagant Worship”

The Gospel of Mark: Journey to the Cross

Mark 14:1-11

Mark 14:1-11 “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, 2 for they said, ‘Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people.’ 3 And while He was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as He was reclining at the 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. 4 There were some who said to themselves indignantly, ‘Why was the ointment wasted like that? 5 For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.’ And they scolded her. 6 But Jesus said, ‘Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me.’ 7 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. 8 She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. 9 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.’ 10 Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray Him to them. 11 And when they heard it, they were glad and promised to give him money. And he sought an opportunity to betray Him.”

1. Who are the scribes and priests and why do they seek to kill Jesus?
2. Mary anoints Jesus with a perfume that costs a whole year’s wages. (John 12:1-7)
 - This is a parallel to the story of the widow’s gift. (Mark 12:43-44)
 - The point is the heart, not the gift.

God desires worship that is extravagant in depth.

3. The disciples hold Mary in contempt in their hearts.
 - While it is not distinguished which of the disciples were looking on her with contempt, Judas speaks out that this was a waste.

Self-righteousness always looks on extravagant worship with contempt.

4. Jesus responds with a rebuke to the disciples.
 - One again Mary has chosen the greater portion. (Luke 10:38-42)

Worship is the priority. Everything else can wait.

5. Judas’ betrays Jesus.
 - Out of all the things Jesus taught and did, this was what sent Judas over the edge.

Why did the disciples see Mary’s worship as inferior to caring for the poor?

- Jesus routinely rejected the crowds in favor of spending time alone in communion with God.

- Time spent with God is never wasted because it is where we receive the power to do everything else.

It starts with worship.

God does not want or need our outward actions if they are not sourced in and caused by a heart of worship.

- How are we tempted to offer God actions not sourced in a heart of worship?
 - Our time.
 - Our money. (2 Corinthians 9:7)
 - Our talents.
- When we attempt to give our works where God wants worship we betray Jesus just like Judas did.