



## True Devotion, Deep Betrayal

### Key idea:

In the midst of deep betrayal by the priests and Judas, a woman displays true devotion and worship, sacrificing a costly gift to anoint Jesus in spite of the indignant reaction of others.

### Key text:

Mark 14:1-11

Now the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill him. 2 “But not during the Feast,” they said, “or the people may riot.” 3 While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. 4 Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? 5 It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly.

6 “Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. 7 The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. 8 She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. 9 I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

10 Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. 11 They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

### Key points:

1. The passage contrasts deep betrayal with true devotion to Jesus.
2. Mark uses a "sandwich" technique to emphasize the importance of reading the stories together.
3. True worship is not about status or power, but about recognizing Jesus' worth.
4. Extravagant devotion to Jesus may be misunderstood or criticized by others.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What stood out to you most from the teaching? Why?
2. The teaching mentions Mark's "sandwich" technique. How does understanding this literary device enhance our reading of the passage?
3. Discuss the contrast between the "insiders" (religious leaders, Judas) and the "outsider" (the unnamed woman). What does this teach us about true devotion to Jesus?
4. The woman's act of worship was considered wasteful by some. Have you ever experienced criticism for your devotion to Jesus? How did you respond?
5. How does the woman's extravagant act of worship challenge our own approach to worshiping Jesus?
6. The teaching states, "Jesus is worth our extravagant devotion, our love, and our worship." What might this look like in our daily lives?
7. How does the story of the woman's worship prepare us for understanding the significance of communion?

### **Practical Applications:**

1. Reflect on your own worship practices. Are there areas where you might be holding back due to fear of what others think? How can you cultivate a more extravagant devotion to Jesus?
2. This week, practice "pouring out" something valuable (time, resources, talents) as an act of worship to Jesus. Be prepared to share your experience with the group next time.
3. Spend time in prayer, asking God to reveal any areas where you might be betraying Jesus in small ways, perhaps through compromise or lukewarm devotion.
4. Consider ways your small group can encourage and support each other in demonstrating bold, extravagant worship, even in the face of potential criticism.