

Theme: 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.

I. The Advantage of Deep Reading An Author

- A. I have spent years reading Augustine, Francis Schaeffer, CS Lewis, and others
- B. The extended time with one author really helps you understand their writing better
- C. We have been learning a lot about Mark! In today's text we see one of his favorite literary devices (intercalation)

II. The Passover Plot

- A. A plot to arrest and kill Jesus
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.** Mark 14:1
 - 1. The priests and teachers of the law plot together
 - 2. The Pharisees and Herodians had plotted earlier
Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus. Mark 3:6
 - a. Groups in Galilee had wanted to do this for years
 - b. However they did not have authority and would need help from religious and political leaders to do this.
 - 3. The chief priests, teachers of the law, and elders were upset when Jesus cleared the Temple, and had been in conflict with Him all week over His teachings. But rather than confounding and shaming Him, He had confounded and shamed them!
 - 4. They have had enough and decide Jesus must die!

B. The problems facing the conspirators

- 1. 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.”** Mark 14:1-2
- 1. It was just days before Passover and this was a problem for the conspirators.
- 2. The problem was not trying to kill someone wrongfully - they had no problem with that!
- 3. The problem was that Jerusalem was overflowing with crowds, and many of them supported Jesus!
 - a. During Passover, Jerusalem's population increased massively—doubling, tripling, and even five times its normal size!
 - b. This made the Roman authorities VERY nervous and they would clamp down harshly on any unrest.
 - c. This was compounded by the fact that Jesus did not come back into Jerusalem before the Passover!
- 4. The problem: how can they get their hands on Jesus away from the crowds?

III. The Deep Betrayal

- A. Judas agrees to betray Jesus
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. Mark 14:10-11
 - 1. Judas goes to the chief priests with an offer to betray Jesus to them!
 - 2. This is not an enemy but one of the 12 disciples!

3. Mark offers no reason for why Judas did this - he simply says that Judas betrayed Jesus.
4. In After Hours, I will look at what we know - and don't know - about Judas' betrayal of Jesus.
5. This is the answer the priests and scribes were looking for —some sly way to arrest Jesus without causing a riot.

B. The deep betrayal of Jesus

1. Jesus has been betrayed - by the leaders of His chosen people and by one of His closest followers!
2. The betrayal and plot will unfold over the next two chapters, ending with Jesus's crucifixion and death.
3. It will ultimately involve the Jewish religious leaders, the Roman leaders, the mob - and even Jesus' closest followers and friends will betray Him as they abandon Him in His darkest moment.

IV. An Act of True Devotion

A. Mark uses his “sandwich” technique to make his point

1. He begins with the plot to kill Jesus, interrupts it with another story, and then finishes the plot with Judas agreeing to betray Jesus.
2. He used this technique in the Gospel several times:
 - a. Mark 3:20-35 - Jesus' family and the accusation that Jesus is acting with Satan's authority
 - b. Mark 5:21-43 - The Raising of Jairus' daughter and the healing of the woman with bleeding
 - c. Mark 6:7-30 - The sending out the disciples and the death of John the Baptist

d. Mark 11:12-21 - cursing the fig tree and clearing the Temple

3. This is a clue that the stories must be read together to understand the true meaning

B. An act of true devotion and extravagant worship

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. Mark 14:3

1. Jesus is in Bethany where He has gone each night
2. He is at a feast when a woman enters the feast - a scandalous act!
3. John 12:1-8 seems to be the same incident and tells us the woman is Mary, the sister of Lazarus - but Mark leaves her unnamed for dramatic purposes.
4. An expensive vial full of very expensive perfume made of nard (from India)
5. This was worth a full year's wages (verse 5) - it was probably a family heirloom only to be used on the most special occasion.
6. The woman breaks the jar (it can not be reused) and pours out all of the perfume - an act of total devotion and extravagant worship!

C. An indignant response

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. Mark 14:4-5

1. Some present are indignant - what a waste!

2. This could have been sold to help the poor!
3. This may have been a pretense with no real concern for the poor.
4. But helping the poor was part of Passover traditions, so the objectors may have even been sincere.
5. Either way, the key point is that they view this extravagant act of devotion and worship as a waste. Surely, something better could have been done with it!
6. The actions of this woman are the only beauty in this ugly part of the story of Jesus - and the people around rebuke her for her love and worship of Jesus!

D. Jesus' response to this situation

“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.” Mark 14:6-9

1. Jesus commands them to leave her alone - they don't understand!
2. Jesus receives her act of devotion as beautiful!
3. The poor will always be here, and we should help them (Deuteronomy 15:11) - but Jesus takes priority, especially in this moment!
4. She is anointing Him not as King, but for His burial, for Jesus knows the plot to kill Him is underway!

5. Far from being worthy of rebuke, this action will be remembered through the ages as the Gospel is told to everyone!
6. Jesus has set the record straight - but Judas immediately goes out and betrays Jesus to His enemies!

V. Applying the Word

A. Do I see what qualifies one to worship God?

1. Notice the incredible contrast in this passage!

Betrayal (Insider)	Worship (Outsider)
Religious leaders, one of the Twelve (Judas)	An unnamed woman
Jerusalem, the holy city and site of the Temple	House of Simon the Leper in Bethany
30 pieces of silver	Priceless vial of perfume
Ultimate hypocrisy and betrayal	True sacrifice, devotion, and worship

2. What an incredible divergence in responses to Jesus on the same day!
3. Furthermore, notice the insider/outsider motif at play - and it is insiders who should be most open to Jesus who betray, while the outsiders who are considered nothing by society worship!
4. Never despair that Jesus will not receive you and your worship!
5. No matter your background, no matter your struggles with sin, no matter your lack of qualifications - all Jesus looks for is a heart that humbly worships Him, “doing what it could” (v8)

- B. Learning from her act of extravagant worship
1. The woman in the story is a model of true worship
 2. She is not concerned with what others think and ignores their rebukes - her eyes are fixed on Jesus!
 3. She gives what she has and does not worry about what she does not have.
 4. She is extravagant in her devotion, love, and worship - even when others think it unseemly or too exuberant.
 5. Our culture is very similar to those rebuking the woman - it is ok to follow and worship Jesus, but let's not get carried away and become fanatical about it!
 6. But Jesus is worth our extravagant devotion, love, and worship!
 7. Ultimately, nothing and no one can keep me from giving Jesus my active devotion and worship except me!
 8. Am I active and extravagant in my private expressions of worship?
 9. Am I active and extravagant in my public expressions of worship?
- C. The Table of Extravagant Devotion
1. Just as the precious vial was broken, so the Body of Jesus was broken for us!
 2. Just as the pure perfume was poured out, so Jesus poured out His Blood for us!
 3. here the Spirit works to draw us into deeper worship

4. The way to stir our hearts to extravagant worship is not the Law, but the Gospel!
5. Let us remember Jesus' extravagant gift of love for us and give ourselves back to Him!

True Devotion, Deep Betrayal

Mark 14:1-11
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Communion
Acts 20:32

Teaching keywords: Christology; biblical characters; worship; sin

“Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. Acts 20:32

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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.”

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Mark 14:1-11