



Week 10 | March 23, 2014
Anointed at Bethany
Mark 14:1-11

We are now entering the closing section of the Gospel of Mark. From now on, Mark describes the events which lead up to the cross with careful precision. He notes the days and sometimes even the time of day of one event after another. The account of the dinner in our passage this week takes place on the Friday before the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.

Discuss: What are some items that might be worth a year's wages to you?

Read Mark 14:1-11.

(For additional details, read the parallel passages: Matthew 26:6–16; John 12:2–8.)

List the different motives you find among the characters in this passage:

Chief priests/teachers of the law

The woman (Mary)

Spectators/disciples

Jesus

Judas

[Q] The objection from the spectators concerning the poor seems reasonable and practical, even virtuous. Why is it more important to Jesus to express devotion to Him?

It was common for a host to anoint his guest with oil during a meal. In the gritty, parched Middle Eastern deserts, the oil refreshed and moisturized sun-damaged skin and hair. Jesus contrasted the woman's generosity to care for Him over the religious obligation to meet the needs of the poor. Once again He turns religion upside-down, looking past the outward appearances, straight into the heart – the wellspring of our actions.

[Q] What does Jesus see in the heart of the spectators? What does He see in Mary's heart?

Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. Proverbs 4:23 ESV

Pour out the Perfume

In his book, *The Normal Christian Life*, Chinese evangelist [Watchman Nee](#) says,

Have our eyes been opened to see the preciousness of the One whom we are serving? Have we come to see that nothing less than the dearest, the costliest, the most precious, is fit for Him? Have we come to see that working for the poor, working for the benefit of the world, working for the souls of men and for the eternal good of the sinner—all these so necessary and valuable things—are right only if they are in their place? In themselves, as things apart, they are as nothing compared with work that is done to the Lord.

The Lord has to open our eyes to His worth. If there is in the world some precious art treasure, and I pay the high price asked for it, be it one thousand, ten thousand, or even a million pounds, dare anyone say it is a waste? The idea of waste only comes into our Christianity when we underestimate the worth of our Lord. The whole question is: How precious is He to us now? If we do not think much of Him, then of course to give Him anything at all, however small, will seem to us a wicked waste. But when He is really precious to our soul, nothing will be too good, nothing too costly for Him; everything we have, our dearest, our most priceless treasure, we shall pour out upon Him, and we shall not count it a shame to have done so.

[Q] What if you loved Jesus extravagantly like this woman did? How would that affect your thoughts, words, attitudes, actions, relationships?

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Romans 12:1 NLT

Suggestions:

- Last fall we talked about [A Gospel Reflection Plan](#). These are ideas for reflecting every day on what Jesus has done so that our love for Him grows and overflows into our life. Which idea will help you treasure Christ more? valleycommunity.cc/resources/gospel-reflection-plan
- Listen to the worship song, *Alabaster Jar* youtube.com/watch?v=9UTLI7B3U0.
- Download and read Watchman Nee's short book, *The Normal Christian Life*: dropbox.com/s/6vmq86kawsqhv1a/Normal_Christian_Life_Watchman_Nee.pdf
- Other:

Pray
