



WEEK 8 STUDY GUIDE

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Monday June 13, 2022

Read: Mark 14:1-25

Scripture Verse: *“Jesus was in Bethany. He was at the table in the home of a man named Simon, who had a skin disease. A woman came with a special sealed jar of very expensive perfume. It was made out of pure nard. She broke the jar open and poured the perfume on Jesus’ head.” Mark 14:3*

Today’s Thought:

In Mark 14:1-11 this week, we find neatly placed in between the plot to arrest Jesus and have him killed by the chief priests and the action of Judas, one of the twelve agreeing to turn Jesus over to them, is the story of a woman who performs a beautiful anointing on Jesus. Since Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were just a few days away, the plotters agreed to wait to put their scheme into motion until after the holiday. (The devious can be so thoughtful sometimes, not wanting to cause any riots during the Feast.) The Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread typically lasted eight days to commemorate the exodus from Egypt. However, they expedited their plan with Judas’ agreement to participate in Jesus’ arrest, which followed the timetable set by God.

Meanwhile, back in Bethany, Jesus was the guest of honor at a dinner hosted at the home of Simon the Leper. Simon should probably be referred to as “the former” leper since it is believed that Jesus had healed him some time before this dinner party. While sitting around the dinner table, an unnamed woman in Mark, yet John 12:3, informs us that Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, is who comes into the house with an alabaster jar. This alabaster jar was a small stone flask with a long slender neck and contained about a pint of expensive perfume made of pure nard, an aromatic oil produced from a rare plant root native to India. Mark tells us that Mary broke the neck of the jar and poured its contents on Jesus’ head, while John tells us she poured it on his feet and wiped them with her hair. Historians tell us that both are possibilities since Jesus would have been reclining at the dinner table. It was a common custom to anoint the head of a guest at Jewish meals, but either way, what Mary did had a much more significant meaning.

Remember, I had mentioned earlier that we have the plot to kill Jesus and his betrayal by Judas awaiting Jesus on either side of this story of

anointing. Mary had come to anoint Jesus even though the disciples were criticizing the waste of such expensive perfume. But Jesus saw what Mary did differently. Mary was not only expressing her love for Christ for what He was about to do for her but was, in a sense, symbolically preparing Jesus' body for burial by anointing his head and feet. Jesus called it a beautiful expression of love and devotion to Him in light of His fast-approaching death. Mary was giving the equivalent of one year's wages to the Lord lovingly and lavishly. We consider that a lot, but in return, Jesus gave His all for Mary and the world. What a beautiful act of worship from Mary despite all the criticism. Regardless of what others may say about our worship and service, it is more important to please the Lord in all we do. Others may misunderstand or criticize us today, but we can never let it keep us from showing our love for Christ. The only approval we need be concerned about is that of our Savior alone!

- Why was Jesus having dinner at Simon's house?
- Why do you think Mark sandwiches this story between the two plots to arrest and betray Jesus?
- What are some of the reasons that make the jar of perfume so significant?
- Why does Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus perform this act of devotion?
- What makes her action both an act of worship and an act of service?
- What spiritual lesson did you learn from this story?

Further Reading: John 12:1-11

Tuesday June 14, 2022

Read: Mark 14:1-25

Scripture Verse: *“Why waste this perfume? 5 It could have been sold for more than a year’s pay. The money could have been given to poor people.” So they found fault with the woman.” Mark 14:4b-5*

Today’s Thought:

“Columbus had no gold; he begged bread for his hungry boy and died in want, but he gave the world that which was better than gold, a new continent. Millet had neither gold nor silver, pinched with poverty all through life, but he gave to the world The Angelus. Jonathan Edwards had no gold to give; his wife and daughters were compelled to help support the family, but he gave to the world a great book, perhaps the most profound volume produced in this continent. Jesus Christ had neither gold nor silver. He supported Himself as a carpenter and often ate the bread of a mendicant. When crucified, He was nailed to a cross while His enemies mocked. But He spake as never man spake, in words of priceless truth.” —J. H. Bomberger

As we read today’s opening illustration, many men have come from a meager start to become something better or contribute something significant to their world. Jesus, throughout his life on earth, showed a very special place in his heart for those who were poor. As we study the Gospels, we find many examples of Jesus teaching the disciples how to care for the less fortunate. By His miracles, Jesus had relieved the poverty, sickness, misery, and injustice of the needy. Having learned this concept so well, could it be the reason for the resentment shown toward Mary at her pouring of this expensive perfume onto Jesus’ head and feet? The disciples were only thinking in proper terms of provision for the poor at filing their objection. They had seen the compassion of Christ time and time again, so why would this time be any different?

Most likely, many first-century readers would have been surprised by Jesus’ defense of Mary and his stern rebuke of his disciples. I wonder if the disciples felt a bit confused. Having learned so much from Jesus thus far about serving their brother, they were just starting to get what Jesus meant by this concept of the first shall be last and the last first, only to get reprimanded on this occasion. It seems we are presented with another teachable moment both for the disciples and us. How often have

we looked at events in our lives but missed the eternal meaning of that event? Jesus' point was not that it was wrong to want to help the poor. Instead, He wanted them to see the excellent work of Mary because, at this moment in time, she was involved with something that would have eternal significance.

Our dilemma in choosing to follow Christ can sometimes be unpredictable, and for that, we are not prepared. Many times, as the disciples followed Jesus, they would find his actions and expectations occurring without preparation or direction. The disciples had observed so much, and the expectation was that they understood things about the rule of God, but Jesus never gave them straightforward answers to life. I believe Jesus used this technique in many of his teachings, and it simply caught the disciples at times unprepared for the unpredictable and overwhelming consequences of following Jesus. It happens to us today as well. Our dilemma will continually be choosing Jesus' way over our human logic and innate sense of fairness. Mary sacrificed a year's wages, and Jesus sacrificed His life. We don't know if Mary understood the magnitude of what she had done, but Jesus used it to elevate her action to anoint him for burial. Only through the perspective of Christ in this narrative are we able to comprehend the foreshadowing of His coming death and the sacrificial act of giving His life for the world. Jesus' death will be a vital part of the gospel message and we don't want to put "good works" ahead of God's agenda for the salvation of the world.

- What has Jesus' message been to the disciples since they began to follow?
- Why does it make sense for the disciples to be indignant with Mary?
- Why do you think Judas was so upset by this act? Was his motive different than even the disciples?
- Why was what Mary did accepted and elevated by Christ, in comparison to the good the disciples had in mind?
- How do we sometimes fall into the same line of thinking as the disciples?

Further Reading: Matthew 26:6-12

Wednesday June 15, 2022

Read: Mark 14:1-25

Scripture Verse: *“Leave her alone,” Jesus said. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. You will always have poor people with you. You can help them any time you want to. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body to prepare me to be buried.” Mark 14:6-8*

Today’s Thought:

The disciples sitting around the dinner table find themselves in the crosshairs of Christ as they respond to what Mary had done for him by pouring perfume on his head. Mary had given Jesus her best, a perfume bath worth a year’s wages in a moment of sacrifice. Jesus calls what she did a beautiful thing. By sharing her love with Jesus, which was a blessing to him, she also blessed the entire home with the fragrance of her perfume. And on her account, the whole town of Bethany will be blessed and remembered by the entire world every time the Gospel story is told. We find Jesus’s prediction fulfilled as the story is recorded in three Gospels.

Today, the simple truth is that Mary gave her best in faith and love, and we should do the same. While Judas, still one of the twelve, gave his worst by his unbelief and hatred of what was good. His only action was providing the solution to the religious elites of how they could arrest Jesus without causing a riot. Judas sold Jesus out for thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave, one of the most incredible acts of treason in all of world history. Mary loved Jesus; Judas loved money. We cannot serve both Christ and a passion for the things of this world, including wealth.

- Why were the disciples in Jesus’ crosshairs?
- Do you think Jesus was anymore upset with Judas than the others? Why or why not?
- What was Mary’s motivation for doing this to Jesus?
- What was Judas’ indignation motivated by?
- What is your first love?

Further Reading: Luke 22:3-6

Thursday June 16, 2022

Read: Mark 14:1-25

Scripture Verse: *"It was the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. That was the time to sacrifice the Passover lamb." Mark 14:12a*

Today's Thought:

The Passover Feast is the first of the spring feasts, which then moves into the Feast of Unleavened Bread, lasting eight days. The Passover Feast happens annually to commemorate Israel's exodus from Egypt on the 15th of Nisan, equivalent to late March or early April each spring and is the first month of the year.

Each year during Nisan, each family household was to select a lamb on the tenth day. According to Exodus 12:6, each family would keep their lamb until the fourteenth day of Nisan, and then all families would kill their lamb at twilight. What's interesting about these four days is that each day the lamb was held in captivity represented 100 years of their captivity in Egypt, totaling 400 years. In addition, the lamb would become like a pet to the family during those four days, so when they took it to be sacrificed, they would feel the gravity of the penalty for their sins.

After choosing a lamb, the family name was placed around its neck, so after they presented their lamb for sacrifice and it bled out, it was returned to the family for the Passover meal. Remember, the Lamb of God had his name placed at the top of his cross. The lamb was roasted on an upright pomegranate pole with a crossbar through its shoulders, according to historical evidence. They would take the entrails and tie them around the lamb's head, resembling the crown of thorns during the roasting process. The pomegranate was symbolic of royalty and priesthood.

God's feasts not only provide us with historical teaching and spiritual implications but also prophetic applications. While families were choosing their lamb on the tenth of Nisan for Passover, God at the same time was revealing His Lamb at the triumphant entry of Jesus as stated in Zech. 9:9, "City of Zion, be full of joy! People of Jerusalem, shout! See, your king comes to you. He always does what is right. He has the power to save. He is gentle and riding on a donkey. He is sitting on a donkey's colt." Scholars believe that Jesus' triumphant entry took place on the tenth day of Nisan, or March 30, AD 33. And on the fourteenth day of

Nisan, when families were presenting their lambs for sacrifice, Jesus, the Lamb of God, was crucified on the cross.

Just like Jews put their family name on their lamb for sacrifice at the Temple, God placed His name on His Lamb for His family, including you and me. God has given us so many pictures so that we can understand the magnitude of His love and amazing grace! And even more incredible is that Jesus looked forward to eating this meal with His disciples. It would be the picture of His body broken for our sins.

- **What does the Passover Feast commemorate for the Jews?**
- **Where was the first Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread held?**
- **Who are these feasts for and who started them?**
- **What do you learn from the history of the feast?**
- **What has learning the significance of the Passover/Lord's Supper taught you?**
- **How will your approach to participating in the Lord's Supper change or won't it?**

Further Reading: Luke 22:7-13

Friday June 17, 2022

Read: Mark 14:1-25

Scripture Verse: *“While they were eating, Jesus took bread. He gave thanks and broke it. He handed it to his disciples and said, “Take it. This is my body.” Then he took the cup. He gave thanks and handed it to them. All of them drank from it. “This is my blood of the new covenant,” he said to them. “It is poured out for many.” Mark 14:22-24*

Today's Thought:

Jesus wanted to eat the Passover meal with His disciples, and it would seem he had prearranged a place for this to happen. Still traveling from Bethany, Jesus sends Peter and John ahead into Jerusalem, where they would eat this meal to make the final preparations. Here again, Mark gives us another reflection of Jesus' supernatural knowledge as He shared with Peter and John several signs that would help them find the place Jesus had selected for privacy and safety. Interestingly, tradition claims this occurred in Mark's home, owned by his dad. Whosever home it was, Jesus had planned for this intimate moment with his disciples to be undisturbed.

Jesus and the disciples had arrived in Jerusalem for the Passover meal, which began at sunset and finished by midnight. After Judas's betrayal and allowing him the chance to repent before leaving, they completed the Passover meal. Next, Jesus provides a new interpretation of the bread and wine to the remaining disciples. After giving thanks, he broke a loaf of unleavened flatbread, "saying this is my body, broken for you, take it and eat." After they had taken and eaten the bread, Jesus took the cup that contained red wine mixed with water and gave thanks. He then offered the cup to the disciples, who drank from it. Although Jesus spoke of literal things like bread, wine, His body, and blood, their relationship is purely symbolic.

As we study the various aspects of the Seder meal, we find out that there are four cups of wine during this meal, each with a specific meaning as part of the Jewish tradition. The four cups are a reminder of four promises found in Exodus 6:6-7, "Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord

your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians." Each of the four cups is named to designate its significance concerning the key phrases from Exodus. The first cup of the meal is called the "Cup of Blessing or Sanctification." It refers to the phrase, "I will bring you out." God promises to separate them from Egypt, a picture of sanctification and being separated from our sin. A second cup is taken before the meal, called the "Cup of Praise." It signified God's promise to deliver them from bondage. Following the meal, all participants partake of the third cup called the "Cup of Redemption." This cup is the one Jesus referred to at the Last Supper, saying, "this is My blood of the covenant, poured out for many for forgiveness of sins." We partake of this third cup each week when we participate in communion.

And finally, a fourth cup was to be taken at the end of the meal called the "Cup of the Kingdom." Did you notice Jesus' words in verse 25? He said, "What I'm about to tell you is true. I won't drink wine with you again until the day I drink it in God's Kingdom." Since the Kingdom wasn't established yet and to fulfill prophecy, Jesus did not drink from this fourth cup. But there was another reason, and it had to do with the Jewish wedding tradition. When a Jewish man asked a prospective bride to marry him, he would offer her a cup of wine. If she drank it, she was accepting the marriage. He would then tell her he was going to his father's house to prepare a place for her. The typical bride would then respond, "When are you coming back?" To which the groom would say, "Only my father knows!" These were the words expressed by Jesus to his disciples in John 14:2-3. Jesus was speaking to His future bride, the Church!

When the preparation was over, the father would tell his son it was time to retrieve his bride. Upon picking up his bride and returning to their new chamber, they would spend the next seven days consummating the marriage. After those seven days, they would emerge from the wedding chamber to celebrate and observe the wedding feast in their honor. The new couple would begin the feast by drinking a cup of wine called the "Cup of Consummation." This cup is the same as the fourth cup of the Seder, "Cup of the Kingdom!" As Christians, when we drink the "Cup of Redemption" during communion, we are actually accepting our betrothal to the Lord to be His bride! And eventually, in the Kingdom, we will drink the "Cup of Consummation" with Christ at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. It will be the fourth cup, the Kingdom Cup of the Last Supper. We will someday get to see and participate in finishing the Lord's Supper that began over 2000 years ago in the upper room in Jerusalem! Hallelujah and amen!

- Why do you think Jesus was so eager to eat the Passover with the disciples?
- Why does Jesus send Peter and John ahead to secure the room?
- Explain the significance of the bread and cup used in communion.
- What is the name of the cup we drink at communion each week?
- Who will be permitted to drink the Cup of the Kingdom with Christ?

Further Reading: Revelation 19:1-10

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