

MARK

READ ALOUD: MARK 14:1-11

Pursue

In our test this week, Mark 14:1-11, the author uses a story to reveal the states of heart of four different groups/people towards Jesus. The religious leaders, the disciples, Judas, and the woman (revealed in John to be Mary, Lazarus & Martha's sister.) By looking closely at these responses to Jesus, we are invited to respond to the warnings and calls that these verses put before us.

The main story of the anointing of Jesus by the woman is found within stories of:

- The religious leaders who were seeking a way to kill and destroy Jesus (v.1-2 & 10-11). They see Jesus as their greatest enemy and his message and ministry as the greatest threat to what they treasured above all else, power.
- Judas who was seeking a way to betray Jesus, for his greatest treasure, money.
- The disciples see her act of faith but sadly miss the deeper meaning. While we learn it was Judas who questioned the woman out loud in John, in Mark we see that the other disciples did nothing to defend her or rebuke Judas. They are closer to understanding, desiring the ministry of Jesus to continue, but they miss the greater ministry he is on the road towards.
 - **Lest we consider ourselves greater than we are compared to these stories, we must remember that we too, were born into sin. We all, at one point, were hostile towards God. He was the greatest enemy and threat to the way of life we enjoyed - our sin. If you have faith in Jesus, can you recall who you were before you met Jesus? What did you desire, love, or treasure most then?**

Between these stories of the religious leaders is the story of a woman who likely gave her greatest earthly treasure (an alabaster flask of nard) to honor and prepare her greatest eternal treasure, Jesus, for his coming death, burial, and resurrection. She had faith that saw, understood, and believed all Jesus had said about who he was and what he was doing to save.

- **The author is helping us understand who our true treasure should be: the person of Jesus. Unfortunately, there can be times in our faith journey when we treasure Jesus less than other things. (Hopefully, that happens less and less by his grace.) But we want to celebrate those times of great faith. Can you think of a time when you treasured Jesus deeply? What moved you in that way? What did that time look and feel like?**
- **In your life today, what threatens to get in the way of making Christ your highest treasure?**

Practice Confession & Repentance

- In our last question of the material, we asked, "In your life today, what threatens to get in the way of making Christ your highest treasure?" Hopefully, you have had time as a group to share these areas of temptation or sin with the group. If not, please take a few minutes to pray and consider what this might be. Splitting into smaller groups or pairs, with the help of the Spirit, practice confession & repentance with one another.
 - Repentance is the response of recognizing, grieving, and turning away from sin and to Jesus. Repentance is a gift from God that the Holy Spirit gives us through Jesus Christ. Repentance is an invitation into grace!

- Begin your time in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to help you respond in true repentance. Ask him to help you recognize your sin as sin against God first and his creation (others, yourself, etc.) second. Ask him to give you godly sorrow over your sin and to grant you the gift of repentance.
- Spend time confessing to your prayer partner the specific ways you have been tempted or walked in sin in this particular area of your life. Acknowledge the ways this can or has affected your relationship with God and with others.
- Spend time in prayer asking for forgiveness, healing, and wisdom as you consider what active repentance will look like in this area. Finally, spend time in prayer thanking him for his work in you, for the forgiveness, mercy, and grace found only in Jesus.
- Spend time discussing what active steps you can take to turn away from this sin and move toward Jesus. Be specific; when will you take these steps? Is there anyone you need to make amends to because of this sin? What will accountability look like, etc.?
- Close in prayer, asking the Spirit to help you walk in grace-fueled obedience as a response to God's loving forgiveness rather than white-knuckle obedience.

Proclaim

At the beginning of this series, we encouraged people to choose one person this semester that they would pray for and share with. Encourage group members in this relationship. What is something you learned, was convicted of, or encouraged by that you will share this week with that person who doesn't have faith in Jesus?