

Mark 14:1-11
March 26, '17

MARCH IN MARK
“THE PERILOUS PLOT”

(Before Scripture)

**DURING LENT THIS YEAR, WE’RE LOOKING AT
EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF JESUS THAT TOOK PLACE
DURING HOLY WEEK.**

**WE’RE USING THE GOSPEL OF MARK AS OUR
GUIDE BECAUSE MARK IS THE ONLY ONE OF THE
FOUR GOSPELS THAT APPEARS TO ACTUALLY TELL
US WHAT HAPPENED ON EACH DAY OF THAT FATEFUL
WEEK.**

**AFTER TELLING US ABOUT THE ENTRANCE OF
JESUS INTO JERUSALEM ON PALM SUNDAY, MARK
SAYS, “*ON THE FOLLOWING DAY...*” WHICH MAKES IT
CLEAR THAT THE EVENTS HE’LL BE SHARING NEXT
TOOK PLACE ON MONDAY.**

HE THEN SAYS, “*IN THE MORNING...*” WHICH TELLS US THAT TUESDAY HAS ARRIVED.

AT THE BEGINNING OF OUR PASSAGE THIS MORNING, HE SAYS, “*IT WAS TWO DAYS BEFORE THE PASSOVER...*” WHICH INDICATES THAT ANOTHER DAY HAS ENDED AND NOW IT’S WEDNESDAY.

THAT MAY SEEM CONFUSING BECAUSE, TO US, THE NEXT DAY WOULD HAVE BEEN THE DAY WE CALL MAUNDY THURSDAY.

BUT THE WAY TIME WAS CONSIDERED *THEN*, IT MEANT TODAY COUNTS AS ONE DAY AND TOMORROW AS THE SECOND DAY.

WE’RE LOOKING AT THE FIRST 11 VERSES OF MARK’S 14TH CHAPTER – MARK 14:1-11.

(After Scripture)

TWO WEEKS AGO, WHEN WE WERE LOOKING AT TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK, I TOLD YOU ABOUT A BOOK THAT I'D STUMBLED UPON WITH THE VERY INTRIGUING TITLE – WHAT MATTERS MOST – HOW WE GOT THE POINT BUT MISSED THE PERSON.

I THINK THIS PASSAGE GIVES US YET ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF HOW THIS CAN HAPPEN – HOW WE CAN UNDERSTAND A LOT ABOUT CHRISTIANITY BUT OVERLOOK JESUS.

WHAT WE HAVE HERE IS ANOTHER “MARK SANDWICH.”

WE SAID THAT A “MARK SANDWICH” IS A TECHNIQUE EMPLOYED BY THE WRITER OF THIS GOSPEL, WHEREBY HE PUTS SOMETHING ON THE TOP OF AN EVENT THAT IS VERY SIMILAR TO SOMETHING

**ON THE BOTTOM & IN THE MIDDLE IS SOMETHING
DIFFERENT.**

**IN MAINTAINING THE SANDWICH ANALOGY, THE
“MEAT” IS IN THE MIDDLE.**

THAT’S WHAT WE HAVE HERE.

**ON THE TOP, WE’VE GOT THE DECEPTION &
TREACHERY OF THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS & IT
CORRESPONDS TO THE DECEPTION & TREACHERY OF
JUDAS ON THE BOTTOM.**

**IN THE MIDDLE – IN THE MEAT OF THE SANDWICH
– WE’VE GOT THIS STORY OF AN UNNAMED WOMAN
WHO ANOINTS JESUS WITH EXPENSIVE OIL.**

LET’S TAKE A LOOK AT IT.

**FIRST OF ALL, JESUS IS IN THE HOME OF A MAN
MARK REFERS TO AS “SIMON THE LEPER.”**

**HE'S THERE FOR A MEAL & THERE ARE
OBVIOUSLY A LOT OF PEOPLE PRESENT.**

**WHAT THIS TELLS US IS THAT SIMON IS NO
LONGER A LEPER.**

**IF HE WAS, HIS HOUSE WOULDN'T BE FULL OF
PEOPLE!**

**I THINK WE CAN REASONABLY CONCLUDE THAT
SIMON HAD BEEN CURED OF HIS LEPROSY BY JESUS.**

**WHAT BETTER WAY FOR HIM TO EXPRESS HIS
GRATITUDE THAN BY HAVING JESUS & HIS FRIENDS IN
FOR A MEAL.**

**AND IT'S THIS MEAL OF GRATITUDE THAT SETS
THE STAGE FOR AN EVEN GREATER ACT OF
GRATITUDE.**

**THE HEART OF THIS STORY INVOLVES THIS
UNNAMED WOMAN WHO OPENS A JAR & POURS OIL
ON THE HEAD OF JESUS.**

WHEN SHE DOES, THE DISCIPLES ARE OUTRAGED!

THIS WAS EXPENSIVE OIL!

**WE'RE EVEN TOLD *HOW* EXPENSIVE BECAUSE ONE
OF THEM SAYS IT COULD HAVE BEEN SOLD FOR 300
DENARII.**

**HOW MUCH WOULD 300 DENARII HAVE BEEN
WORTH?**

**WE'RE TOLD EARLIER IN MARK THAT IT WOULD
HAVE BEEN ABOUT A YEAR'S SALARY FOR AN
AVERAGE WORKER.**

WE'RE TALKING THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS HERE!

**AND WHEN SOMEONE SUGGESTS IT COULD HAVE
BEEN SPENT ON THE POOR, WE CAN ALSO LOOK**

**EARLIER IN MARK AND SEE THAT 200 DENARII WOULD
HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENT TO FEED A CROWD OF 5,000
PEOPLE!**

**SO, DO THE MATH – THIS PERFUME POURED ON
THE HEAD OF JESUS BY THIS UNNAMED WOMAN IN
THE HOME OF SIMON, THE HEALED LEPER, COULD
HAVE FED 7,500 PEOPLE!**

WHAT AN OUTRAGEOUS WASTE!

**IF WE'RE HONEST WITH OURSELVES, WE'D HAVE
TO AGREE WITH THOSE WHO OBJECTED TO WHAT
THIS WOMAN HAS DONE!**

**THOSE WHO WERE THERE THAT DAY KNEW THE
PLIGHT OF THE POOR.**

**THEN – AS NOW – THEY MAY HAVE TRIED TO
DENY IT OR IGNORE IT IN AN EFFORT TO ABSOLVE
THEMSELVES OF RESPONSIBILITY.**

**BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE – THEY KNEW THE
PLIGHT OF THE POOR.**

AND – LET’S BE HONEST – SO DO WE.

**THE DISCIPLES & ANYONE ELSE DINING IN
SIMON’S HOUSE THAT DAY WERE KEENLY AWARE OF
THE POVERTY THEY COULDN’T FAIL TO SEE ALL
AROUND THEM & THE STAGGERING VALUE OF THE
PERFUME THAT WAS – IN THEIR MINDS – WASTED ON
THE HEAD OF ONE MAN.**

AS ISRAELITES, THEY KNEW THE HEBREW BIBLE.

**THEY KNEW THAT THE FIRST RESPONSIBILITY OF
ISRAEL’S KING – BACK IN THE OLD TESTAMENT TIMES
WHEN ISRAEL STILL HAD A KING – WAS TO
SAFEGUARD THE POOR.**

**THE FIRST RESPONSIBILITY OF *POLITICAL* AS
WELL AS *RELIGIOUS* AUTHORITY WAS TO SAFEGUARD
THE POOR.**

**THAT, IN ITSELF, HAS PROFOUND IMPLICATIONS
FOR OUR OWN DAY.**

**SO, WE CAN CERTAINLY UNDERSTAND WHY THE
DISCIPLES WERE UPSET OVER WHAT THIS WOMAN
HAS DONE!**

**I THINK IT'S INTERESTING, THOUGH, THAT THEY
NEVER SEEM TO GIVE A THOUGHT TO SOMETHING
ELSE THIS WOMAN MIGHT HAVE DONE WITH THIS
OIL.**

**THEY NEVER EVEN CONSIDER WHO ELSE MAY
HAVE BENEFITED FROM THIS PRECIOUS GIFT.**

MAYBE *YOU* HAVEN'T CONSIDERED IT EITHER.

THINK ABOUT IT.

**WHO IS THE MOST OBVIOUS PERSON TO BENEFIT
FROM THIS VERY EXPENSIVE PERFUME?**

WHY NOT THE WOMAN HERSELF?

IT'S HERS.

**WHY DOESN'T SHE JUST KEEP IT & USE IT
HERSELF?**

**OR WHY NOT SELL IT FOR SOME OUTRAGEOUS
PRICE AND TAKE THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME?**

**WHY SHOULD ANYONE ELSE – EITHER JESUS OR
THE POOR – GET WHAT'S RIGHTFULLY HERS!?**

**WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT LIKE THAT – WHEN
YOU THINK THAT AN ALTERNATIVE USE FOR IT
WOULD HAVE BEEN TO BENEFIT THE WOMAN
HERSELF – IT PUTS THIS ACT IN A COMPLETELY
DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE, DOESN'T IT?**

**IS IT GOING TO BE ME OR IS IT GOING TO BE
JESUS?**

**WHAT WILL THE FOCUS & THE CENTER OF MY
LIFE BE?**

**AM I CENTERED ON ME OR AM I CENTERED ON
GOD?**

**BECAUSE, YOU SEE, I THINK THE ARGUMENT
THAT IS USED HERE BY THOSE WHO ARE OUTRAGED,
IS REALLY JUST A SMOKE SCREEN.**

**AS JESUS SAYS, “*YOU ALWAYS HAVE THE POOR
WITH YOU.*”**

**BUT, MORE IMPORTANTLY, HE SAYS, “*YOU CAN
SHOW KINDNESS TO THEM WHENEVER YOU WISH.*”**

**YOU SEE, THE CONTRAST IS NOT BETWEEN JESUS
& THE POOR.**

THE CONTRAST IS BETWEEN “*ALWAYS*” AND “*NOT ALWAYS.*”

**OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP THE POOR WILL
ALWAYS BE PRESENT.**

**BUT – FOR THIS WOMAN & THOSE OF THE TIME -
OPPORTUNITIES TO BLESS JESUS WILL *NOT ALWAYS*
BE AVAILABLE.**

**THIS WOMAN TOOK ADVANTAGE OF WHAT
LITTLE TIME WAS LEFT.**

**IF SHE CHOSE – AND IF THE DISCIPLES CHOSE –
THEY COULD SPEND THE REST OF THEIR LIVES
CARING FOR THE POOR – REACHING OUT TO HELP
THOSE IN NEED.**

**WHAT THE DISCIPLES HAVE DONE HERE,
THOUGH, IS PRESENTED AN ILLOGICAL PAIR OF
OPTIONS.**

THEY'RE SAYING, "*YOU SHOULD DO THIS & NOT DO THAT.*"

WHY CAN'T IT BE BOTH?

WHY DO WE HAVE TO EITHER HONOR JESUS OR FEED THE POOR?

I THINK THAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE OF WHAT JESUS IS SAYING HERE – WE SHOULD ALWAYS CARE ABOUT THE POOR BUT THAT DOESN'T PRECLUDE US FROM EXTRAVAGANTLY LOVING HIM AS WELL.

IN FACT, THE TWO SHOULD REALLY GO HAND IN HAND.

THE MORE WE LOVE GOD, THE MORE WE'LL FIND OURSELVES PASSIONATELY MOVED TO LOVE OTHERS.

PERHAPS THE MOST REMARKABLE ASPECT OF THIS PASSAGE IS THE ABSOLUTE OUTRAGEOUSNESS OF THIS WOMAN'S ACTION.

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU DID SOMETHING AS OUTRAGEOUS AS WHAT THIS WOMAN DID?

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU ALLOWED YOUR LOVE FOR JESUS CHRIST TO ENABLE YOU TO DO SOMETHING THAT WENT BEYOND THE BOUNDS OF REASONABLE THINKING?

SO OFTEN IN LIFE, WE ARE PRISONERS OF LOGIC, REASON & PRACTICALITY.

I'M AFRAID THE OLDER WE GET, THE MORE TRUE THAT IS.

I THINK THAT'S ONE REASON SO MANY OF US FIND IT SO MUCH FUN TO BE AROUND CHILDREN.

WHETHER IT'S OUR OWN CHILDREN, OUR GRANDCHILDREN OR ONE OF OUR CHURCH CHILDREN, BEING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE ALLOWS US TO HAVE FUN – TO GET DOWN ON THE FLOOR & ROLL AROUND, TO PLAY GAMES WITH OUR IMAGINATION & ACT IN OUTRAGEOUSLY IMPRACTICAL WAYS.

I THINK THAT'S WHY JESUS LOVED CHILDREN SO MUCH & WHY HE TOLD US THAT IF WE ARE SERIOUS ABOUT ENTERING THE KINGDOM OF GOD, WE MUST AGAIN BECOME LIKE CHILDREN.

AND JUST THINK OF THE POSSIBILITIES THAT EXIST FOR US IF, AS ADULTS, WE ACT IN OUTRAGEOUSLY IMPRACTICAL WAYS – IF WE CONSIDER THE TITLE OF THAT BOOK – WHAT MATTERS MOST?

**I'VE ALWAYS BEEN FASCINATED BY A QUOTE OF
GEORGE BERNARD SHAW:**

***“THE REASONABLE MAN ADAPTS HIMSELF TO THE
WORLD. THE UNREASONABLE ONE PERSISTS IN
ADAPTING THE WORLD TO HIMSELF. THEREFORE, ALL
PROGRESS DEPENDS ON THE UNREASONABLE MAN.”***

**THE WOMAN IN THIS STORY WAS UNREASONABLE.
WHAT SHE DID WAS OUTRAGEOUS.**

**IN HER LOVE & COMMITMENT TO JESUS CHRIST,
SHE DID SOMETHING THAT WENT FAR BEYOND THE
BOUNDS OF RATIONAL THOUGHT & NORMAL
BEHAVIOR.**

**SHE IS CONTRASTED HERE, NOT ONLY WITH THE
DISCIPLES WHO DISAPPROVED OF HER
EXTRAVAGANCE, BUT WITH THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS
& WITH JUDAS.**

THAT'S WHAT WE'VE GOT ON EITHER SIDE OF THIS MARK SANDWICH - THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS & JUDAS.

ON BOTH COUNTS, THEY'RE LOOKING TO SEE WHAT THEY CAN *GET* FOR THEIR OWN BENEFIT.

THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS – AS WE'VE SEEN THROUGHOUT THE PREVIOUS DAYS OF HOLY WEEK – WERE TRYING TO TRAP JESUS WITH HIS WORDS.

NOW THEY'RE LOOKING TO TRAP HIM *PHYSICALLY*.

THEY'RE OUT TO *GET* HIM TO PUT AN END TO WHAT THEY SEE AS A THREAT TO THEIR POWER & PRESTIGE.

THEN THERE'S JUDAS.

MATTHEW SUGGESTS THAT THE MOTIVE OF JUDAS IN BETRAYING JESUS WAS GREED.

LUKE SUGGEST THAT IT WAS SATAN.

**JOHN SUGGESTS THAT IT WAS BOTH GREED AND
SATAN.**

**BUT IN MARK'S GOSPEL – HERE & ELSEWHERE –
WE AREN'T GIVEN ANY MOTIVE AT ALL.**

**MARK WOULD SUGGEST THAT WE SIMPLY CAN'T
KNOW WHAT HIS MOTIVE WAS.**

**SO REGARDLESS OF WHAT IT MAY HAVE BEEN,
WE CAN AT LEAST SAY THAT HE SAW THIS AS AN
OPPORTUNITY TO *GET* SOMETHING FOR HIMSELF.**

**SO ON EITHER SIDE, YOU'VE GOT THOSE WHO
WERE LOOKING TO *GET* SOMETHING.**

**AND IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS SANDWICH, WE'VE
GOT THIS WOMAN WHO WANTS – NOT TO *GET* – BUT
TO GIVE.**

**ISN'T THAT A FAIRLY STARK & SIMPLE WAY OF
LOOKING AT YOUR OWN LIFE & YOUR OWN MOTIVES?**

**ISN'T THAT A GOOD QUESTION TO HONESTLY ASK
YOURSELF IN ANY NUMBER OF SITUATIONS?**

**IS MY LIFE FOCUSED MORE ON *GETTING* OR AM I
MORE INTENT ON *GIVING*?**

**HERE WE ARE - 2,000 YEARS AFTER THIS EVENT IN
THE HOME OF SIMON THE FORMER LEPER.**

**WE REMEMBER THE TREACHERY OF THOSE
RELIGIOUS LEADERS & WE REMEMBER THE
BETRAYAL OF JUDAS.**

**BUT WE ALSO REMEMBER THIS UNNAMED
WOMAN WHO DID SOMETHING OUTRAGEOUS,
SOMETHING UNREASONABLE.**

AS JESUS SAID, “*WHEREVER THE GOOD NEWS IS PROCLAIMED IN THE WHOLE WORLD, WHAT SHE HAS DONE WILL BE TOLD IN REMEMBRANCE OF HER.*”

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU DID SOMETHING SO OUTRAGEOUS & SO UNREASONABLE THAT OTHERS WOULD REMEMBER IT LONG AFTER YOU’RE GONE?

EVERY ONE OF US IS PRESENTED – VIRTUALLY EVERY DAY - WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO DO SOMETHING OUTRAGEOUSLY KIND.

WE ALL – REGARDLESS OF WHO WE ARE – HAVE THE CAPABILITY OF ACTING IN AN UNREASONABLY LOVING FASHION.

THINK ABOUT IT THIS WEEK.

DO SOMETHING UNREASONABLE.

DO SOMETHING OUTRAGEOUS.

**DO SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL FOR SOMEONE ELSE
& YOU'LL BE DOING SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL FOR
JESUS. AMEN.**

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