

WASTEFUL LOVE

Mark 14:1-11

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In Mark 14:1-11, Jesus is journeying towards the cross. The timing of this passage is significant. Jerusalem was crowded with people who were anticipating the coming Messiah, and the religious leaders were plotting how they could arrest Jesus. In this setting, something very unexpected happens. A woman (*unnamed in Mark's account of the story, yet from John 12:1-8, we know this is Mary, the sister of Martha*) comes to Jesus and breaks a flask and pours perfume on Christ's head. Her action was an act of love and devotion to Christ. It would have been custom to anoint someone's head with a small drop of oil when they entered your home. Mary, however, takes this a step further and pours an entire flask over Christ's head. It would have been socially unacceptable for her to anoint Christ publicly, yet she did it anyway. In doing so, she was expressing her love and devotion to Christ. The behavior of Mary is contrasted with the disciples who are wrongly concerned with their glory and power (Mark 9:33-36). Mary's humble act of devotion is a symbolical preparation for Christ's coming sacrifice on the cross.

1) What stands out to you about Mark 14:1-11? How does the act of devotion by Mary impact you?

2) During the COVID-19 crisis, the world is looking at how the Church responds. What does it look like to respond to crisis by trusting in Christ and demonstrating our devotion to Him?

After the woman anoints Christ's head with oil, several people who witnessed the scene were angry with Christ. John 12 tells us that it was specifically Judas who was especially upset with the expense. Those who were critical did not understand the significance of the moment. They were missing the more significant point of Christ's death and resurrection. Therefore, as they misunderstood this moment, they were missing Christ Himself. The woman recognizes Christ, His importance, and rightly worshipping Him as Lord and King. Mary acknowledges that Jesus is Lord and gives herself to Him in devotion and worship. She does not miss what Christ is doing and, therefore, is rightly worshipping Him as Lord.

3) During the COVID-19 crisis, how do we not "miss Christ" during this moment? How do we pay attention to what God may be doing in our hearts and our world?

4) During this crisis, many distractions are vying for our attention. How do we keep our eyes firmly fixed on Jesus through each day of the crisis?