



Loving Jesus, Loving People, Plowing a Counter-Culture

SERMON TEXT: Matthew 26: 1-19

KEY POINT: The heart of the Christian longs to worship our crucified and resurrected Lord.

FOR LEADERS

- **Baptism!** *Our baptism service is coming up! If you or someone you know are interested in getting baptized or would like to speak to one of our pastors about baptism, reach out to your Campus Coordinator and let them know!*
- **Apprenticeship!** *As a Gospel-centered church, it's our hope that Emergence would be the leadership locus of our community, and as a Community Leader, you are very much on the front lines of that! Who are you personally investing in? Who in your group could lead in their own right if you gave them the proper guidance and encouragement? Pray about who God has placed around you and consider what a next step in their faith, their leadership and their ministry might be today*

GETTING STARTED

- [1] Communities Video:** Watch this week's community extras video!
- [2] Icebreaker:** Name a hobby that you tried to take on and quickly found out wasn't for you!
- [3] Opener:** What stood out to you from the sermon this week? Did you find anything particularly helpful or eye opening?

WORSHIP

Ask for a volunteer to read Matthew 26:1-19.

One important aspect to understand about our passage this week is that Matthew has structured as a "chiasm," or in a way that calls specific attention to the object at its center. In other words, Matthew is specifically trying to focus our attention on a singular act of worship from a woman who pours an expensive perfume over Jesus' head.

- [1]** Worship is a word we use quite often in church, but what exactly does it mean? In your own words, how would you describe what it means to "worship" Jesus?
- [2]** What are some different ways in which worship can be expressed? How do you personally worship Christ in your own life?
- [3]** Ryan shared that purpose of our entire lives is to "pour ourselves out for the worship of Christ." What do you think he means by this, and what does this look like, practically? Before you answer, consider what Paul says to us in Romans 12:1-2.
- [4]** What was your first experience at a Bible-teaching church like? How were you treated, and what did you think about everyone gathering together to worship Jesus?
- [5]** Was there anything about your first impressions of church that left something to be desired? How have your previous experiences with church affect the way you worship Jesus today?

PASSOVER AND BETRAYAL



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Ask for a volunteer to read Matthew 26:1-19

The Passover was an annual celebration in which Jewish people would celebrate God’s great act of deliverance in the Old Testament – the exodus from Egypt. Here, on the eve of his death, Jesus is especially concerned that his disciples partake of this meal with him, even though there are some seemingly “bigger” things about to happen.

- [6]** Why do you think Jesus is so concerned about having this meal with his disciples?
- [7]** Consider Judas’ treachery and willingness to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. What are some ways that we betray Jesus today? How can a true follower of Jesus come back from acts of unfaithfulness?

In verses 10-13, Jesus corrects his disciples for being indignant at the woman for “wasting” a jar of very expensive oil to anoint Jesus head. He suggests that the symbolic act of anointing him is a worthwhile use of such a precious resource.

- [8]** How does Jesus’ reaction here compare to what he teaches us elsewhere about the importance of using wealth to care for the poor (ref. Matthew 19:21, Luke 19:8-9)? What do you think we are meant to learn from this?
- [9]** What kind(s) of principles do you think should inform decisions of both individual Christians and churches as to where to allocate their resources?

THAT WHICH IS PRIMARY

In the sermon, Ryan mentioned that any true Christian ministry will always have the proclamation of Jesus as our crucified and risen Lord at its center. He went on to explain that to love the “causes of Christ” without Christ himself, is to completely miss the heart of the issue.

- [10]** What happens when a Christian loses sight of what’s primary, and gives themselves to ministries of mercy while neglecting the Gospel? Have you ever seen this happen?
- [11]** Have you ever personally been tempted to do the “causes of Christ” without actually preaching Christ himself?
- [12]** What are some things that would lead a Christian to an unhealthy balance of Gospel proclamation while neglecting the poor, or mercy ministry while neglecting the Gospel?
- [13]** Which side of the spectrum do you find yourself more tempted toward, personally? (Cause of Christ without preaching, or preaching Christ with no ministry to the poor?)
- [14]** In what way could a concern over what others may think about us impact or even inhibit our ability to worship Jesus in Spirit and truth? What needs to change about your own life to better worship Jesus?

PRAYER

- [1]** Pray that Jesus would reveal any imbalance in worship or ministry in your life, and that you would live out your faith without concern over what others may think of it.

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LEADER'S COMMENTARY

- Matthew has structured this week's passage as a chiasm (pronounced *kai-azm*), which is a literary device in which a sequence is given, and then given again in reversed order. Chiasms are often used to call attention to the object at the center, climax, or turning point of the chiasm:

Preparation of the Passover (26:1-2)
 Preparation for arrest/betrayal (26:3-5)
 Preparation for burial (26:6-13)
 Preparation for arrest/betrayal (26:14-16)
 Preparation of the Passover (26:17-19)

This is one way that Matthew subtly shows us that the woman's worship of Jesus as one who will soon be killed and buried is at the center of all the pieces that are being moved into place.

- To familiarize yourself with the Passover, as the Old Testament prescribes it, read Exodus 12:1-27. This was one of the three major "pilgrimage festivals" of the Jewish calendar, where all able-bodied Jewish people were encouraged to journey to Jerusalem. The other two were Pentecost (aka the Feast of Weeks) and Succoth (aka the Feast of Tabernacles/Booths). Paul explicitly calls Christ "our Passover lamb" in 1 Corinthians 5:7.
- One of the major alleged discrepancies between the Gospels is that John makes it clear that the lambs had not yet been eaten by the time Jesus was crucified (John 18:28), also saying that it happened on "the preparation of the Passover" (19:14). Yet in the other, the Last Supper seems to be a Passover meal. Thus, critics often argue that John places the crucifixion a day earlier than Matthew, Mark, and Luke in order to more explicitly portray Jesus' death as a Passover sacrifice. This is unnecessary. Among the several convincing ways of resolving this difficulty, in our opinion the following is the most probable:
 - Jewish days begin at sunset, not sunrise. This means that the "day of preparation" began on what we would consider Thursday evening. This would have been when the Last Supper was eaten, suggesting that their meal was an anticipated Passover meal that took place *before* the lambs were killed. Note that none of the Gospels mention the eating of lamb at the Last Supper—a telling omission, given the centrality of lamb in the Passover ritual. Rather, the meal Jesus partakes of with his disciples is a simple meal of bread and wine. Jesus is then presenting his death both as connected to the "old" Passover, and yet something new that replaces it. In all four Gospels, then, Jesus dies on the same day as the Passover lambs.
 - This sequence of events fits best with the first century astrological calendar. Nisan 14 (the day of preparation) fell on a Friday in both AD 30 and 33. On the other hand, there is no year between AD 27 and 34 on which Nisan 15 (the Passover meal) fell on a Friday.
- In all likelihood, the woman did not know that she was anointing Jesus in preparation for his burial. Rather, she probably did so in order to acknowledge him as the long-awaited messianic king (note that the title *Messiah/Christ* means "anointed one"). On this understanding, Jesus reinterprets her act as having more significance than she knows—she does it to anoint him as king, but in doing so, she unknowingly anoints him for burial.