

Sermon Discussion Guide- Week of April 7, 2019



Pastor Temple 8:15,10:55 Pastor Hall 9:30

Getting Started- Life Updates, Prayer Requests & Opening Question (15-20 min)

- Anything to share about personal events in the past week? About follow-ups from last Sunday's meeting on "Coming To Our Senses?"
- Are there any joys or concerns that you would like to share with the group for the closing prayer time or for group members to hold in prayer during the week? (please note them below for later)

- Opener Question: What is the most extravagant gift you have ever given or received?

Review the Sermon (15 min)

Please read aloud the sermon scripture below, Mark 14:1-11. Know that it is ok to skip some questions below in order to manage the time for discussions in each section.

Now the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were scheming to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. ²“But not during the festival,” they said, “or the people may riot.” ³While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. ⁴Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? ⁵It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly.

⁶“Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ⁷The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. ⁸She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. ⁹Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.” ¹⁰Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. ¹¹They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

If you had to give a one-minute summary of the sermon message this week, what would you say?

- Why might Jesus have wanted to see his friends in Bethany (outside of Jerusalem) prior to the festival of unleavened bread (verses 1-2)?
- While the woman who anointed Jesus' head with expensive perfume (in verse 2) remains anonymous in Mark's gospel, the gospel of John reveals her to be Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus (John 12:1-8). What may have motivated Mary to give such a generous gift to Jesus offered in such a personal and dramatic way?
- Do you believe there is merit to the criticism of the gift in verses 4-5? What may have been the motivation behind the criticism?
- How did Jesus come to her defense (verse 6-8) and what kind of prescribed priorities for his followers are implied in his response?
- How do you respond to Pastor Hall's statement that if we loved recklessly "we would do things that were not necessarily logical but absolutely acceptable in the eyes of Christ...?"
- What connections can be made between the Exodus story of the Passover lamb and the foreshadowing of Jesus' death (verses 1, 8 and 10)?

Other Related Scriptures (10 min)

- Would a volunteer please read out loud Revelation 5:6-14. John's message describes his vision of worship in heaven of a "lamb, looking as if it had been slain." What images of worship are present in these passages?
- How is worshipping Jesus, the lamb who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29), a natural response for both angels and humans?

Personalizing and Applying The Message (15 min)

- As you reflect upon the sermon and the additional reading above, what are points of encouragement or challenge for you personally?
- She may have looked foolish at the time, but after the resurrection, her extravagant gift and action must have seemed far more justified to His followers then. What are the limits on how foolish you are willing to look for Christ?
- How are our worship experiences expressions of love for God?
- Why does extravagant love lead to sacrificial giving and not simply giving "left-overs"?
- What actions of ours this week could communicate extravagant love for God such that Christ may say of us, "she has done a beautiful thing to me?"

Witness & Closing Prayer (5-10 min)

- How can approaching and encountering God in worship with extravagant love be a positive witness to other worshipers?
- How might the extravagant love of Christ on the cross inspire us to reach out to others this week? Who might that be?
- The group leader or another volunteer who took notes on the prayer requests shared earlier in the meeting, may now lead the group in closing prayer.