

07.25.10 / Mark 14:1-11

Passage Insight

In the preceding chapter, prompted by one of His disciple's admiration of the earthly temple, Jesus has just been telling the disciples about the end times and what will happen to heaven and earth. He mentions that while heaven and earth will pass away, His own words will not, and He encourages His disciples to stay awake, to keep an eye out for the Father, to focus on that which is truly most important, the Creator of all things, not the created world.

This brings us to chapter 14, where Jesus, his disciples, and multitudes of other Jews are crammed into Jerusalem in anticipation of the annual Passover celebration, where God would be remembered and celebrated for having brought the Jews out of slavery in Egypt. While at a male-only gathering, the woman in the story enters and anoints Jesus with a costly ointment that was worth approximately a year's wages, no doubt a small fortune, something precious to this woman. When we buy something, we make a trade. If we spend \$300 on a new phone, we are saying that we value the new phone more than we value the \$300. In spending this ointment on Jesus, this woman was saying that she valued Jesus more than her precious ointment. The Bible tells us that the kingdom of heaven, into which we gain entrance by believing in Jesus, is like a field that houses a treasure, and the one who finds this treasure will sell all he has to purchase that field (Matthew 13:44). In other words, gaining Jesus is worth it even if we have to lose everything else. What is the one thing you think you could never let go of? Let this reveal to you what you truly value.

The disciples reproached the woman for spending so extravagantly and said that it would have been better to sell the ointment and give the money to the poor. In making this statement, they are saying that doing this would be more valuable than worshiping Jesus with all that we have and are. It is not uncommon in many churches today for the focus to be on social justice and meeting the needs of others. These are important matters, and they should receive our time and attention, as they are important to Jesus, but when they are done at the exclusion of worshiping Christ (rather than being done out of love for Christ, obedience to Christ, and as a response to who Christ is), then they have become primary over God. How did Jesus deal with this? He rebuked the disciples openly for their error.

Ultimately, as we have seen time and time again, Jesus is focused on our hearts. He knows us deeply, intimately, and completely. There is absolutely no way we can hide from Him, and THIS IS A GOOD THING. Allow Him to reveal the parts of your heart that don't currently worship Him. Ask Him to show you what you worship instead, and when He shows you, and He will show you if you ask Him to, humbly repent before Him and thank Him for His mercy, for it is from His mercy that He loves you enough to free you from the burden of worshiping anything other than Him.

Application Questions**How We Pray**

- 1) What do you regularly ask the Lord for?
- 2) The answer to this question reveals something about your heart and priorities. What does it reveal?

What We Love Most

- 1) Finish this statement: If I lost _____, my world would come crashing down.
 - 2) What are some ways that this thing is more important to you than Jesus?
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- 3) How would worshipping Jesus first impact this thing in your life?

Culture vs. Jesus

- 1) The woman in this story took an action that was very much against Jewish etiquette when she interrupted a male-only gathering. While against social norms, Jesus commended her for her actions. Where does your respect for culture keep you from worshipping Jesus?
- 2) What would it cost you to love Jesus more than fitting in?
- 3) What would you gain by loving Jesus more than culture?

What We Do In Secret

- 1) The chief priests and scribes sought to have Jesus arrested and killed in secret in order to serve their own interests. What do you do in secret, hoping that others will not see your sin?
- 2) Jesus is the great Illuminator. He is Love. When He brings sin into the light, it is not to destroy us, but rather to free us. What does He want to free you from?
- 3) How does Jesus want to use the body of Christ to help you be freed from this burden?

Sources

- Prayer
 - Pillar
 - Word Bible Commentary
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