



Prelude to Easter Part 3 *The Pre-burial Anointing of Jesus*

Message to Conversation Guide

Matt 26:6-13

6 While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of Simon the Leper, 7 a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.⁸ When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. “Why this waste?” they asked. 9 “This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor.”¹⁰ Aware of this, Jesus said to them, “Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. 11 The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. 12 When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. 13 Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

Mark 14:3-9

3 While 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.⁴ Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? 5 It 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. 7 The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. 8 She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. 9 Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.” NIV

John 12:1-11

12 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 Here a dinner was given in Jesus’ honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. 3 Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus’ feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.⁴ But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, 5 “Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year’s wages.” 6 He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what

was put into it. 7 “Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. “It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. 8 You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.” 9 Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. 10 So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, 11 for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him. NIV

Discussion Questions

1. The occasion for the dinner in which the anointing occurred was a dinner in honor of Jesus. In other words, this dinner was all about Jesus and the focus was totally on him. What insights can we gain from this principle of how we should do church and live our lives?

John 12:2 Here a dinner was given **in Jesus' honor.** NIV

Heb 12 :2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. ESV

2. Matthew and Mark tell us that the dinner was held at Simon the Leper's house. Obviously, he was no longer a leper because no one would come to a party hosted by a leper. No doubt he was given a dinner to honor Jesus because it was Jesus who healed him of leprosy. Also, at the dinner was Lazarus who had been raised from the dead. The dinner was a party celebrating how Jesus changed and helped people. Discuss how this is a model for church services and gatherings of believers.

A church service is a party to honor Jesus hosted by people that have had their lives changed by him.

1 Cor 6:9-11 9

*Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 **And that is what some of you were.** But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. NIV*

3. Mary anointed Jesus' head and feet with this expensive perfume. When she broke the neck of the alabaster vial, she couldn't reverse what she had done. How does this illustrate our totally commitment to Jesus?

Luke 9:62

*62 Jesus replied, **“No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”** NIV (also see **Deut 6:4**)*

4. Some of the disciples criticized Mary for her extravagant devotion to Jesus. This illustrates that we can expect some people to not understand or comprehend our radical devotion to Jesus. Why do you think the disciples saw this devotional act of Mary to be outlandish and absurd?

