



May 14, 2024

Concerning Jesus - Mark 14 ~Aaron McRae

This Discussion Guide is designed to help you **think more deeply** about the sermon and **engage with others** through thoughtful conversation, biblical exploration and **allow God to work** in your life as you apply what you discover.

➤ CONVERSATION STARTER

What is the most important thing your mother taught you?

➤ EXPLORATION

Over the last 14 weeks we have been following the life and ministry of Jesus, seeking to understand who he is and why he came. This week we find him walking steadily toward the end of his life. He knew that the religious leaders of the day were looking for ways to stop him, but he continued to spread the good news of the Kingdom of God.

If Jesus had kept a daily calendar during this particular week, it might have looked something like this:

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
6pm Be Anointed w/Oil	6pm Last Supper	1am Get Arrested
	8pm Predict Peter's Denial	2am Religious Trial
	11pm Go to Gethsemane (RSVP +Peter, +James, +John)	3am Peter Denies Me

Mark 14:1-2 (From your bible, read aloud)

The Passover was an important feast for the Jewish people. During the feast they remembered God's deliverance of his people from slavery. Every Jewish family was planning and preparing to commemorate their deliverance with a Passover meal.

Why do you think it is important that this was happening during the preparation for Passover?

Mark 14:3 (From your bible, read aloud)

Anointing someone in the ancient world was not uncommon at feasts and special occasions. When a guest arrived for a meal, it was customary to anoint the guest's head with a dab of oil. Here, this woman went much farther than the customary greeting. She poured the entire contents of an alabaster flask of very costly oil on the head of Jesus.

This act was an extravagant expression of devotion to Jesus. It would have been a huge sacrifice to pour this out on him. The value of something is connected to what we are willing to sacrifice for it. This woman gave what was most likely her prized possession to Jesus in an act of worship.

What do you consider to be your most prized possession? Why is it important to you?

Mark 14:4-5 (From your bible, read aloud)

The woman knew who Jesus was and she was willing to give her very best to him. But others were confused,

and couldn't understand why she would do something so foolish. Her extravagant expression of worship didn't make sense to them.

Mark 14:6 (From your bible, read aloud)

Jesus immediately comes to the defense of the woman. He acknowledged her offering as something beautiful. The fragrance of the perfumed oil would have been strong. Its smell would have lingered long after the dinner was over. ***It may have even stayed with Jesus while he hung on the cross just two days later.***

Mark 14:7-9 (From your bible, read aloud)

Jesus gave her the highest compliment: **she has done what she could**. God expects no *more* from us than what we can do; but beware of setting your sights so low that you believe that doing *nothing* is doing what you *can*.

Share about something you do intentionally as an act of worship and devotion to God.

When we read a story like this one it is sometimes helpful to imagine ourselves in the story. Who do you most identify with in this story? Simon the Leper, a man whose life has been transformed by Jesus? The woman, who worships with extravagance? An onlooker who is indignant when something doesn't seem to make sense?

Jesus Invites His Disciples Into:

- **Pure & Undivided Devotion**

When the woman entered the room, she gave all her attention to Jesus. Her focus was on the one she came to honor.

"Attention is the beginning of devotion."

Poet Mary Oliver

She models for us what pure devotion looks like. The Apostle Paul describes this same kind of devotion in Philippians 3:7-8:

"But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ."

Jesus Invites His Disciples Into:

- **Sacrificial & Joyful Generosity**

Take a moment to ask yourself, "Am I willing to be joyfully generous, even when it means I will have to sacrifice something valuable in my life?" This kind of devotion only comes when we truly understand the value of the one we worship.

What motivates you to be joyfully generous? What keeps you from being joyfully generous?

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." 2 Corinthians 9:7-8

Jesus Invites His Disciples Into:

- **Purposeful & Unexpected Participation**

We do not always understand the way the kingdom of God works. But we are still invited to participate in what God is doing in the world. As we follow Jesus, we become more and more aware of the beauty of his generosity to us, and our worship becomes a pure and purposeful response.

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." ~Jim Elliot

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."

Ephesians 3:20-21

► TAKE AWAY

This story illustrates what true devotion to God looks like. It is pure, extravagant, costly, joyful, sacrificial, and purposeful. This is the kind of worship that Jesus calls "beautiful". Just like the woman gave her very best to Jesus, we are called to do the same.

How does your life reflect the values of Pure & Undivided Devotion, Sacrificial & Joyful Generosity, and Purposeful & Unexpected Participation? Which of these needs some attention?

Pray together, asking God to help you give your very best to God in worship this week.