

Holy Week - Wednesday

Scripture Reading

3And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head. 4There were some who said to themselves indignantly, "Why was the ointment wasted like that? 5For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they scolded her. 6But Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. 7For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me. 8She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. 9And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."

Mark 14:3-9

Devotional

At this point in Jesus' activities during Holy Week, we see Jesus reclining at a table in the house of Simon the leper. While Jesus is there, an unexpected event unfolds, but this time, Jesus is not the initiator. While Jesus is reclined at the table a woman comes to him, breaks an alabaster jar filled with ointment of pure nard, and pours it over Jesus' head. As the disciples watch the actions of the woman, they become annoyed. The disciples clearly know that there is a better way to use that ointment. The valuable ointment should have been sold and the profits given to the poor. Now, however, the oil has been wasted. If only the woman would have asked the disciples how she should handle the ointment, then it would have been put to good use. However, it is the disciples that Jesus rebukes and not the woman. In fact, Jesus proclaims that the woman has indeed anointed Jesus' body in preparation for his burial. The woman's actions are an important piece of Jesus' road to the cross.

In this passage, the disciples are looking at the ointment and the woman's actions. The disciples look at the ointment and see it as valuable. The ointment is worth over 300 denarii, which is almost a year's worth of wages. Therefore, the oil should be sold and proceeds given to the poor. So when the woman pours the ointment over Jesus' head it is wasted. The disciples become critical as they focus their eyes on the woman and the ointment. The woman, however, focuses her eyes and attention on Jesus. The woman brings her very expensive ointment to the most valuable one in the room, Jesus. The ointment could be sold for a great profit and used charitably, but instead the woman chooses to use her valuable ointment to anoint Jesus. The disciples are focusing on the ointment while the woman is focusing on Jesus. Where is your focus this Holy Week? Is it on the great things surrounding this Easter season, or is it on the one who made our Easter celebrations possible?

Response

Take some time to think through these questions:

-What is taking most of your focus during this season?

-How can you build some rhythms over the next few days to move your attention to God?

-Spend some time in prayer asking God to show you where your focus is and where needed move your focus back to God.

