

Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Mark 14:1-11 | Radical Generosity Vs. Demonic Betrayal
September 12, 2021

WELCOME:

- Please turn your Bibles to Mark 14:1-11
- Bibles in back—our gift to you.

REVIEW:

We are in our verse by verse study of the Gospel of Mark.

For the past three weeks, we have been learning about Eschatology—what will happen at the end of the world.

We have learned about the tribulation in the first century— along with the Great Tribulation to come.

We wrapped up Mark chapter 13 last Sunday studying the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the Rapture.

If you missed any of those sermons, please visit our website at River Bible dot ORG.

INTRODUCTION:

Today, we come to the longest chapter in Mark's Gospel—Mark chapter 14.

It has seventy-two verses—so for the next six hours, we'll be going through this text verse by verse.

When we started Mark's Gospel nearly a year and a half ago, we discussed how it was a Gospel of action.

Mark, our Gospel writer, writing through the power of the Holy Spirit, got most of his source material from Peter—who obviously is a man of action.

Mark's audience is the Romans—they are a people of action.

So as we move into chapter 14 today, we're not only going to see lots of action, but we'll also meet ~~many~~ ^{A few} different players and characters inside the action.

But—the action is different.

~~Jesus is no longer the one performing the action.~~

He is still the main focus of the narrative, but in chapter 14, something happens—Jesus is not the one performing the action—He is being acted upon.

By both friends and enemies.

There's a change in chapter 14 because it deals with the heart of the Gospel.

The heart of the Gospel is the key to salvation.

And the key to salvation—eternal life—is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

cf. 1 Corinthians 2:2—I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

So as we slowly move through Mark's Gospel—chapters 14-16—focus on the central theme of what it means to have a personal relationship with God—and that's the cross of Jesus Christ and His resurrection.

If there is no cross and Jesus did not walk out of His grave as He promised—then we all have a severe problem.

cf. 1 Corinthians 15:17—And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.

But as we know, Christ was raised—and God the Father, raising God the Son is proof that propitiation has been satisfied.

Propitiation—God's wrath for your sin has been satisfied through the person and work of Jesus.

↳ sin must be paid for.

So in today's narrative, we have a story within a story.

Mark likes to sandwich ^{two} these stories together to make a point. — several times

What's Mark's point today? Let's find out!

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE: Mark 14:1-11 CSB

Mark 14:1—It was two days before the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a cunning way to arrest Jesus and kill him.

Mark 14:2— "Not during the festival," they said, "so that there won't be a riot among the people."

Mark 14:3—While he was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper,, as he was reclining at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured it on his head.

Mark 14:4— But some were expressing indignation to one another: "Why has this perfume been wasted?"

- + **Mark 14:5**— For this perfume might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and given to the poor." And they began to scold her.
- + **Mark 14:6**— Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. Why are you bothering her? She has done a noble thing for me.
- + **Mark 14:7**— You always have the poor with you, and you can do what is good for them whenever you want, but you do not always have me.
- + **Mark 14:8**— She has done what she could; she has anointed my body in advance for burial.
- + **Mark 14:9**— Truly I tell you, wherever the Gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her."
- + **Mark 14:10**— Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them.
- + **Mark 14:11**— And when they heard this, they were glad and promised to give him money. So he started looking for a good opportunity to betray him.
- + **PRAY:**
Open my eyes so that I may contemplate wondrous things from your instruction.
(Psalm 119:18)

EXEGESIS:

Mark 14:1—It was two days before the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a cunning way to arrest Jesus and kill him.

Mark tells us that this is two days before Passover—so this is still Wednesday.

Most likely Wednesday evening.

So as Jesus was teaching the Olivet Discourse—which is all of Mark chapter 13—Mark gives us glimpses into what the religious leaders were doing about the same time.

It was two days before the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread.

So let's begin this morning with a bit of history from the OT—this will put this passage in the correct context.

During the ^{middle} last part of the Exodus (chapters 7-12), God was demonstrating His power to Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

God initiated nine plagues upon them so far, and Pharaoh would still not release them from slavery.

Now, when I say a plague—And I'm not talking about COVID—I'm talking about God turning rivers into blood.

2) Frogs, 3) gnats, 4) flies, 5) death of livestock, 6) boils, 7) hail, 8) locusts, 9) darkness.

Well, the last plague was where the Angel of Death killed the firstborn son in Egypt.

↳ Another Sermon for Another Day

from the plague

To protect His people, God told them to smear the blood of lambs all over their front doors. Why?

So that the Angel of Death would pass over any home marked by blood—

In other words, the blood was a sign of life for the family.

And any home that was covered in blood escaped the judgment of God.

So, the firstborn son was “passed over” and spared.

That’s why the feast is called “Passover.”

Shortly after the episode of the Angel of Death— Pharaoh and the rest of the Egyptians start freaking out, begging the Jews to leave.

And leave in a hurry they did—millions of Jews.

They were in such a rush that the bread they were making for the trip didn’t have time to rise.

So, The Feast of Unleavened Bread is celebrated because of Israel’s rapid exodus from Egypt.

It’s a festival to remember that God saved them from slavery.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread lasts for seven days.

So that’s the context and background...

what they are celebrating in our text

+ *BACK TO*

Mark 14:1— The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a cunning way to arrest Jesus and kill him.

Now, remember Mark's Gospel is a Gospel of action; he uses as few words as possible.

And it sounds like this meeting is somewhat of a last-minute informal gathering. Matthew's Gospel gives us more detail...

In the Gospel of John... John's Gospel gives us more detail.

+ cf. **John 11:47**— So the chief priests and the Pharisees convened the Sanhedrin and were saying, "What are we going to do since this man is doing many signs?"

+ cf. **John 11:48**— If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

+ cf. **John 11:49**— One of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all!

+ cf. **John 11:50**— You're not considering that it is to your advantage that one man should die for the people rather than the whole nation perish."

+ cf. **John 11:53**— So from that day on they plotted to kill him.

So this is not a last-minute meeting...these men are conspiring, plotting, and scheming to murder Jesus of Nazareth.

+ **Mark 14:2**— "Not during the festival," they said, "so that there won't be a riot among the people."

Pause...Have you ever been on jury duty—a murder case?

Have you seen an episode or two of the TV show Law and Order?

What's the difference between murder and premeditated murder?

Premeditation means that the murderer thought about it and planned the whole thing out.

which means there is a heavier price to pay.

These religious leaders have been premeditating Jesus' murder for years—

This meeting is so premeditated!

And yet Jesus knows all this.

cf. Matthew 26:2—“You know that the Passover takes place after two days, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”

These men are as wicked and guilty as they come—and they're clothed in the garments of religion.

Their conspiracy contains two elements:

1. The first was to get Jesus away from the crowd so they could arrest him—
We'll see Judas provide that opportunity.
2. The second was not to murder Him during Passover.

Why? Murder is murder, right? No.

These religious leaders know that if Jesus is executed during Passover, His death takes on a new meaning.

If Jesus is murdered during Passover, the Jews will not remember Passover as God killing the firstborn Egyptian son and delivering Israel from slavery.

Instead, they'll remember Passover as God killing His only begotten son to deliver all mankind from the bondage of Satan and sin.

And that's God's sovereign plan.

The Jewish leaders think that they are in control, but they don't realize that God is using their own wickedness for His glory.

If Jesus had died at any time other than the Jewish Passover and in any other way than by crucifixion, there is no propitiation for your sin.

In other words, God's holy wrath for mankind's sin is not satisfied.

Which means that there is no reconciliation and no peace between you and a Holy God.

And that's awful news because it means our sins are not paid for, and we're all going to pay for those sins in a very real place called hell.

There are serious consequences if Jesus is not the Lamb of God.
Jesus had to die at the proper time and in the proper way—otherwise, He would just be another martyr.

So, the religious leader planned to wait until after Passover.

But, we're going to see the sovereign hand of Almighty God at work for the rest of Mark's Gospel.

The religious leaders may have been planning this murder for close to three years,

but their plans are certainly not going to divert God's sovereign plan for the redemption of all mankind that began back in Genesis 3:15.

Mark 14:3—While he was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured it on his head.

Two things before we dive into verse 3.

First, it appears that Mark takes a pretty abrupt turn here in this narrative—because we're now introduced to a new location with new people.

There is a reason for this...this is the beginning of the second story I mentioned.

Secondly, the placing of this event in Mark's Gospel is different in John's Gospel.

Some people will use this text to prove that the Bible is filled with mistakes and errors.

But the reality is that each Gospel writer has a different audience and theme.

In the Gospel of Mark, theological truth is more important than chronology.

And we're going to see this theological truth played out in light vs. darkness.

Worship vs. wickedness — Radical generosity vs. demonic betrayal.

X So let's take a look...

Mark 14:3—While he was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper,

Bethany is a small village just a few miles from Jerusalem.

Bethany is where Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha live.

This is probably where Jesus and the Disciples are staying for the week of Passover.

We meet a new person here in verse 3.

Simon the Leper.

Simon is obviously not a leper anymore.

If I were a bettin' man, I would guess that Jesus healed Simon from leprosy, and it's out of Simon's gratefulness that he's throwing a party in Jesus' honor for the healing.

So we have Simon, maybe Simon's wife and children.

We have The Twelve Disciples along with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. (John 12:1-3)

This is a big ordeal.

Continuing
Mark 14:3—as Jesus was reclining at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured it on his head.

John's Gospel tells us that this woman was Mary of Bethany.

This is not Mary, Jesus' mother and this is not Mary Magdalene.

~~Mary's sister was Martha, and her brother was Lazarus.~~

Mary is the one who seemed to be sitting at Jesus' feet listening to every word He said.

Mary loved Jesus.

Can't you just see her big beaming loving smile as she walks in with this jar of oil?

Mary of Bethany is so excited to anoint Jesus!

And she walks over to her Lord and Savior, and she does something unthinkable...

And she breaks the neck of the bottle and starts to pour it on Jesus' head.

Now, it's not uncommon to anoint someone with oil in the first century.

It was normal practice for the host to give you a few drops of oil.

But what was unheard of is to pour the oil all over Jesus as she did.

Verse four says that this oil was pure nard.

This oil comes from a plant in the Himalayas!

The Himalayas are a mountain range 3,000 miles away from Jerusalem—a 12-16 hour flight!

So all that to say, this oil was a very special family heirloom.

It has incredible sentimental value—

We also read that it was very costly— pure nard— meaning it's undiluted.

There is nothing mixed into the oil to make it go further, which makes it even more costly.

It's similar as to why you pay a premium for extra virgin olive oil vs. olive oil.

Notice that she broke the jar.

That beautiful vessel could never be used again—and it symbolizes the fullness of the gift.

The scene was dramatic and theatrical.

Jesus is not just anointed— but drenched and covered in the oil.

Now, let's pause here for a moment because we come to another discrepancy in the Gospels.

John's Gospel says Mary anointed Jesus' feet and then wiped them with her hair (John 12:3).

But Mark said she poured it on His head. So which is it?

Well, considering the volume of perfume that Mary had, it was both.

There's no discrepancy.

The Gospel writers are focusing on different aspects of the narrative for their particular audience and theme.

Both Gospels are true.

Secondly, it's easy to get this narrative mixed up with another story in Luke's Gospel where Jesus is eating with a Pharisee, and a prostitute comes in, sits at the feet of Jesus.

She is crying and begging for forgiveness and anoints Jesus' feet with perfume along with her tears and wipes his feet with her hair. (Luke 7:36-50)

That is a very different event that has similar characteristics.

Mark 14:4— But some were expressing indignation to one another, "Why has this perfume been wasted?"

John's Gospel identifies Judas as the spokesperson.

Some were expressing indignation—To be so angry that you are flaring out your nostrils.

Judas is not irritated—he is furious.

When the matador taunts the bull in a bullfight, the bull paws the ground, and his nostrils flare in anger.

That's the picture.

Oh no. It sounds like we have a church meeting gone south.

Why is Judas boiling and seething and fuming?

Because he's the treasurer of the Twelve—he's the money guy for the ministry.

Mark 14:4— "Why has this perfume been wasted?"

Mark 14:5— For this perfume might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they began to scold her.

We have an interesting insight here from John's Gospel—

cf. John 12:6— ^{Judas} He didn't say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief. He was in charge of the money-bag and would steal part of what was put in it.

Back to...

Mark 14:5— For this perfume might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they began to scold her.

Now, can you picture the look on Mary's face— after all of her closet friends start to yell at her?

A moment ago

She was so joyful to give this gift to Jesus, and now Judas and a few unnamed disciples are shaming her.

She is now mortified and humiliated. Why?

Because Judas thinks that Mary's gift is wasted on Jesus.

Judas acts if its his gift. - *his Money.*

He believes that all that money was squandered when it should have been given to the poor.

Why does Judas mention the poor?

On the night before Passover, it was customary to give a special offering for the poor (John 13:29).

Judas justifies his anger by saying, "*in the veil of god seeds.*" ***it might have been sold.***

So Judas pulls out his calculator and starts to tally up Mary's waste of ministry resources.

wow.
Judas is the kind of guy who knows the price of everything and yet values nothing.

Judas knows precisely how much the oil's worth—

A year's salary. Wow, that is a lot of money.

Pause, in today's economy, Mary wasted \$25,000 to \$30,000 on Jesus at that moment.

Can't you just hear ministry leaders in today's church.

Bus ministry, children's ministry, pay off debt, AV team.

Can you identify with why Judas was so angry at Mary?

Mark 14:6—Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. Why are you bothering her? She has done a noble/wonderful/beautiful thing for me.

Jesus immediately comes to Mary's defense for two reasons.

First, because Mary's motive was pure.

She had no interior motive other than to bless Jesus.

It was out of her love for Jesus that she wanted to honor Him in this way.

Secondly, this was a loving response prompted by the Holy Spirit.

↳ get to that here in a moment

Mark 14:7— You always have the poor with you, and you can do what is good for them whenever you want, but you do not always have me.

Mark 14:8— She has done what she could; she has anointed my body in advance for burial.

Jesus had come to Jerusalem for a specific reason.

To be murdered at the hands of sinners.

Jesus told The Twelve several times but never grasped it until it was happening.

Mary, on the other hand, had a spiritual discernment that was lacking in the Disciples.

She heard Jesus say that He would die, and she believed in His resurrection.

How is that Mary believed and the others didn't?

When Mary's brother, Lazarus, died and Jesus showed up,

cf. John 11:32— *As soon as Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and told him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died!"*

And then, a few minutes later, Jesus commands Lazarus to walk out of the grave.

Mary knew what it was like to anoint a dead body. She just buried her brother.

Mark 14:8— *She has done what she could; she has anointed my body in advance for burial.*

The Twelve Disciples didn't catch the reality that Jesus would be murdered in two days.

But Mary knew, and because she believed, the Holy Spirit prompted her to do something extraordinary.

She has done what she could—

That's an interesting phrase by Jesus, isn't it?

In other words, Mary *did what she could* with what she had.

Somehow, somehow, Mary realized that when Jesus was murdered, she wouldn't be able to do anything.

So it's in this Holy Spirit moment, she did what she could.

This explains the passion of her devotion.

She blessed Jesus with such abandon; her friends couldn't understand her.

How different this story would be if Mary had gone up to Jesus and said, "**Here's one drop for your head, and here's two droplets for your feet!**"

Where's the love in that?

KEYPOINT 1:

There's no love in stinginess.

Secondly, why is this a Holy Spirit moment for Mary?

Most of the bodies of criminals were taken off the cross and thrown into the garbage dump.

However, Jesus' body was laid in a rich man's tomb.

But, Jesus was buried in such a hurry that He wasn't anointed in the typical Jewish fashion.

So, Mary's anointing was the only anointing He received.

That's why Jesus says...

She has anointed my body in advance for burial.

Keep in mind, Mary of Bethany did not go to the tomb with the other women on Sunday morning to anoint Jesus' body.

Why wasn't she there?

Because she knew Jesus would walk out of his grave, just like He told her.

Mark 14:9— *Truly I tell you, wherever the Gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.*"

Wow. Jesus went on to say something about Mary of Bethany, that he had not said about the Twelve Disciples.

Two thousand years later, we are still honoring Mary for her radical generosity of Jesus and her obedience to the Holy Spirit.

She gave Jesus everything—she didn't hold anything back.

Moving on...

Mark 14:10—Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them.

So we have a transition back to our first story.

Mark, our Gospel writer, sandwiched the light in between darkness.

It's out of this love and joy from Mary of Bethany that we see the dark contrast of Judas Iscariot.

Verse 10 points us back to vv. 1–2.

Mark 14:1—The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a cunning way to arrest Jesus and kill him.

Mark 14:10—Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them.

Judas enters the picture

Scripture teaches that all Twelve of the Disciples betrayed Jesus.

Most of them would do so out of fear.

premeditated

But Judas has been thinking about this for quite some time.

Note that Judas went to them.

They did not recruit Judas; ~~he came to them.~~

X

Mark 14:11— And when they heard this, they were glad and promised to give him money. So he started looking for a good opportunity to betray him.

The unexpected offer of Judas betraying Jesus was almost too good to believe.

The religious leaders would never go to the Disciples like this.

And yet, here's Judas, voluntarily offering to betray Jesus. Jesus—the Son of Man and the Son of God.

They must have thought that this was the hand of God—and in a way, it was.

But they couldn't see that.

They thought it was a perfect opportunity.

Remember, they originally wanted to wait until Passover had ended.

But they jumped all over it.

X

PREACH: *these two*
How does ~~the~~ narrative apply to you today?

Focus on Mary

KEYPOINT 2:

Does my devotion to Christ cost me anything?

How much devotion to your Lord Jesus is too much?

~~How much devotion to your Lord Jesus is too much?~~

A drop or two of very expensive oil is fine—but to break the whole jar?!

Oh Mary, you've lost your mind! There was no need to do that!

The practical question before us today is...

What jar are you willing to break at this point in your life with Jesus?

What has God laid on your heart that moves the needle one degree to go from generous to overwhelming generosity?

I think many of us can fall into three camps with this.

#1 Some of you are overwhelmingly generous.

In fact, you've broken too many bottles too quickly, and you can't understand why people are not doing the same.

When we break too many bottles, over time, we tend to become bitter and angry at others and at God because ~~we're giving ourselves, as Scripture says, and eventually we get tired of giving.~~

→ We get tired because we can't sustain it.

There's also a strange dichotomy....

The more we give, the more people ask us to give, because they know we won't say no.

For your own sanity, I would encourage you to seek the Lord's face and ask Him what the one bottle is He wants you to focus on and to throw the others away.

Secondly, some of us fall into the camp of giving the bare minimum.

You would never admit this, of course, because you consider yourself careful, cautious.

You don't like risk. You are pragmatic and practical.

The problem with all of this is that under the guise of these polite titles is that your controlling and you trust in yourself more than God.

And dear friend, I would encourage you to repent.

The third camp is not one of generosity at all, but instead, you're the one who expects to be anointed.

You expect people to be generous to you because you're special.

And if you believe the lie that you're special, you're easily offended when it comes to giving.

And at the slight chance when you do feel generous, it's always on your timeframe so that it doesn't inconvenience you.

And dear friend, I would encourage you to repent.

KEYPOINT 3:

Radical generosity unlocks the door to things only God can do.

Radical generosity is the link that shifts the culture from me, myself, and I to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Radical generosity creates stories that people remember forever.

Mark 14:8—*She has done what she could;*

Do you know that God has gifted you with abilities and talents that are specifically designed for you?

So the question becomes, are you currently using those abilities?

Are you giving up your plans and joining God in His?

The reason Jesus memorializes Mary of Bethany is because she revealed the heart of God.

The most radical form of Generosity is found in John 3:16—

cf. John 3:16—*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son.*

Dear friends, you will never ever out-give God.

PRAYER ROOM:

PRAYER:

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