RTS Women's Study: The Gospel of Mark
#29: Mark 14:1-11: What Will You Do with Jesus?

Intro: Jesus the Great Divider

I.   The Jewish Leaders: Blatant <u>Animosity</u> Towards Jesus (v.1-2)

   A. Animosity in Spite of the "Evidence"
   - By this time, the chief priests and scribes have been "watching" Jesus for three years
   - They had seen countless miracles and good deeds: healing the sick, feeding the 5000, raising the dead
   - Yet the text tells us they were seeking to "kill him"
   - Key point: people's belief/disbelief in Jesus is not dependent on "evidence"! Can you think of other places in the Bible where people had evidence and yet disbelieved?

   B. Animosity Driven by Desire for Power/Control
   - These religious rulers were ultimately concerned about their own power: "lest there be an uproar from the people"
   - This is a repeated theme throughout Mark: beware of valuing your own power and control over following Jesus
   - **Key point: If you are about controlling your own life, then when you meet Jesus your only choice is to declare war against him and try to destroy him.

II.   Judas Iscariot: Outward <u>Association</u> with Jesus (v.4-5, 10-11)

   A. Associations with Jesus Can Have a Veneer of Righteousness
   - People only outwardly associated with Jesus are not easy to spot
     - Don't assume you would have been able to predict Judas' betrayal
     - None of the other disciples saw it coming; when Jesus said one would betray him, they all thought it might be them!
   - Judas seemed to be concerned for the poor
     - Other Gospels tells us that it was Judas that made this objection: "Why was the ointment wasted like that?"
     - But notice this objection was merely about an *idea* (helping the poor), and not about a *person* (Jesus himself)
     - **Judas's relationship with Jesus was remarkably *impersonal*

   B. Associations with Jesus are Inevitably About One's Self
   - We learn elsewhere that Judas was the keeper of the money for the disciples and would often steal from it. So, he wanted this ointment so he could sell it and keep the money for himself!

- Judas' association with Jesus was inherently tentative and temporary. As long as it benefited him, he would stick around. But, if it got costly, he would leave.
- Key Point: If you follow Jesus only outwardly it will never last. As soon as it gets difficult, that is not enough to keep you committed.

Diagnostic question: Are you passionate about a *cause*, or are you passionate about a *person*?

III.   The Woman: Deep Affection for Jesus (v.3, 6-9)

    A. Affection that is Sacrificial
- Alabaster jar of perfume was very expensive; worth a whole year's wages!
- Her sacrifice was full and complete; she gave everything she had.

    B. Affection that Endures Opposition
- We are told that the disciples "rebuked her harshly" (v.5)
- Key point: People will support your religious life as long as it's not "extreme" (in their eyes). But as soon as you do something radical for God you will be opposed, sometime even by people inside the church!

    C. Affection That Has Theological Understanding
- The woman's affections weren't just emotional; they weren't just drummed up feelings
- Her affections were rooted in her belief that Jesus was headed to the cross to die, and she was preparing his body for burial (v.8)
- Key point: All the other disciples had resisted the mission of Jesus to suffer, yet this woman believes Jesus's mission of suffering and embraces it!

Discussion Groups

1. Diagnostic question: Are you involved in the church because of a righteous *cause* (e.g., helping the poor), or because of a righteous *person* (Jesus himself)? Why is it so important that it be the latter and not the former?
2. What would it look like in your life to be deeply sacrificial like this woman? Think of specific examples of how that might play out in your situation.
3. Why is it important that our affection for Christ be driven by theological understanding? Do you think most people operate like that? Why not?