



Questions for this week's at home Connect Groups
November 18, 2020
"The Gift"

Gospel Lesson: Matthew 26:1-13

When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, ² "As you know, the Passover is two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."

³ Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, ⁴ and they schemed to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. ⁵ "But not during the festival," they said, "or there may be a riot among the people."

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."

Warm Up – *What were some "aha!" moments (points or statements that really engaged your head or your heart) from Sunday's sermon?*

1. Christmas is coming, if you had a year's salary to spend on a single gift what would you buy and for whom?

Study the Scriptures – Matthew 26:1-13

2. Read the Matthew text for today but also the fuller account from the Gospel of John. “Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ²Here a dinner was given in Jesus’ honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. ³Then Mary took about a pint^[a] 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.⁴But 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.” ⁶He 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. ⁸You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.”⁹Meanwhile 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. ¹⁰So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, ¹¹for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him.” What parts does John fill in concerning Matthew’s account? What differences are there? Talk about the fact that God shared Jesus with us through four eyewitness accounts? What challenges might that pose, what strengths do you see?

3. (verses 1-5) Why do you think God and Christ chose Passover as the time when Jesus would die? Discuss the historical details of Passover and the ongoing impact that event had for us.

4. (verses 8-10) From a “monetary” standpoint and putting the best construction on their words what were the disciples trying to do and say when they were indignant at Mary?

5. Was Jesus bad at stewardship of the churches’ money and did he dislike poor people? Consider the following passages from Matthew;

- a. ⁵The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.
Matthew 11:5,
- b. ²¹ Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me. *Matthew 19:21*

6. What is Jesus teaching the disciples about priorities?

7. (verse 12) Why is the context for what Mary does appropriate?

Bringing it Home

- 8. Matthew shares this story as a bit of confession. How do we easily let our priorities slip? During Covid? At Christmas time?
- 9. Consider your priorities and acts of praise for Christ. In the coming week how can you "anoint" Jesus feet and head with perfume in what you do...say...act...and give?