

Daily Bible Study

“Plotting & Preparation”

Mark 14:1-9

October 14 –20, 2012

THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY –As we return to our study of Mark, this week we move along and enter **chapter 14** as we begin to close out this record of our Lord’s life and ministry as recorded in this Gospel. Our text will be **Mark 14:1-9**. We see in the opening verses of this chapter both a *Plot & Preparation*; the former from the Lord’s enemies and the latter from one of His friends. It is interesting to see the connections in Jesus teaching of **chapter 13** and the events carried out in **chapter 14**. One connection we see at the very start of our text. We saw in **chapter 13** Jesus speaking of God the Father’s Sovereign Providential control of everything including the timing of events and now we see that was not understood and believed by the religious leaders. Another connection is the *Call to Watchfulness* given by Jesus in **chapter 13** which we find Jesus doing but the disciples already not. We will see these things and more as we move along. Let’s now look at the text: **Mark 14:1-9**: *“After two days it was the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery and put Him to death. But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people. And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head. But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, “Why was this fragrant oil wasted? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.” And they criticized her sharply. But Jesus said, “Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.”*

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, teach me from Your Word as I study this piece of Scripture.*

TUESDAY – **Mark 14:1-2**: *“After two days it was the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery and put Him to death. But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people.”* We previously mentioned the connection between **chapters 13 and 14**. In **Mark 13:32** Jesus said, *“But of that day or that hour no one knows....”* He knew that His times were in the Father’s hand and control (**Psalms 31:15**). But as we read, *the chief priests and the scribes* seemed to have been of the opinion that they themselves were in control, and that they had the

power to determine the day of Christ's death. The very plot for Jesus' arrest and death which we see here gives a deeper meaning to all of Jesus warnings to be *watchful*. He had entered Jerusalem to the '*Hosanna*' cries and a confident celebration of Israel's future. Now, however, Passover is upon them, the feast which reminded God's people of the awful cost of sin, as the angel of the Lord brought death to the Egyptian first-born, and reminded them of their deliverance found in obedience to God by trusting and turning to Him by placing the blood of sacrificial lambs on the door frames of the homes which served as a picture of their covering and protection from Divine penalty. God's people are saved by the death of the Passover Lamb. The interesting reminder to us of God's Sovereign Power is that the leaders didn't want to have Jesus killed during Passover, They said, "*Not during the feast...*" but that is exactly what God had happen as Jesus also echoed that "*this was His hour*".

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, thank You for being in total control of all things including the plotting of sinful men. Thank You for loving Your people & having and carrying out Your plan.

WEDNESDAY – Mark 14:3: "*And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head.*" Mark interrupts the story of the plotting of the religious leaders to kill Jesus and brings us some information concerning Jesus at a man's home in Bethany. Mark uses this literary technique in his writing and we will see what he has to say concerning the Lord Jesus and these events does in fact relate to the broader narrative. We will read now of Jesus, the true Passover Lamb, being "prepared" for sacrifice. This story is recorded in three Gospels. **John 12:1–8** the most detailed with 142 words in the original. Our text, **Mark 14:3-9** is next, with 124 words. The shortest is **Matthew 26:6–13** with only 109 words. The among the differences are: *a.* the woman broke the jar; *b.* the perfume could have been sold for more than a year's wages; *c.* the disciples were grumbling at the woman; *d.* the woman who anointed Jesus was Mary (obviously the sister of Martha and of Lazarus; see **Mark 11:1** and **Luke 10:42**); *e.* she anointed Jesus' feet, which she afterward wiped with her hair; *f.* the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment; and *g.* it was Judas who, for selfish reasons, took the lead in finding fault with Mary. In telling the story Mark goes back a few days, from the Tuesday of **verses 1-2** to the preceding Saturday evening, when a supper was given at Bethany in honor of Jesus. It is interesting how Divinely inspired Scripture was written and many have guessed as to why **verses 3-9** are placed where they are in Marks record. Truly God shows His grace in Christ and His upcoming sacrifice for sinners in the middle of this record of human sin and depravity (**verses 1-2** and **10**). We find Jesus was *at the house of Simon the leper...* We know there at least fifteen men there: Jesus, The Twelve, Lazarus (**John 12:2**), and a certain Simon, mentioned here and in **Matthew 26:6**. Maybe the meal was set up to honor and thank the Lord who had raised Lazarus from the dead and possibly had healed Simon, who could not have been allowed to host a meal if he was still leprous. It was at the home of Simon that the dinner was given and Martha and Mary, Lazarus sisters were serving (**John 12:2**). But the main attraction is Jesus, always the friend of sinners.

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, thank You for Your grace which stands in stark contrast to my sin. Thank You Jesus for loving me and for being my friend as an unworthy depraved sinner.

THURSDAY – Mark 14:3-5: “*And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head. But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, “Why was this fragrant oil wasted? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.” And they criticized her sharply.*” As the guests were *sat at the table* we read that a woman came who we know is Mary of Bethany (**John 12:3**). Her *alabaster flask* (a translucent white bottle which in and of itself was of value) contained a *very costly oil of spikenard*. The perfume had been extracted from dried root leaves of a very rare plant. The jar contained a lot of this perfume as we learn **John 12:3**, not less than a Roman pound (twelve ounces). Guests in this culture ate as they reclined on low couches. They lay on the couch resting on the left elbow and using the right hand to take their food. Anyone coming up to those who were lying like this would stand well above them. It is from this position that Mary breaks the jar and pours its contents down or out over Jesus. According to Matthew and Mark she pours the perfume out upon or over his *head* (**Psalms 23:5**); according to John she anoints his *feet*. There is no conflict here for both Matthew and Mark indicate the perfume was poured over Jesus *body*. While it was customary to pour a few drops of perfume on a guest upon arrival at a house or when he sat down to a meal evidently there was enough nard for Jesus entire body. John says the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. Along with the perfume we see Mary pours out her heart in love, gratitude and devotion to Jesus. As we read on we find there *were some who were indignant...* Always there will be critics and criticism against and toward the nature of genuine love, faith and trust in Jesus. The Greek text indicates they were not merely a bit upset but actually irate and furious upon witnessing this incident. They didn’t realize they were witnessing the preparation of The Passover Lamb of Glory. Instead, they *criticized her sharply* (harsh and angry reproof).

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me to love Jesus and express it in the manner illustrated here by Mary. Thank You Jesus for being so patient with critics and selfish angry sinners.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY –Mark 14:6-9: “*But Jesus said, “Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.”* Our text today begins with such a wonderful two words... *But Jesus...* remember we are seeing a contrast in this broader text between man and his sin and God and His perfection and grace. To the question, *Why was this fragrant oil wasted?* Jesus answers, *She has done a good work for Me.* She did a ***kalos*** in Greek; a work which was “beautiful, fine, excellent, one that there shall be no room for blame, honorable”. Jesus goes on

to say something in reference to the poor that is often misunderstood. He says, *For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always.* Jesus is not saying that being benevolent to the poor is unnecessary but rather He is saying they will ALWAYS be here, there will always be needs to take care of and He is about to be done with His ministry and therefore Mary's act was also beautiful in its timeliness. We must learn to never putt off working for Jesus, whatever the work may be (**Romans 13:11-14**), the time may be far shorter for us then we plan. The next phrase of Christ is loaded; *She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial.* Lord willing, when we preach the text concerning Jesus burial, we will see some of the details concerning our Lord's death and burial and how things would be done in manner so that prophecies of Sacred Scripture would be fulfilled. In the haste surrounding Jesus burial, you will remember that He was not anointed fully (the women were coming to do that on Resurrection morning) so this anointing was the one Jesus received in preparation for burial. What is especially interesting in the response of our Lord is the emphatic way in which Jesus defends Mary and apparently ends the "dinner conversation". *Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.* Jesus would not let the world forget this act of devotion, love, and sacrifice that these disgruntled dinner guests just witnessed. What Mary did (not the ointment per se but the gesture of sacrifice and love) we should see and strive to emulate. While Mary received the Lord's everlasting praise we move along in the text and find that one of the grumblers, Judas, received money from the Jewish leaders and he now looks for an opportunity to betray Christ. Finally, we must be careful to not get lost sitting here admiring Mary's beautiful deed. What she did was only a reflection of the Jesus own kindness toward her; His saving grace and mercy, and His tenderness in her defense. He is the real hero. His hour of incomparable suffering was almost here yet so deeply does He love his own (**John 13:1**) His heart went out to her amidst unjust criticism. What a Savior.

Suggestion for Prayer: *Glory be to The Father, and to The Son, and to The Holy Ghost. Thank You for being the only true, just, loving, graceful, merciful. and loving God ! Help me to serve and love you as I should.*