

## Mark 14:1-31

Every Jewish male was required to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem every year for Passover (Deuteronomy 16:5-6) -- in addition to the festivals of Pentecost and Tabernacles. **What do you think Jerusalem must have looked like at this time?** Congestion! Mobs of people choked the city. One writer claimed that the population of Jerusalem swelled from 50,000 to 250,000.

**Why do you think God would require the Jewish men to journey to Jerusalem for three festivals every year?** So they would remember what God had done. It would be easy to stay home and get lazy and/or be apathetic. He knew the Jews' track record when it came to remembering. **What do we do to remember God's goodness to us?** For one, we celebrate communion on a periodic basis.

**The Jewish leaders resolved to kill Jesus but why not during the festival (vv. 1-2)?** Jesus enjoyed a large popular following among the Jews. So, the religious leaders wanted to avoid a riot which was certain to happen if they executed Him at this time....or so they thought. They wanted to postpone further confrontation with Jesus until after the festival when the pilgrims would have returned to their homes<sup>1</sup> but Judas' unexpected offer (vv. 10-11) expedited matters. Thus, God's timetable ended up being followed.<sup>2</sup>

**Who was the woman that anointed Jesus with perfume (v. 3)?** John's account of this incident (John 12:1-8) tells us that this was Mary of Bethany, the sister of Lazarus and Martha. **What does this incident tell us about Mary?** This was an extravagant display of worship, love and devotion to Jesus accompanied no doubt by a pure heart.

**What was the reaction of some of the spectators (vv. 4-5)?** They criticized her sharply. They looked at the oil poured on Jesus' head and considered it wasted. **How did Jesus respond (vv. 6-9)?** He rebuked them. Some thought this extravagant anointing with oil was a waste, but Jesus received it positively - as a good work.

**What was the result of her act of worship and devotion (v. 9)?** She was memorialized. Her story was written in the Bible for millions to read. The disciples longed for fame and influence; they were jockeying for position and prestige (10:35-37), but this woman is the one who found an enduring memorial not by wanting it or trying hard, but simply by loving Jesus and serving Him with a pure heart. The Lord wants our hearts above all.

**What can we do - what act of worship/devotion - to be looked upon favorably by God like Mary was?** Obtaining God's approval is not a matter of what we *do*. It is a matter of the heart. Psalms 51:16-17 "*You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart.*" Any act of devotion, if done with a broken and contrite heart, is looked upon by God in the same light as Mary's.

**What was Jesus' next directive in response to the disciples' question (vv. 13-15)?** Find us a place to celebrate the Passover. Look for a man carrying a jar of water and he will lead you to the place. **A man carrying a jar of water was an unusual sight (v. 13).** Why? Women usually carried jars of water. Men carried wineskins. So, a man carrying a jar of water would be a distinctive sign to the disciples. They couldn't miss him.

**While eating the Passover meal, Jesus broke what startling news (v. 18)?** One of you is going to betray Me. The disciples had heard many surprising things from Jesus, but certainly this must have been one of the most surprising. Not one of them suspected Judas, and the idea that one of them would betray Jesus must have seemed absurd. His announcement gave the betrayer an opportunity to repent.

On the one hand, "*the Son of Man will go*," that is, to the Cross (8:31). He must die, in fulfillment of Scripture (e.g. Psalms 22; Isaiah 53). His death was according to God's plan not simply because of the betrayer's action. **But on the other hand, what is the verdict on the betrayer (v. 21)?** Woe to that man, through whom the Son of Man is being betrayed. Such an awful destiny awaited him that it would have been better for him if he had not been born. Though he acted within God's plan, the betrayer remained morally responsible for his actions.

**What did Jesus do at the Last Supper (vv. 22-24)?** In addition to introducing the ordinance of communion, He introduced the New Covenant. This expression of God's grace replaced the Old Covenant (the Mosaic Law, the Ten Commandments), which had been a way of life for the Jews for 1,500 years.

Jesus spoke about literal things—the bread, wine, His physical body and blood—but He spoke about them in a figurative, symbolic sense (John 8:12; 10:7, 9). The verb “is” means “represents.” Jesus was physically present as He spoke these words, so the disciples did not literally eat His body or drink His blood, something detestable to Jews anyway (Leviticus 17:10-14).

Just as sacrificial blood ratified the Old (Mosaic) Covenant at Sinai (Exodus 24:6-8), so Jesus' blood shed at the Cross inaugurated the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:8-13). This Covenant promises forgiveness of sins and fellowship with God through the indwelling Spirit to those who come to God by faith in Jesus.<sup>3</sup>

**Do the Ten Commandments have any purpose in our lives today?** They serve as a moral guide; not as a requirement to win the approval of God. Perhaps most importantly, they reveal the heart of God – things that are important to God. The way we live our lives in relationship with people and with God is important to Him.

**Why do we take communion? What is the purpose of this ordinance?** To remember the sacrifice Jesus made for our sins: “*Do this in remembrance of me*” (1 Corinthians 11:24-25). To commemorate the establishment of the New Covenant. Like the Jews, we have a tendency to forget.

**They next went to the Mount of Olives. What would happen there (vv. 26-31)?** Our Lord knew that His time had now come when he must be delivered into the hands of his enemies. He is marching to the Cross. He wasn't hiding or evading the authorities.

**What did Jesus prophecy to His disciples (v. 27)?** They would all fall away. This was not the first time Jesus warned Peter and the other disciples that they would forsake Him. But He graciously assured them that He would not disown them; after rising from the dead, He would be waiting for them in Galilee.<sup>4</sup>

**Why did they all fall away? Was it a faith issue?** No, it was a courage issue – they were afraid. **What did Jesus tell them that would give them reason to hope (v. 28)?** He would rise.

**How did Peter respond (vv. 29-31)?** “No way am I bailing out on You! Even if I have to die.” Peter wasn't the only one to make that noisy boast. They all engaged in brash, self-confident claims. Let us never forget that we are no different. We must all learn the cowardice and weakness of our hearts.<sup>5</sup>

**What does this response tell us about Peter?** He was devoted and passionate...but clueless. Peter only knew how he felt at the moment, and at the moment he felt pretty brave. He knew nothing of the spiritual battle that lay ahead. He overestimated his own courage and boldness while underestimating the power of the enemy. Peter did not know how weak he was. His courage and boldness, when it came to crunch time, failed him.

Like Peter, we must all learn the lesson that self-confidence leads to humiliation. We must learn to distrust self and to lean completely on the power of God.<sup>6</sup>

**When we face our battles, what help do we have that Peter didn't?** The power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). Peter was operating in his own strength.

**Like Peter, how do you fill in the blank.....I will never \_\_\_\_?**

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Mark, 2020 Edition, (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 277

<sup>2</sup> Grassmick, J. D. (1985). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament* (p. 174). Wheaton: Victor Books

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 175

<sup>4</sup> MacDonald, W. (1995). *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. (A. Farstad, Ed.) (p. 1358). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1361.