

# A Woman Anoints Jesus with Oil

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 29 September 2024

Preacher: Nathan Rambeck

[ 0 : 00 ] Well, we'll open up our Bibles to the book of Mark, and we're in Mark chapter 14. And let me get myself all set up, but while I do that, we just spent seven weeks in Mark chapter 13.

It was more than I was expecting, but there's a lot of detail in there and a lot of, I don't know, disagreements and controversies around the end times.

So I wanted to make sure we spent plenty of time on that all of it discourse when Jesus talks about the end time. But I am glad that we're finally through with that and we get to move on.

And there's only, what, 14, 15, 16. There's only three chapters left in the book of Mark. And these last three chapters really span just two days, two days or so.

I guess the last few verses of chapter 16 are a little bit past that. But we're going to be looking at the last two days before Jesus is killed and crucified on the cross for our sins.

[ 1 : 04 ] What we're going to do, and I'll just do a quick overview. We're going to be looking at the context of the Passover feast because that's what's coming up. And this is a feast for Israel in Jerusalem, which is where Jesus is at at this time with his disciples.

We're going to look more at the details of what this Passover feast is all about. We're going to be considering there's a plot to kill Jesus. We'll look at that in some detail.

And then there's this account of this woman who wastes, it seems, some very expensive oil by pouring it on Jesus' head.

And there's some controversy, some conflict, some dispute about that and whether that was a good thing to do or a bad thing to do. And Jesus has something to say about that.

And then what we're going to do at the end is kind of tie that in as part of this plot to kill Jesus. And there's a certain person, part of Jesus' group, part of his disciples, a man who's become quite famous to anybody, Christians and non-Christians alike, Judas, who betrayed Jesus.

[ 2 : 15 ] And we'll be getting into that in future weeks. But what we'll do is we're just going to read verses 1 through, let's go through 11 because I think that's what we'll try to get through today.

So Mark chapter 14 verses 1 through 11, let's read. 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 300 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.

[ 3 : 26 ] But me, you do not always have. 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.

Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray him to them. And when they heard it, they were glad and promised to give him money. And so he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

There's an interesting passage in here because we've got what actually some scholars call a Markian sandwich. That's funny. It sounds delicious, right? But Mark tends to do this thing as he writes the historical account of Jesus.

He'll actually take a story, one account, and like squeeze it between another account. So it'll start with one thing that's happening and then kind of transition to something else and then go back to that same account.

You see that at least half a dozen times in the Gospel of Mark. But so the first part of the sandwich, that top piece of bread, is about the plot to kill Jesus and then it transitions to this woman anointing Jesus and then it goes back to the plot to kill Jesus and Judas' involvement.

[ 4 : 51 ] But let's start with verse one here. So after two days, it was the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Now that's kind of strange the way that that's read. That's a very literal translation. I'm in the New King James, but really it's, I think, easier in English.

Instead of saying after two days, it was Passover because that seems to mean, well, it's Passover now and it's been two days. But really what it's saying is it's two days away. It's two days away and I think like the NASB says that explicitly, the ESV has a little bit easier reading on that text.

But in two days, so two days from now, it says that there is this Passover, the Feast and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Those are actually two different feasts, two different events, but they really coincided together.

The Passover was a single feast on a single day in which the Passover lamb was sacrificed and then people would eat it for their meal. It was like a barbecue. But it was something that was prescribed in the law of Moses and the Jews were told to do this, to sacrifice the Passover lamb and eat it.

And it was a Sabbath day. So it was a day of rest and feasting. And it was to commemorate what? There was an event that had happened with the Jews many, many years before.

[ 6 : 16 ] And it was that time in which they were enslaved, right, by the Egyptians. And Moses, their deliverer, came and there was a final plague.

Remember there was the ten plagues? And what was the final one? It was the death angel who came and killed the firstborn of every human and animal family.

And God told the Israelites that if they would sacrifice a lamb and put the blood of that lamb on their doorpost, that they would be rescued or saved from the plague of the death angel.

And so this Passover feast was prescribed in the law of Moses as a way to commemorate that and God's salvation of Israel from the Egyptians.

And then also prescribed was this feast of unleavened bread. And that feast was seven days long. And it started on the same day as the Passover and ended a week later.

[ 7 : 19 ] And that whole week was a Sabbath week. You were supposed to rest. You were supposed to feast. And so these two things would go together. And so many people would come to Jerusalem because this is where sacrifices had to be made.

You couldn't just make your sacrifice in your backyard as a Jew. You had to do the sacrifices where? At the temple. The temple was the only place you were allowed to offer the sacrifices. And so many, many people would come to Jerusalem during this time. And so there is a ton of people there in Jerusalem during this time.

It says, After two days it was the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might take him by trickery and put him to death. So there's this plot to kill Jesus.

And who are the ones that are part of this plot? Is it some gang of thieves and robbers? No, these are the leaders of Israel. The ones who are in charge.

[ 8 : 25 ] The ones who the people look up to. As the ones to lead them and guide them. And what's in the law? And how should we practice our faith? And they are the ones. The term used for this group of people is the Sanhedrin.

And it included the priests, the chief priests, the scribes, Pharisees, teachers of the law. And these are the ones looking and plotting to kill Jesus.

And why? We've talked about this before. But just to reiterate, just to review. Was it from a godly motivation? Because they were concerned for the people? Concerned for their religion?

Let's actually turn to John 11. We're actually going to look today, as we read through these passages, at some parallels in the book of John.

John chapter 11 and John chapter 12. So keep your finger in Mark 14. And a bookmark there in John 11 and 12. John 11 and let's see.

[ 9 : 28 ] This is right after Jesus raises somebody from the dead. Do you remember the story of Lazarus? Lazarus was a friend of Jesus. And he was sick and they asked him to come.

And before he could arrive, Lazarus dies. And he's decaying in a tomb. And Jesus goes to the tomb and he says, Lazarus, come forth. And Lazarus wakes up from death.

And he's raised from the dead. And it caused quite a stir. But it actually caused certain people to become very upset and angry. And again, these Jewish leaders.

And so, let me see. Where do we want to look here? John chapter 11. I want to specifically look at verse 48. But where do we start? Like, verse 45.

Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary and had seen the things Jesus did believed in him. So many believed because of what they saw. But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things that Jesus did. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, What shall we do?

[ 10 : 32 ] For this man works many signs. If we let him alone like this, everyone will believe in him. And the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.

And this speaks to their motivation. Jesus is drawing people towards him. And hey, we're going to lose our spot. We're going to lose our power. We're going to lose our privilege.

These Romans, the ones who are basically giving us this privilege, power. And just as a reminder, during this time in Israel, it wasn't the Israelites who were in charge.

They had roles. There were certain people put in place. We would call them today puppets. King Herod was just a puppet of the Roman Empire. And so, really, it was the Romans who were in charge.

And any freedoms they gave to the Jewish people to practice their law and their sacrifices and their religion was at the behest, was at the privilege of whatever the Romans allowed them to do.

[ 11 : 33 ] And so, their concern was for themselves, the power that they had, and for their nation. And so, back to Mark chapter 14 here, this is their plan.

They sought that they might take him by trickery and put him to death. So, they had to do something on the sly. They couldn't just do something out in the open on solid legal grounds because they didn't really have solid legal grounds.

Jesus had a lot of support from many of the people who were in Jerusalem at the time. And so, one of the things we'll find out as we go along is that they actually recruited people to give false testimony about Jesus and what he did.

And we see that in our day, don't we? People who want a certain court case to go their way so they will find people who are willing to lie on their behalf so they can get their way.

Sometimes we see that in movies, but it happens in real life as well. But then they said this, verse 2, but they said, Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people.

[ 12 : 45 ] And so, there was this concern that if they did this during the feast, and remember again, this feast is seven days long, that they're going to cause an uproar. They don't want to, they don't want things to get out of hand, out of control.

And why would they be concerned about that? I mean, a few people might get upset, but who cares? Right? Just, they can deal with it. Well, the reason is because at this time, in Jerusalem especially, there's like a powder keg situation going on.

If you think of a powder keg, all it takes is one little spark, and the whole thing can just blow up into smithereens. You see, there's a lot of Jews who don't like the Romans being in charge.

And remember that this is a week where they're celebrating the Passover, a week in which they're celebrating a time where they were set free from oppression, from bondage. And so, this is on people's minds.

We were set free from Egyptian bondage, but we're still under these Romans who are oppressing us and preventing us from having our own nation and practicing our religion, you know, exactly as we want to or even should.

[ 14 : 00 ] There's an interesting account around this time, probably about a dozen years after this time period.

But it kind of would provide an illustration of what things are like. This happened in 49 AD. This is an account written by Josephus.

Josephus was a Jew who was conquered. He actually wrote a history. Israel, or excuse me, Jerusalem was conquered by Rome and completely destroyed in 70 AD.

That's probably about 20 years, 40 years, about a generation after Jesus' crucifixion. And Josephus was part of that war and ended up losing.

But the Romans had favor on him for some reason. I can't remember the details. But he ended up becoming a historian for the Romans to describe the history of the Jews.

[15:02] And so, he wrote several books that we have today. But he writes this account, and I'm just going to quote from here, about something that happened during this feast. And it kind of shows you what the tension is like.

Because during this feast, they would actually have extra soldiers come to, extra Roman soldiers come to Jerusalem because of how tense things could be. But this is what Josephus says.

But on the fourth day of the feast, a certain soldier let down his breeches and exposed his privy members to the multitude, which put those that saw him into a furious rage and made them cry out that this impious action was not done to approach them or reproach them, but God himself.

And so, and one of the things that makes me think of, right, is, do, is it just in our day where people do immature and childish things because of politics?

No. So, evidently, there was this Roman soldier, and he decided that he's going to offend the Jewish people. And with all these people during this time of the Passover, and it causes people to become furious that he would do something like that.

[16:27] And what ends up happening is a riot forms, and by the end of this riot, 20,000 people had been killed. 20,000 people. And so you can see just one little act, one little offense, can cause a huge amount of death.

And it's later on, and we see kind of how this ends out later on. Like I mentioned in 70 A.D., it got so tense, the Romans were so finished with the Jewish revolting and rioting that they decided we're just going to destroy the entire city.

And so they came in in 70 A.D. and just decimated the whole city, turned the whole city upside down, burned it to the ground, destroyed the temple, everything. And over a million Jewish people were killed in that, a million.

So, anyway, just some details to describe kind of what the situation is there. They don't want to cause that powder keg to go off.

So they're trying to be careful. They want to go after Jesus, but they have to be careful about it.

Then it transitions here in verse 3 to this event that happens with Jesus in the little town of Bethany, which is right next to Jerusalem.

[17:47] 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. And so they're in Bethany, which is again right next door.

And he's at a man named Simon's house who probably is not a leper now because otherwise they wouldn't probably be there, right, if he has leprosy.

You don't hang out at somebody's house where they have leprosy. But this is very likely somebody that Jesus healed, right? And he was a leper and Jesus healed him, and he's having him over to his house.

There is some confusion about this particular story. And there's actually a story like this in all four Gospels, in Matthew, in Mark, in Luke, and in John.

And it's caused some confusion as people read this as to, are these the same story? Because some of the details just do not match up. And so, you know, what does that say about the veracity, about the truth of these accounts?

[18:59] Did they really happen? Did people just make them up? In the book of Luke, there's an account that is similar, but this one happens in Galilee.

That's way north of here. And it happens much earlier on about a woman who comes, and she takes some oil, and she actually washes Jesus' feet with the oil, and then uses her hair to wash his feet.

Is this the same account, or is this a different account? It seems pretty clear that that's a very different account.

Now, why would a woman do almost the exact same thing? Well, it's actually because this was somewhat of a custom. If you had somebody come who was somebody of honor, somebody, maybe a dignitary, or maybe, you know, a patriarch in the family, or something like that, it was common to honor them by anointing them with oil in some kind of way.

So I think that explains why you might see two accounts that are similar of a woman coming to anoint Jesus. But in this case, the one in Luke, which, by the way, if you want to look it up, it's in Luke chapter 7, this woman, Jesus is criticized because they say, well, she's a sinner.

[ 20 : 20 ] And why are you allowing a sinner to touch you? And by a sinner, if it's a woman, it's almost certainly that she was a prostitute. But she came, and this was a lesson, as you read through that passage, this was a lesson about forgiveness.

And those who are forgiven much, they love much. So this is a woman, a prostitute, who found forgiveness through Jesus. And because of that, her love for him was expressed in this honoring that she did by anointing and washing his feet with her hair.

But we see similar accounts that align with the same time period. It's this last week before Passover, in Mark, or excuse me, in Mark, which we're reading in Matthew and in the book of John. The account in Matthew is almost word for word the same as Mark. So we won't necessarily look at that. You can look at that later if you'd like to compare. But let's go and look at John's account in John chapter 12.

And we're going to read this and see what the similarities are and talk about them just briefly. John chapter 12, verse 1.

[ 21 : 28 ] Then six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom he had raised from the dead. Now notice here, six days.

When we read Mark, what did it say? It was two days before Passover. So there's a time difference there. What's going on? Therefore they made him a supper and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with him.

So we've got some extra characters in here that we don't read in Mark. Lazarus, Mary, Martha. And by the way, these three were brothers and sisters. Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil, a spikenard.

So it's the same kind of oil, also very costly. But this time we get a name. This is Mary, a friend of Jesus and one of these three siblings. She anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair and the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

One of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray him, said, why was this fragrant oil not sold for 300 denarii and given to the poor? Here's another detail that we don't get from Mark.

[ 22 : 33 ] There's this outrage at the waste here, but we have a name now. At least one, the primary one, was Judas. This he said, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief and had the money box and he used it to take what was put in.

But Jesus said, let her alone. She has kept this for the day of my burial. For the poor, you will always have with you. Or you have with you always, but me, you do not always have. And so you can see the similarities there, but just a bit more detail.

Well, some people have asked the question, well, one says this happened two days before the Passover and John says it happened six days. So what is going on? Is this a contradiction in the Bible? And I think we should take these kinds of things seriously.

Now, some have said, well, this is actually two different things that happened. One six days before and the other two days before. And what do you think? Does that sound like that could be a possibility?

It just doesn't sound right. Does it? That same kind of thing, a woman would do the same thing and Jesus would have the same response. It just doesn't sound legitimate.

[ 23 : 38 ] Well, I think what's going on here is that as we read in the book of John, this is something that happens six days before. And this is right before Jesus actually enters into Jerusalem, what we call Palm Sunday when he comes from out of town and his first entrance into Jerusalem, Palm Sunday we call it.

That's when this account happens according to the book of John. But as we read in Mark, notice how we read that it's two days before Passover as it's talking about this conspiracy to kill Jesus. And so I think what's going on here is that we're, it's setting up, you know, as we've been reading, we just read the Olivet Discourse, this happened right before, probably maybe the third day before the Passover.

And then it's talking about this plot to kill Jesus. And as it's talking about the plot to kill Jesus and the characters who were involved, the leaders of Israel and then another man, Judas.

I think what's going on is that in Mark, he's going back to something that happened a few days earlier to provide some context. Right?

[ 24 : 51 ] Because who's the player involved in that context? It's Judas. And we see this opportunity where Judas had to be, to kind of show his colors and then to be rebuked by the Savior.

And how did that play into what happened? A lot of times as we're reading through the Bible, in fact, it came up this morning in the book of Daniel. As you read through the book of Daniel, it can be confusing because certain things don't seem to happen in chronological order.

And if you read closely, they don't. They're not written and recorded in chronological order. And so sometimes if you just take everything as it's written as chronological order, it can cause confusion. And so not everything that's recorded either in biblical history or even in other types of history, right? Sometimes there are what we call flashbacks, right? There's a flashback.

We see that in books. And you see those kind of similar things in the Bible. So let's continue on. So they're at the house of a man named Simon the leper and there's this woman there and we read in John that this is Mary, sister of Martha, brother of Lazarus.

[ 26 : 03 ] We just read that. And she's got this perfume and I want to talk about this perfume, this oil called Spike Nerd. But it's really more than just any kind of regular perfume. You know, we can go to the store and we can buy bottles of perfume and some of them are pretty expensive, right?

Some of them are cheap, some are expensive. And it's, you know, what kind of perfume you can afford is kind of like a status symbol, right?

Do you get the cheap perfume or do you get the really expensive stuff? And sometimes I wonder if there's really a difference, right? Like with a lot of things, it's just a status symbol. But this was very expensive.

When it says costly, very expensive. There's a mention of how much money it would cost if you, or how much you would get if you sold it. 300 denarii. Well, we don't use denarii.

What does that mean? Well, in general, a denarii was one day's wage for a laborer. If you were a laborer, it was one day's wage. And there are about, if you work six days a week, there's about 300 days in a year.

[ 27 : 05 ] So it's about one year's wage. And so what's a, what's a kind of a day laborer's wage these days? I don't know. It keeps going up, right? With inflation, 50,000, 60,000, 70,000.

It could be if you're a skilled laborer, you know. Maybe 40,000, 40,000 to 60,000, let's say. Okay. That's expensive perfume.

Can you imagine having a bottle of perfume that you could sell for that much? And for a lot of people, this was a kind of a family heirloom, something that would even be passed down from generation to generation.

And if people would use it, typically, right, you just get a little bit. And it would be a privilege for such an expensive perfume to just take a little drop and anoint somebody's head with oil.

And it's in a, it was called an alabaster flask. Alabaster's a stone, and so this is just a stone that doesn't, you know, it keeps the oil preserved, and you would seal it usually with some kind of wax.

[ 28 : 10 ] But she takes this and doesn't just put one drop. She breaks the whole thing. Probably there's a neck on it. I'm assuming she just broke the neck and poured the whole thing on his head.

You can imagine what this looks like. I mean, typically, if you anoint somebody's head with oil, I mean, it's, you know, a drop or two. But this is like a mess.

You can imagine. In fact, in one account, it says she put it on his head, and then in the other account in John, it says that she washed his feet. This got all over the place, from his head to his feet.

And so there was some criticism. Mark 14, 4, 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 300 denarii and given to the poor.

And they criticized her sharply. So their ire was towards this woman, towards Mary, because she wasted oil.

[ 29 : 10 ] She wasted money that could have been used for something more important, giving to the poor. And I want to use this as an opportunity to talk about what sometimes has been referred to as the social gospel.

And there's a whole movement today, and it's not anything new today. It's been around for a long time, called social justice, specifically related to Christianity.

Christianity, but not always, but there's a movement within Christianity, a social justice movement. You've ever heard the term of being a social justice warrior? And I think this account demonstrates that this is a tendency within Christianity that we need to be on the lookout for.

And it's a tendency to focus more of our Christianity, more of our faith, on charitable deeds, on humanitarianism, rather than on the center, which is Jesus Christ himself.

The center of our faith, the person of our faith, is Jesus Christ. There's nothing more important than him. If you look at any progressive, liberal, Christian group, and there are many today, and if you look at almost any of them, if you go back far enough, this group was a faithful Christian group who loved the Lord and wanted to serve him and had Christ at the center.

[ 30 : 50 ] Almost all of them. And now today, their eyes are on something else. And the path is almost always goes through this path of social justice, of transforming the main message from Jesus, the person of Jesus Christ and what he accomplished for us, to something else, to doing good to our neighbor.

And is that something we ought to do? Should we do good to our neighbor? Should we love our neighbor? Should we help out the poor? Without a doubt. But is that the focus of Christianity? And should we, for a moment, give that place over Jesus Christ himself and his person and who he is and what he has done in us and who we are in him?

No way. You know, once this path starts, once you start to move towards a social gospel, it doesn't end there.

eventually humanitarianism becomes the gospel itself. You know, I'll talk to people sometimes and, you know, they might say, oh, I'm a Christian too or something like that.

[ 32 : 04 ] But you really can't just take that at face value today, can you? Many people will call themselves Christians if they don't even know the gospel message at all. Because they see, oh, well, I, you know, I'm part of maybe a church or an organization.

We help people, you know, we have soup kitchens or we do this or that. But they're not trusting that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world and specifically for their sins.

And that is the crux and that is the core of the gospel. And that's what's going on here with this woman. She is wasting all of this oil that could be used to do so many good things for humanity. She's wasting it on the Savior of the world. And let's make sure that we never have that same kind of attitude.

That we think that we can waste something on putting too much focus, giving too much honor, and too much dignity to Jesus Christ.

[ 33 : 10 ] The gospel is not doing good. And this is a huge confusion for many today. Oh, well, hey, as a Christian, our number one priority is to just try to live like Jesus.

Do the nice things that Jesus did. And that is not the center of Christianity. While those things may be true, we do want to be like Jesus, don't we? The center of the message of the Bible and the gospel message itself, the good news, is that, well, the bad news first, right, is that we've all sinned. And we're in trouble. We're in deep doo-doo, as they say. Because of our sins. Because we've failed God. Because we've pursued paths against God.

We've done things that are outrageous. That deserve judgment. And the gospel is this, the good news, is that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world, for you and me.

The Bible says the just for the unjust, the righteous for the unrighteous. And all we have to do is trust in Him and we can have eternal life. And then, we can live a life in union with Him, having assurance of our faith, having assurance that we have eternal life with Him.

[ 34 : 31 ] and relate to Him and love Him and receive His love towards us. And then He can change us from the inside out so that we can be more like Him in this life.

Amen? So verse 6, Jesus responds. 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 always. Or you do not have always. You know, Jesus just tells a truism here.

You're always going to have poor people. Has there ever been a time in history where there's not poor people? No. Poverty will never be eradicated. Not in this age anyway. There will be an age to come in which it will.

And you know, where does poverty come from? Many times, it comes from the foolishness of those who are suffering from poverty. If you go look at the book of Proverbs, it talks about the diligent man

and the not diligent man and what's going to be the outcome.

[ 35 : 34 ] Well, it leads to poverty. What other things lead to poverty? Sin leads to poverty. And so many times, poverty is caused by the poor person itself.

But not always. Other times, people are poor because of exploitation. Really, when it comes to helping the poor, and in the Old Testament, there was a lot in the law about helping the poor. Farmers, you don't do a second pass when you're harvesting your crop. If there's things that fell on the ground or stayed on the vine or the stalk or whatever, just leave it for the poor. Gleaning. Don't glean. Leave things on the edges of the fields. That was for people who were maybe traveling or poor people to grab some food from the edges of the fields. Now, they weren't allowed to go into the middle of the field and just start filling up their buckets. But they could stop by and just get some crops from the edges of the field. But we don't see encouragement to provide for the needs of those who are not diligent.

[ 36 : 46 ] for those who won't work. Right? There are three people that come up all the time when it comes to helping the poor. Three groups. The orphan, right?

The widow, and the stranger. Those are the three groups that constantly come up. The orphan, the widow, and the stranger. And what are the unique things about those groups of people?

Well, the orphan, did they do anything? No, this is a tragedy. This is a calamity that has come upon them. They lost their parents. For a woman, especially in that day, it's different today, right?

There are all kinds of jobs that a woman can get and provide. It's hard, right? Especially if you've got kids. But if you lose a husband, you can kind of make by. Back then, in this day, you were up a creek.

Unless you had a brother, a lot of times, or a father still around who could help support you. And so, if you were a widow or an orphan, you were in dire straits. So these are the kinds of people that God wanted people to help.

[ 37 : 53 ] And then the stranger, those who were traveling through, those who didn't own land to be able to farm. A lot of times, the only work they could have was day laboring.

And a lot of times, they would be exploited. And so, help those people out as you find need. But it turns out, especially today, that helping the poor is big business.

Did you know that? Helping the poor, you can make a lot of money by helping the poor. Especially, if you're the government. Right?

Because there are thousands and probably tens of thousands, maybe even hundreds of thousands of people involved in the distributing of social justice programs to help people.

Some who are legitimately in need. Others, probably the most, right? Who, who really don't deserve, if you will, if that's the right phrase to use those handouts.

[ 39 : 05 ] But there's lots of middlemen who can make a buck by being part of this big business of helping the poor. So there's a lot of people, there's incentive today to keep as many people poor.

Right? And we don't want to be part of that system. Poverty, I think, is way outsized in this country because of the perverse incentives. And you know what? I see this in Christian ministries too. Christian ministries who really exploit the poor for religious gain or for their own gain for their ministries.

I've seen ministries that start a program to feed the poor whether it's in this country or in another country and it's so obvious that it's just a way to make money because that's what people would love to give to those kinds of programs.

And you find out that, well, how much of that money that you're giving to this program to feed the hungry is actually going to feed the hungry? Oh, like 30%.

Well, where's the rest of it going? Other things? Yeah. And so much has been said, of course, when it comes to government about all the waste and, you know, you've got big time salaries and programs and lavish conferences and things all around the industry, the big business industry of helping the down and out.

[ 40 : 24 ] and so what do we see here? Judas, Judas, he's the social justice warrior here, isn't he? Judas is the social justice warrior.

Hey, what are we doing here? We could use this money and why did he say that? Was it because he had concern for the poor? Let's go back. John chapter 12. Why was this fragrant oil, verse 5, why was this fragrant oil not sold for 300 denarii and given to the poor?

This he said not that he cared for the poor but because he was a thief and had the money box and he used it to take what was put in. Hey, this is an opportunity lost for me.

We could have sold this and, hey, I could have skimmed off the top because, hey, I'm the one in charge of the money box. I'm the one in charge of the government program.

We're going to lose our budget. If the number of poor people comes down, we're going to have to reduce the budget for my department. You know, the Bible does speak to these political issues, right?

[ 41 : 36 ] And we should listen and pay attention. Back to Mark 14, verse 7.

For you have the poor with you always and whatever you wish you may do them good but me you do not always have. And so, you know, just another reminder.

Yes, we can do good for the poor but just a reminder, giving money to a poor person, it's not always the good thing to do. It's not always the thing that will do them good. Sometimes, the way that you do good to a poor person is to say, you know what, I'm not giving you anything.

You need to get up your, off your duff and go get a job. Sometimes that's the best thing to do for them, right? Sometimes the best thing is to feel those hunger pains, pangs, right? So that they, they'll be diligent like they should be.

Charity requires wisdom. You know, at this church, we have a benevolent fund. So, what's a quarter about? We'll take up an offering and it's a fund that we have to help meet people's needs when there's some kind of calamity, some kind of unforeseen thing.

[ 42 : 51 ] But we try to use wisdom. You know, there are all kinds of people that call this church and they're calling to leave a voicemail. Oh, you know, I'm in this situation or I have a friend who is in this situation.

And so, we could give out money all day long. We try to use wisdom because we don't want to hurt people. You know, you can hurt people by giving to them. In fact, there's a book out there, When Helping Hurts.

And it's so true. Helping can be destructive. So, we want to do good for people but we don't want to enable people whose poverty is caused by drugs, alcohol, sexual morality, those types of things. But Jesus makes the point, the poor you're going to have with you always, hey, I'm only here for a little while. And you know, today, we don't have the opportunity to go to Jesus and honor him in a physical way like that.

But Mary had that opportunity. He was just there for a little while, three years. It's a flash in human history, just three years. And she took that opportunity that she had to waste a whole vial, a whole box or container of that expensive oil on him to honor him.

[ 44 : 03 ] Then it finishes up with this, she has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint my body for burial. And surely, 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.

And that's what happened, isn't it? We're memorializing her right now. what she did was great, was wonderful. She's honoring the Savior, the Messiah, the Savior of the world by wasting that oil on him.

And three of the gospel accounts remember her. And billions of these Bibles have been printed to remember her. And from pulpits and Bible studies, people read this account of her to remember her and what she did.

And we honor her for that. And you know, what Jesus said here, she did what she could. And what does he mean by that? Well, there were things that she couldn't do. She was a woman. Could she be one of Jesus' 12 disciples and travel around like the men did?

No. But you know what, and it seems, what do we find, remember that this whole concept of anointing with oil, and by the way, Jesus mentions that, and we don't know that her intention, like she had his burial or crucifixion in view because we know that the disciples were really confused.

[ 45 : 23 ] Even though Jesus said that he was going to die, they were like, what? I don't know, I don't think that's going to happen. And so we don't know that she necessarily had this in view, but Jesus took it as that, right? He said, she's anointing me for my burial.

And usually you anoint somebody after they're dead. But he was saying, hey, she's basically preparing me for death. And that's how I'm taking it anyway, right?

So he was so thrilled to have her do that. And we see later on after Jesus does die, and remember, they bury him in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, and then it was three days later, who went out

with spices and oil to go anoint him?

It was the women. And so it seems that the women were the ones who were the ones who would use the spices and anoint the bodies. And so this is something that she could do.

She had this expensive oil, probably a family heirloom. She was going to waste it. She was going to extravagantly use that on him.

[ 46 : 29 ] And you know, not all of us have the same opportunities to serve the Lord, to honor him, but we all have something that we can do.

some of us lack the money, maybe, but we have the time to honor the Lord. You know what I think about?

I think about young moms with four little ones under six years old, and they don't have the time to go on a mission trip to serve the Lord, but you know what they can do?

While they're changing the 18th diaper for the day, they can sing a song of praise to the Lord to honor him. And Jesus loves that.

Do what you can do. We're going to finish up with this. Back to Judas. Verse 10, Judas was all about the money, all about the cash.

[ 47 : 46 ] And so again, I think if we kind of try to tie things together, this was tying two accounts together. I think they were four days apart, but they're being tied together to show kind of what's going on here specifically.

with Judas. He was part of this anointing story, and really he got rebuked. And we saw where his heart was at. His heart was all about the money.

And so, we see him going to the chief priests to betray Jesus because he values money over the Messiah.

I'm going to end there. Our time is up. And let's go ahead and just end in a word of prayer. Father, as we close, may, I think the biggest thing that we can impress on our hearts is just the centrality of you in our lives.

That you are the center of everything. Your life, your death, your burial, your resurrection. and that even though we want to be like you, we want to serve others.

[ 48 : 58 ] We want to be do-gooders. That we put you and your honor and our love and our care for you above all of it. That we don't forget you and all the things that we do in this life.

would you continually remind us of that to love you, to honor you, to put you first in everything we ask these things in Jesus name, Amen