

PLOTTING & PREPARATION

Mark 14:1–16; Exodus 12:21–28

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Jesus's life evoked varied, and often strong, responses. In today's reading from Mark, we find two such responses. There's the woman who poured out all she had, giving Him her best, and there's Judas, seeking momentary gain.

In Mark 14, Jesus was reclining at a dinner party when a woman burst into the room, broke an expensive jar of perfume, and poured it out on Jesus's head. Talk about a public display of affection! She had no shame about using her most valuable possession to worship Jesus and give Him glory. The party guests chastised her actions as wasteful, but Jesus proclaimed, "Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what

she has done will also be told in memory of her" (Mark 14:9). Jesus told the guests that the price of the woman's perfume paled in comparison to His coming sacrifice. She prepared Jesus's body like a King, an honor worthy of the one who promised eternal life (Mark 10:29–31).

In contrast, we see Judas and the Pharisees also preparing for the death of Jesus. But they did not seek to honor Him like a King—instead, they plotted to have Him put to death as a criminal. Judas was offered money to betray Jesus, and he took it (Mark 14:10–12). Instead of pouring out everything of earthly value in exchange for "a hundred times more... and eternal life in the age to come," he schemed in the shadows and waited to hand Jesus over for some silver coins. He put his trust in a tangible, physical thing he could hold that day instead of what is eternal (Mark 10:29–31).

As I read this passage, I find myself wrestling with dueling desires: wanting to honor Jesus and trust in the future He has promised, and wanting to run away and put my trust in what I think will meet my needs today.

Jesus knows the heart of every person. He knew the heart of Judas, the heart of the woman who honored Him with perfume, and He knows our own wayward hearts—and He still died for us. Even when our hearts are turned away from Him, Jesus pursues us and had already prepared a way for us to turn back to Him.

When we are tempted like Judas to run after other things, I pray we will remember what Jesus has done for us and what He promises for our future. May His compassion and saving grace lead us to be as bold and faithful as the woman at that dinner the weekend Jesus died, honoring His gift of salvation with the fragrant offering of a surrendered life for His glory (Ephesians 5:1–2).