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A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

## Questions for Reflection or Discussion

### Observation—*What do I see?*

- 1 Read Mark 14:3-9. List all of the characters mentioned in this incident and everything you know or can surmise about each.
- 2 By and to whom were the comments of v. 4-5a made?
- 3 By and to whom was the comment of v. 5b made?
- 4 By and to whom were the comments of v. 6-9 made?

### Interpretation—*What does it mean?*

- 5 What is suggested by the fact that Jesus and others were eating in a leper's home?
- 6 What connection do you think Mary (Luke 12:3) and Simon the Leper had with Jesus?

### Application—*What do I do with this?*

- What is the costliest kingdom sacrifice you have ever made? Was it truly sacrificial?
- What is the balance between practical, responsible stewardship and radical, extravagant generosity? How do we avoid using the former as an excuse to escape the latter?
- Do you publicly identify yourself as a Christian? What risks are you willing to take to do so?
- 7 Has your devotion to Christ ever been criticized by others? If so, how did you respond? (If your devotion has never been criticized, what might that suggest?)
- In what ways do some people today seek to personally profit from their faith or church affiliation?
- Have you ever been tempted to turn your back on Jesus in some way? How did you respond? (If you failed him, have you sought and experienced his forgiveness? It's available!)

- 1 v. 3 ♦ **Jesus**—divine-human “Son of David”, Savior of the world, on the brink of crucifixion
- ♦ **Simon the leper**— mentioned in the NT only in connection with this narrative.  
Since a leper was an outcast in Jewish society, he was probably miraculously cleansed of his leprosy by Jesus, and may have planned this meal for Jesus in gratitude
- v. 4 ♦ **Mary** — (see Luke 12:3) the woman with the jar of perfume of very costly pure nard
- ♦ **some (who) were indignant**—Matthew 26:8 identifies them as the disciples  
John 12:4 identifies Judas Iscariot as the main spokesman
- v. 5 ♦ **“the poor”**—the supposed beneficiaries of Judas’ largess (Judas was a thief; John 12:6)
- v. 9 ♦ **“(the people of) the whole world to whom the gospel is preached”**—yup, Matthew, Mark and John have preserved the story of her extravagant, sacrificial, loving act!

2 Judas was the ring-leader (John 12:4-6), but some other of “the disciples” (plural) chimed in (Matthew 26:8).

3 Several of Jesus’ disciples were scolding Mary for her loving act.

4 Jesus said this back to his disciples—perhaps focusing his attention on Judas.

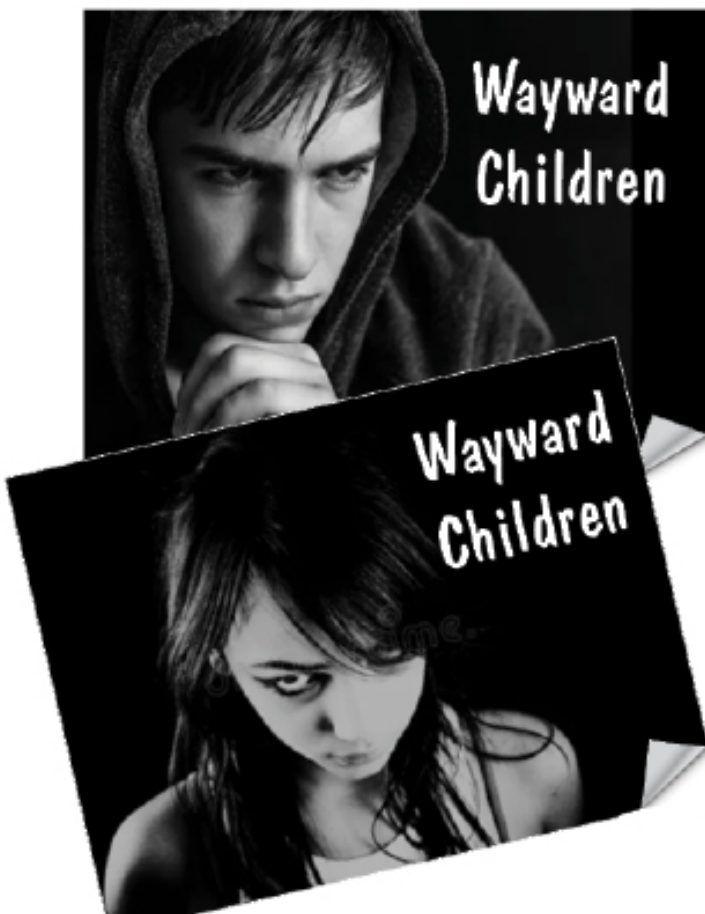
5 Clearly Simon was a **former** leper—for **at least** two reasons:

1. Nobody could associate with a leper, so he must have been already healed.
2. Jesus is the king of compassion—even if he were a leper at the beginning of the meal, that would have been the first thing Jesus resolved!

6 Bethany was a favorite haven for Jesus. A village on the south-eastern slope of the Mount of Olives (Mark 11:1), about 2 miles east of Jerusalem, on the road to Jericho. It was the residence of Lazarus and his sisters. It is frequently mentioned in connection with memorable incidents in the life of our Lord (Matthew 21:17; 26:6; Mark 11:11, 12; 14:3; Luke 24:50; John 11:1; 12:1).

7 These are all issues of individual experience. You likely will need to “prime the pump” on some of them, so be prepared with your own answer to this question, but wait for others first.

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Author of the best-seller,  
*The Exemplary Husband*

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Biblical Counseling at  
The Master's Seminary  
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## Sermon Summary Mark 14:1-11

Each year every adult male Jew who lived within fifteen miles of Jerusalem was obligated to attend three major feasts: Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. As our text opens (Mark 14:1-11), Jesus and his disciples have come to Jerusalem to attend the major Feast of Passover and the lesser Feast of Unleavened Bread (which consisted of the seven days following Passover). These feasts occurred in April, according to the modern calendar. The Passover had tremendous historical significance, commemorating the deliverance of the children of Israel from their bondage in Egypt (Exodus 12). God had sent plague upon plague upon Egypt. With each plague, Pharaoh promised to let the people go, but as each plague abated, he hardened his heart and went back on his word. Finally, God's angel of death passed through the land of Egypt, slaying every first-born son in every home—except in the homes of faithful Jews whom God had directed to slay a lamb and smear its blood on their doorposts. When the Angel of Death saw the marked doorposts he would “pass over” that house, keeping its occupants safe. God then directed the Jews evermore to commemorate this “passover”.

For an entire month each year before Passover preparations were made, its meaning was expounded in the synagogue and daily in their schools. No one was to come ignorant and unprepared to the feast. Roads and bridges were repaired to make travel easier. Tombs were whitewashed lest one accidentally touched one and became ceremonially unclean and be unable to participate in the Feast. Each year the population of Jerusalem swelled five times as up to three million converged for the Feast. It was the ambition of every Jew to eat at least one Passover in Jerusalem before they died. Emotions—and nationalistic fervor—ran high as they reflected upon their deliverance from slavery in Egypt—and longed to be liberated from their Roman overlords. And the Roman authorities were understandably nervous!

Jewish religious leaders were seeking to arrest Jesus, and so he and his disciples chose to stay with friends in nearby Bethany. At a meal, Mary lovingly anointed Jesus with exquisite perfume. What makes this story so poignant is that this was one of the last kindnesses shown to Jesus. It was customary to pour a few drops of perfume on an honored guest when they arrived at your home but Mary didn't stop there: she broke the flask and poured the whole thing over Jesus' head! The aroma must have filled the room! I have no reason to think that she knew the future, but her timing was impeccable: customarily when someone died the body would be anointed with perfume! One thing is undeniable: this act of extravagant love was incredibly sacrificial. That one flask of perfume cost a year's wage! This act of extravagant love was sacrificial.

You might think that her extravagant, loving sacrifice would have been universally applauded, but it wasn't! Some criticized it as “wasteful” (v. 4-6). She didn't give Jesus her leftovers—but that's what we often do, isn't it? Do we give a generous, sacrificial percentage of our income up front to kingdom work and adjust our lifestyles accordingly? Or do we first determine the lifestyle we want, and then give God the leftovers, if there are any leftovers? Mary set the bar high with her extravagant, sacrificial gift, and Jesus declared that her beautiful act of love would long be remembered (v. 9)! Her extravagant act of love also was done publicly. Mary wasn't ashamed to express her devotion to Jesus. She didn't care about cultural conventions. Jesus was her friend and her Lord. She deeply loved him, so she went public. No one could deny where her loyalty lay. Can the same be said for us?

But her act of extravagant love was contrasted with acts of betrayal. Mark sandwiched her act of devotion between two acts of betrayal: the Jewish leaders' decision to kill Jesus (vs. 1-3) and Judas' complicity in their plot (v. 10-11). Judas' betrayal was premeditated. We don't know exactly what Judas' motives were. Surely the promise of money was part of it. We also know that there was a demonic element at work (John 13:27), but Mark puts the blame squarely on Judas as the morally responsible agent (v. 10). He chose, in a premeditated way, to sell his Lord for the price of a common slave (Matthew 26:15; cf. Zech 11:12-13 & Exodus 21:32). Mary is the hero of this story and Judas is the villain. We are to imitate her act of extravagant, sacrificial, beautiful, public, memorable love, even if we, as she was, are criticized for it.

## Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

*Mary's act of extravagant, sacrificial, beautiful, public love is an example for us all.  
We can use the "Five Question Bible Study" to learn how to likewise love Jesus...*

**Monday**— Study Colossians 3:12-17.

**Tuesday**— Study Luke 16:10-15.

**Wednesday**— Study Galatians 2:20.

**Thursday**— Study Romans 12:1-2.

**Friday**— Study Psalm 40:6-8.

**Saturday**— Study 2 Corinthians 11:2-4.

*Want to grow in devotion to Christ?*

For free, confidential help, write to:  
**BiblicalHopeAndHelp@gmail.com**

### Five Question Bible Study

Bible Text: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]