

Conquering Death
Prepare for the resurrection

Mark 14:3-9

³ While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.

⁴ Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume?" ⁵ It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly.

⁶ "Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ⁷ The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. ⁸ She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. ⁹ Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

Matthew 26:6-13

Transition

- Set up the story
- Jesus was headed to Jerusalem where he would be crucified.
- He is fully aware of what is ahead.
- He would go to lay down his life as a ransom for many.
- He would be the sacrificial lamb who takes away the sins of the world.
- Every step is calculated
- Every stop is intentional
- Every interaction has significance

I. The Big Sacrifice of Worship

Mark 14:3

While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.

- A. Unpack the story
 1. Meal that took several hours.
 2. Big fellowship event.
 3. Simon the Leper
 4. Mark does not identify the person with the perfume except to say she is a woman.

B. What did she offer.

She came to the table with an alabaster jar.

Inside the jar was a very expensive perfume - Pure nard.

1. This would have most likely been the most expensive thing she owned.
2. May have been passed down to her.
3. Her inheritance
4. Would most likely be used a little bit at a time for special occasions.
5. Or kept as an investment.
6. Possibly part of her dowery.

She came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard.

Yes, the [alabaster jar](#) itself was a valuable item, independent of its contents. Crafted from expensive, often white, translucent marble quarried in Egypt, these containers were considered luxury items. In the biblical context, it may have been a rare, costly family heirloom or a woman's inheritance (dowry).

Key points regarding the jar's value:

- **Significance:** It was a precious item used for storing, protecting, and transporting high-value ointments and perfumes.
- **Significance of the Breaking:** Breaking the jar, rather than opening it, allowed the entire contents to be poured out, representing a total sacrifice and surrender, and removing the option to resell the container itself.
- **Value of the Whole:** While the perfume (nard) was highly valued, sometimes estimated at over a year's wages (approx. \$50,000+), the vessel holding it was also an expensive, prized possession.

The act of breaking the flask for Jesus' anointing was, therefore, an intentional act of extravagance and profound devotion

David's example 2 Samuel 24

¹⁸ On that day Gad went to David and said to him, "Go up and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." ¹⁹ So David went up, as the LORD had commanded through Gad. ²⁰ When Araunah looked and saw the king and his officials coming toward him, he went out and bowed down before the king with his face to the ground.

²¹ Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?"

"To buy your threshing floor," David answered, "so I can build an altar to the LORD, that the plague on the people may be stopped."

²² Araunah said to David, “Let my lord the king take whatever he wishes and offer it up. Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and here are threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood. ²³ Your Majesty, Araunah gives all this to the king.” Araunah also said to him, “May the LORD your God accept you.”

²⁴ But the king replied to Araunah, “No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing.”

So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them. ²⁵ David built an altar to the LORD there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the LORD answered his prayer in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped.

2 Samuel 24:24

...“No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing.”

Application

- In the indignant response of the guests, the good has become the enemy of the best.
- What about you?
- Has this crept into your life?
- Has the good things in your life become an enemy of the best?
- Are there good things in your life that have crowded out the best things for your life?
- Are you spending your life in pursuit of good things and by doing so missing out on the best things?

Exercise

- If we all could set up one hour meetings with Jesus this week.
- When your life was evaluated on the scale of good vs. best where would the scales tip?

II. The Big Objection to Worship

Mark 14:4-5

⁴ Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? ⁵ It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly.

A. Unpack the Objection

1. Mark is not specific as to who is objecting – “Some of those present”
2. Matthew tells us that at least some of the objection comes from his disciples.
Back to that in a minute

- B. They were saying indignantly to one another.
1. Why this waste of perfume?
 2. Look at all the waste that is going on here.
- C. The assumption of waste.
1. The objection was that what the woman did was wasteful.
 2. The perfume was expensive.
 3. It cost more than a year's wages.

- Modern day value in America would be more than \$50,000

4. It could have been used in another manner.
5. In this case use it for the poor.

D. That sounds like a logical argument.

1. I thought Jesus cared about the poor.?
2. After all doesn't Jesus care about the poor?

E. The rebuke was strong.

1. The critics' attitude is expressed strongly. ἀγανακτέω (used of Jesus' response to the disciples in 10:14 and of that of the remaining disciples to James and John in 10:41) expresses strong indignation over an offensive action or attitude, while ἐμβριμάομαι is even more vivid (see on 1:43).
2. Mann translates **'They turned upon her in anger'**
3. Gundry uses **'growling'**.
4. Jesus' response in v. 6 suggests that the woman found her critics intimidating.

Elaborate

- Do you know what we could do with all that money?
- Do you know what we could do with that?

Factors that make an object expensive

Key factors contributing to their high cost include:

- **Rarity and Scarcity:** Precious metals exist in very low concentrations in the Earth's crust, limiting supply.
- **Useful:** They are essential in electronics (semiconductors), medical equipment, and catalytic converters.

- **Safe Haven Asset:** They are trusted stores of value that hedge against inflation and currency devaluation during economic uncertainty.
- **Physical Properties:** They are durable, malleable, and do not corrode, making them ideal for jewelry and long-term storage.
- **Extraction Cost:** High costs of mining and refining impact the overall supply, keeping prices high.

She is so wasteful!

Waste

- To spend or use carelessly extravagantly, or to no purpose.

Application

- Parents your role is to “train your children in the way they should go.”
- Deuteronomy 6

¹These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, ²so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. ³Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

⁴Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.^[a] ⁵Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

¹⁰When the LORD your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you—a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, ¹¹houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant—then when you eat and are satisfied, ¹²be careful that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

¹³Fear the LORD your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name. ¹⁴Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you; ¹⁵for the LORD your God, who is among you, is a jealous God and his anger will burn against you, and he will destroy you from the face of the land. ¹⁶Do not put the LORD your God to the test as you did at Massah. ¹⁷Be sure to keep the commands of the LORD your God and the stipulations and decrees he has given you. ¹⁸Do what

is right and good in the LORD's sight, so that it may go well with you and you may go in and take over the good land the LORD promised on oath to your ancestors, ¹⁹ thrusting out all your enemies before you, as the LORD said.

²⁰ In the future, when your son asks you, "What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the LORD our God has commanded you?" ²¹ tell him: "We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. ²² Before our eyes the LORD sent signs and wonders—great and terrible—on Egypt and Pharaoh and his whole household. ²³ But he brought us out from there to bring us in and give us the land he promised on oath to our ancestors. ²⁴ The LORD commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the LORD our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. ²⁵ And if we are careful to obey all this law before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness."

Straw Man

- Notice it does not say that your responsibility is to teach them to play baseball, football, soccer, softball or encourage them to go out for the track team.
- Notice it does not say that your responsibility is to enter them into beauty pageants, or cheer or gymnastics.
- Notice it does not say that your responsibility is to give them music lessons and get them involved in school band.
- Notice it does not say that your responsibility is to buy them a car when they turn 16 so they can get a job to pay for the gas, so they can miss a ton of church activities and youth ministry opportunities.
- Notice it does not say that your responsibility is to sign them up for 75 things.

What does it say?

- Summarize Deuteronomy 6

What does it mean to waste your life?

- Work hard in school.
- Be a good citizen.
- Get a job and make money.
- Buy a car and a house and start going on trips in your car.
- Buy a house and then pay to leave your house to go to another house for a break.

There is a tension here.

- Where is the line?
- Where is the proper view of things?
- How am I supposed to live?

- I don't want to be like those who were objecting to the woman.
- I want to be like the woman.
- I want to love the Lord with all of my heart, soul, mind and strength.

What do it do?

1. You will have to sacrifice. There will be times where it will seem like a high price to pay by the systems of this world.
2. Your love for God and expressions to God will be seen by some as extravagant and you will possibly be criticized.
3. You will be counter culture.
4. You will have to live a life of surrender.

My pastoral advice

- Your heart must be transformed and your mind must be renewed.
- You cannot be squeamish. Toughen up.

III. The Big Intervention by Jesus for worship

Mark 14:6-9

⁶“Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ⁷The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. ⁸She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. ⁹Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

- A. First Jesus defends her.
 1. Leave her alone.
 2. Why are you bothering her.
 3. Jesus interprets her actions completely different from those in the room.
 - a. What is she doing? Why is she wasting?
 - b. Receiving her worship and connecting with her.
- B. She has done a beautiful thing to me.
 1. What was done was done to Jesus.
 2. That is the point.
 3. Her worship was for Jesus.
 4. It wasn't for the others.

5. It wasn't for the crowd.
6. It wasn't for show.
7. It wasn't for recognition
8. It was for Jesus and HIM alone!!!!

C. Jesus gives context

1. She is preparing my body for burial.
2. I'm going to die here soon and you will all run and flee.
3. Pat attention to the significance of the season you are in.

The Big Sacrifice of Worship

The Big Objection to Worship

The Big Intervention by Jesus for worship