**Are You a Memorial to God**

**By Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Mark 14:1-16**

**Wednesday Evening**

**August 21, 2019**

**1 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. 2 But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people."**

The Passover commemorated the night the Israelites were freed from Egypt (Exodus 12), when God “passed over” homes marked by the blood of a lamb. This was the last great plague on Egypt; in the unmarked homes the firstborn sons died. After this horrible disaster, Pharaoh let the Israelites go.

**Chart of the Festivals>**

The day of Passover was followed by the seven-day Festival of Unleavened Bread. This, too, recalled the Israelites’ quick escape from Egypt when, because they wouldn’t have time to let their bread rise, they baked it without leaven (yeast). All Jewish males over the age of twelve were required to go to Jerusalem for this festival.

**Deuteronomy 16:5-7**

5 You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates which the LORD your God gives you; 6 but at the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide, there you shall sacrifice the Passover at twilight, at the going down of the sun, at the time you came out of Egypt.

Saints, Jews from all over the Roman Empire would converge on Jerusalem, swelling the population from 50,000 to 250,000 people.The Jewish leaders plotted secretly to kill Jesus. They had already decided that Jesus must die, they just needed the opportunity. They did not want to attempt to arrest Jesus during the Passover because they feared that the crowd would riot on his behalf. They feared that such an uprising might bring the wrath of Rome.

**John 11:47-53**

47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. 48 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." 49 And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all,

50 nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish." 51 Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, 52 and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad. 53 Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.

**3 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.**

Bethany was located on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives (Jerusalem is on the western side).

This town was the home of Jesus’ friends Lazarus, Mary, and Martha (who were also present at this dinner, John 11:2).

**John 11:2**

“It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.”

Jesus had been returning to Bethany from Jerusalem each night during this final week. This night, Jesus was a guest of Simon. He did not have leprosy at this time, for lepers had to live separately from people because of the extreme contagiousness of the disease. Jesus may have healed Simon.

This woman was probably Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, who lived in Bethany (John 12:1-3).

**John 12:1-3**

1 Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. 2 There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. 3 Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

**Luke 7:44-47**

44 Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. 45 You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in.

46 You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. 47 Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."

She brought a beautiful jar of expensive perfume, which she poured on Jesus’ head. It was a common custom at some Jewish meals for the honored guests to be anointed with oil, but it would not be so expensive. Such an anointing, with expensive oil, pictured a royal (messianic) anointing.

**4 But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, "Why was this fragrant oil wasted? 5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they criticized her sharply.**

Where Mark says some, John specifically mentions Judas:

**John 12:4-5**

4 Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, 5 Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?"

Saints, this indignation over Mary’s act of worship would not have been based on concern for the poor, but on greed. Because Judas was the treasurer of Jesus’ ministry and had embezzled funds.

**John 12:6**

“This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.”

Judas no doubt wanted the perfume sold so that the proceeds could be put into his care. This event probably pushed Judas over the edge in his determination to betray Jesus.

**6 But Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. 7 For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. 8 She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial.**

Saints, Jesus reprimanded the disciples, but comforted Mary. The expensive ointment poured on Jesus had been a good thing to do for him—a beautiful, acceptable, appealing act of love and sacrifice—and Jesus declared it to be so.

This was a unique act for a specific occasion—an anointing that anticipated Jesus’ burial and a public declaration of faith in him as Messiah. Jesus was not saying that we should neglect the poor, nor was he justifying indifference to them. Jesus said it best in:

**Matthew 6:20-21**

20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

**Luke 14:13-14**

13 But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. 14 And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

Saints, Jesus was affirming Mary’s unselfish act of worship. The essence of worshiping Christ is to regard him with utmost love, respect, and devotion, as well as to be willing to sacrifice to him what is most precious.

**9 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."**

Mary’s unselfish act would be remembered forever. This has come true because we read about it today. While the disciples misunderstood Jesus’ mission and constantly fought about places in the Kingdom and while the religious leaders stubbornly refused to believe in Jesus and plotted his death, this one quiet woman so loved Jesus and was so devoted to him that she considered no sacrifice too great for her beloved Master. She is an example to us all of unselfish devotion to our Savior.

**Matthew 10:40-42**

40 "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. 41 He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. 42 And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."

**Colossians 3:23-24**

23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

**Matthew 16:27-28**

27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. 28 Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

**10 Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Him to them.**

Why would Judas Iscariot want to betray Jesus? Very likely, Judas expected Jesus to start a political rebellion and overthrow Rome.

As treasurer, Judas certainly assumed that he would be given an important position in Jesus’ new government. But when Jesus praised Mary for pouring out the expensive perfume, Judas finally began to realize that Jesus’ Kingdom was not physical or political.

Judas knew the leading priests had it in for Jesus, and he knew they would have the power to arrest Jesus. So that was where he went. Judas’s greedy desire for money and status could not be fulfilled if he followed Jesus, so he betrayed him in exchange for money and favor from the religious leaders.

**11 And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. So he sought how he might conveniently betray Him.**

Obviously the leading priests were delighted to have discovered a traitor among Jesus’ followers. They had been having difficulty figuring out how to arrest Jesus (14:1-2); so when an offer of help came from this unexpected corner, they took advantage of it.

They promised Judas a reward, and Judas began looking for the right opportunity—when there would be no Passover crowds to prevent Jesus’ capture and no possibility of a riot (14:2).

**12 Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover lamb, His disciples said to Him, "Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?"**

Saints, the Passover took place on one night and at one meal, but the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which was celebrated with it, continued for a week. The first day of the feast was technically the day after Passover, but the two were often equated.

Thus, this was either Wednesday night (the day before Passover) or Thursday of Jesus’ last week (the night of the Passover meal). The highlight of the festival was the Passover meal, a family feast with the main course of lamb.

The sacrifice of a lamb and the spilling of its blood commemorated Israel’s escape from Egypt when the blood of a lamb painted on their door frames had saved their firstborn sons from death. This event foreshadowed Jesus’ work on the cross. As the spotless Lamb of God, his blood would be spilled in order to save his people from the penalty of death brought by sin.

**John 1:29-30**

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.'

Jesus’ disciples assumed that they would eat the Passover meal together with Jesus. However, the meal had to be eaten in Jerusalem, so the disciples asked Jesus where they should go in order to make preparations.

**13 And He sent out two of His disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him.**

The two disciples Jesus sent were Peter and John (Luke 22:8).

**Luke 22:8**

“And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat."

Saints, whether Jesus had supernatural knowledge in this instance or if he had made arrangements in advance is unclear (as in the incident with his Triumphal Entry.

It seems that in this instance this room had been reserved previously and kept secret—none of the disciples knew where they would eat this meal.

Jesus already knew that Judas would be looking for an opportunity to betray him without crowds around, so Jesus may have made these arrangements and kept them secret.

The two disciples were dispatched in the morning from Bethany to Jerusalem to prepare the Passover meal. Jesus told them that as they entered the city, they would meet a man carrying a pitcher of water.

Ordinarily women, not men, went to the well and brought home the water. So this man would have stood out in the crowd. This may have been a prearranged signal, or Jesus may have supernaturally known that this man (most likely a servant) would be there and would lead them to the right house.

**14 Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?" ' 15 "Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared; there make ready for us." 16 So His disciples went out, and came into the city, and found it just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover.**

Saints, the owner of this home was probably one of Jesus’ followers.

He knew exactly who the Teacher was and probably knew the disciples by sight. Tradition says this may have been Mark’s home, so this would have been Mark’s father.

Many homes had upstairs rooms large enough to accommodate Jesus and his twelve disciples. As before, when two disciples went to get the donkey for Jesus to ride into Jerusalem, these two disciples found everything just as Jesus had said.

The preparations for the Passover would have included setting the table, buying and roasting the Passover lamb, and making the unleavened bread, sauces, and other ceremonial food and drink that were a traditional part of every Passover meal.

**Let’s Pray**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**