

**Mark 14:1-21**  
**September 26, 2010**  
**Lynchburg, Virginia**

**EXHORDIUM**

We have another wonderful contrast from Mark. The woman who would lavish her all upon Christ and Judas who would betray the Lord with a kiss. She gave Jesus a wonderful gift and Judas take a pittance to betray the Lord to death. She lavished a gift valued at a year's labor. Judas would betray Him for half of that.

We also have another one of those hard to swallow but easy to understand passages of God's Sovereignty and Man's Responsibility. A black coffee Calvinist passage, if you will. Judas was the one who betrayed the Lord, just as it was written but Jesus, Himself, pronounces woe upon Judas.

God had decreed that Jesus would be betrayed but the betrayers do not get a pass. They are held accountable to the full extent and Jesus says that it would be have been better if Judas had never been born.

**EXEGESIS**

**14 After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. 2 But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people.**

It is ironic that at the Feast of Passover, just the time when Israel should be celebrating God's covenant promises, they find themselves committing the ultimate sacrilege.

What is recorded here is Mark's continual use of irony. The chief priests and scribes should be leading the people in true and humble worship. They should be honoring God by doing those things that are beneficial to God's people. But just at the point where they should be humbled before God and God's Messiah, their arrogance and rebellion is dramatically revealed. They should be recognizing and embracing the Messiah. Instead the desire to take Him by craft and put Him to death.

Furthermore, they do not necessarily want to kill Jesus because He is an impostor and misleading the people. They want to kill Jesus because Jesus is a threat to them. They are like their father, Cain, who killed his brother because of envy. We see this revealed in what Mark tells us here. They did not want to kill Him on the feast day because the people might cause an uproar.

What uproar? The day after the anointing in Bethany is the Triumphal Entry. If all Israel is gone after Jesus, the Jewish leaders do not want to be seen fighting the people. The leaders know the people think this. Do they think the people are in error? Do they even care? Are they openly resisting God's Messiah? It appears that they are and this is the reason that God brings such harsh judgment down upon them.

We need to keep in mind another irony in this whole situation. The Passover meal was instituted as a result of God delivering His people from Egypt. The final curse upon Egypt was the death of the First Born. The Passover Lamb was killed and put upon the doorposts and the Angel of Death passed over the Israelites and also any Egyptians that had faith in God. Afterwards, the Passover meal becomes an annual meal to signify God's deliverance of His people and the destruction of His enemies.

So, now the Passover is happening and the One who has arisen to save Israel from her enemies is being sought out and killed. The previous chapter was all about the destruction of Israel. Again, just at the point when Israel should be receiving the blessings, they are heaping curses upon themselves.

**3 And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. 4 And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? 5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.**

Jesus was being hosted in this home. Obviously, there were crowds around that had some access to Jesus.

The woman's act is lavish by any standard of measure. Before we rush to judgment against those who complained, put yourself in their place. Suppose a dignitary were in your presence and someone lavished a huge gift upon them. What's more, suppose the gift that was lavished was immediately consumed. For instance, if you had access to the governor of your state and a state dinner. And someone walks in and offers the governor a drink of some extremely precious drink that cost \$50,000 for a single glass of wine. Or, what if the governor was showered with real gold flakes that blew away in the wind?

What if the governor gladly received such a gift and praised the giver? Would you find it in your heart to be thankful for the lavish generosity and gratitude of the giver? Would you be offended by the governor receiving such a gift?

Would you have indignation within yourselves? If so, why? Would you rather have that money spent on the poor? Or on yourself? Would you be upset with the giver? With the governor?

**6 And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. 7 For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. 8 She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.**

Jesus makes it clear that she has done nothing wrong. In fact, He strongly commends her for her godly deed. She understood that it was not wasteful to lavish your best upon the Lord.

There is a principle here that is worth bringing out. You must do good to those that you are able to serve. You could do good to the poor, that is true, but DO YOU do good to those in your midst? As our church has grown older, there has been some sense of our need to expand our ministry beyond our doors, to those in need, to the poor. I have no problem with that. We should minister to the poor.

But if someone says, Our church should do something for the poor and yet they are not doing anything for the poor, then what are we to make of that? Why don't they exert their energy, either ministering to the poor, as

they would like the church to do, or use their energy ministering to those who are in need in our midst?

By God's grace, most of our people have their needs being met. Noone is missing meals, sleeping under bridges, or wearing worn out shoes. But there are needs within our body. There are sicknesses. There are surgeries. There are babies being born regularly. There are families in some degree of financial distress. If we do not minister to those in our midst who have needs, what makes us think we will do any good to those outside that have needs?

But, you say, it is money or time wasted on those who do not really have a dire need. Well, Jesus did not have a dire need, either. In God's providence, she was preparing Him for burial but nobody but Jesus knew that.

Serve Jesus where you are and where He is. In time, the Lord will give us opportunities to grow our generosity in serving the broader community.

**9 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.**

If there was any doubt about the goodness of what this woman had done and how her goodness contrasted with the greed of some of the disciples, Jesus goes out of His way to emphatically state His view. He makes a memorial of her deed and plants it deeply in the history and memory of all saints for all time. He says that it will be spoken of for a memorial of her. It is not just a memorial of how to do a good deed to Jesus. The memory of this deed memorializes the woman.

**10 And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them. 11 And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.**

This is the direct beginning of the end. Immediately after realizing that Jesus is not going to take advantage of large sums of money that are available to Him, Judas goes out to make a deal with the chief priests.

**John 12:6 6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.**

**12 And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?**

The day the Passover Lamb was killed our Lord was betrayed to be delivered up to death. He died the next day. But the day of the killing of the Passover Lamb was the day that the Lord said, "Take, eat, this is my body and my blood which is given for you."

The Passover Lamb was the means whereby God's people were saved from destruction. It was precious food and precious blood. It was broken, eaten and spilled out but it gave life to all those who ate in faith, trusting that God would keep His promises to them.

**13 And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. 14 And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? 15 And he will shew you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us. 16 And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.**

Jesus gives His disciples instructions to find a fitting room for the Passover meal. It is unclear in the text if He had set up this sign prior to the disciples entering the city or if He knew what would happen in a miraculous way. It would seem that Jesus somehow had this all planned ahead of time. It also seems that it was done with some degree of secrecy. He knew that Judas was going to betray Him. So, it is likely that He had not let the disciples in on the location of their meal until the last minute. That would have been a good place for them to have taken Jesus. As it was, Jesus wanted to eat this last meal with His disciples and institute the Lord's Supper.

**17 And in the evening he cometh with the twelve. 18 And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me. 19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I? and another said, Is it I?**

At the Passover meal, Jesus reveals that one of the disciples will betray Him. There is room to be greatly encouraged in what transpires here. Jesus has been teaching the disciples about who He is and has been expecting absolute obedience and submission from them. At one point, they even confess that Jesus is the Christ, only to resist His will in the very next breath. But here they are told a very hard and sad statement. They do not deny or resist Jesus. Essentially, they all appeal that it would not be them. Of course, Judas has already promised to betray Him. Having been discovered, he could have backed out and repented but he does not do so. He presses on, having completely given up on Jesus.

## **EXHORTATION**

**20 And he answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish. 21 The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.**

God is Sovereign and man is responsible. We have these sorts of statements in Scripture repeatedly.

Acts 2:23 is another example. **Acts 2:23 23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:**

Jesus was delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. That is very straightforward and also redundant. It was determined by God's counsel. That is, it was part of God's decretive will. He knew it would happen and He wanted it to happen. It would seem in such a circumstance that we could take the Calvin and Hobbes approach and demand that it was not our fault since God determined that it would be so. However, the Bible tells us that those who did the deed, were wicked men. They were not absolved. They were guilty.

Just so, we have Judas, the one who delivers up the Son of Man, just as it had been written. Maybe Judas thought that if Jesus was so determined to die, it may as well be him who profited by it? Maybe he convinced himself that it was God's doing, or the devil's doing and therefore, he was not responsible.

But what does the Scripture say? The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! Good were it for that man if he had never been born.

Would it be better if he had never been born because he was just a pawn of the fates? If that were true, where would his responsibility be? That is not why Jesus utters this decree. It would be better if he had never been born because he exercises his wicked free will, or maybe better stated his free evil agency, in condemning the Christ. God's decree does not absolve him from guilt. We don't get out of wicked behavior by blaming God, the fates, the devil, or anybody else. We are responsible for all that we do in these bodies.

And until you recognize that fact, there is little hope for you. But if you recognize the fact that you are responsible for your behavior, then there is nothing but hope for you. For it is true that Christ came into the world to save sinners. But those who are well do not need a physician.

The other disciples did not betray Jesus the way that Judas did. But they did all let Jesus down and sinned against Jesus.. When He is crucified, they reveal their lack of faith and they all shamefully flee. Peter denies the Lord but He is a spokesman for the other disciples. And when He looks upon the Lord, he breaks into bitter repentant weeping.

Much has come to pass in our lives. Will we own what we have done? If not, then you have no need of repentance nor grace. But if you do own your bad behavior, then you must seek the grace of Christ that is abundantly given. He will not turn a deaf ear to a repentant heart.

So, we must have a humble demeanor like the disciples. Is it I, Lord, that have betrayed you? Have I sinned against You? Is it I that needs forgiveness and grace? I confess. Forgive me Lord.