

## COMMUNION MEDITATION

"The Anointing At Bethany"

Mark 14:3-9

### INTRODUCTION

Nov 1, 1981

1. This event is recorded in Matt. (26:6-13) and John (12:1-8) as well as Mark. John tells the time (12:1). The Synoptics mention it parenthetically.

2. There were two anointings: here and Luke 7:36-50. The two Simons and the two Marys make the anointings different. Moreover, this one includes a prediction by our Lord of His death.

#### 1. ACTION v. 3

##### a. Place

All took place at Bethany near Jerusalem. It was at a banquet whereas the Sanhedrin raised a protest (cf. John 12:2 with 11:57).

##### b. People

Lazarus was a guest, as were Mary and Martha. It was in Simon the leper's house. He may have been healed by Jesus. John alone mentions Mary as woman.

##### c. Pouring

The alabaster was a box for holding unguents. This one contained an ointment called nard, a most costly unguent. It weighed 12 ounces (a pound) which was an enormous amount for expensive perfume. It was genuine (pure). The box was broken before the anointing contents were poured on Christ's head and feet and wiped with Mary's hair. To undo a woman's hair in public was a disgrace. Mary bore this sacrifice. Only John mentions the perfume which filled the room (12:3).

#### 2. OBJECTION vv. 4-7

##### a. Noted

Mark does not identify who objected. Matthew says it was the disciples (26:8). John says it was

Judas (12:4). They were very upset and kept up their agitation (imperfect tense).

b. Supported

Ostensibly the objection to the anointing was to help the poor. The Lord never said the poor should not be attended to, but the poor was a straw issue. Judas carried the bag of money (literally a case for flute mouthpieces, therefore, a portable box). The cost of the nard was equivalent to a laborer's salary for a year. Judas wanted to pilfer that money!

c. Denied

Our Lord noted that the poor were always available, but He wasn't. Synoptics focus on "always" and John on "poor." Moreover, he affirmed Mary had performed a "good" work. "Good" means a true moral beautiful act. He rebuked them for giving her wear and tear (literally: "furnishing a blow").

3. PREDICTION vv. 8-9.

a. Concerning Mary

Mark and Luke record that women intended to anoint the Lord, but He had risen (16:1; 24:1). Hence Mary is the only one who had this honor. It relates to embalming and other preparations rather than entombment. It was a funeral rite (cf. John 12:7).

b. Concerning Preaching

Matthew and Mark alone mention the promise of future witness of this event world wide. This teaches world missions and salvation for all. The preaching of the Gospel is a memorial of this blessed event.

CONCLUSION Just before passion week, this precious witness to our Lord's imminent death is given. The high priest plotted murder. Mary lavished love. Today these two classes persist: Some hate Him; some love Him. Some reject Him; some worship Him. There is no third class. When Christ is presented to us, we inevitably take our place in one or another of these two classes--His deniers or His lovers. In which class do you stand?