

TRUE DEVOTION TO CHRIST

Mark 14:1-9

Intro: In chapter 13 of Mark's Gospel he recorded for us what the Lord Jesus Christ had to say about His second coming and the events which would lead up to it. In the final chapters of his Gospel, Mark has given us the events which led up to our Lord's crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension back to the Father in heaven. Matthew, Luke, and John do the same thing although no two of the Gospel records are exactly alike. Yet they all agree that the Lord was unjustly tried, and so unjustly convicted, that He really died, that His resurrection was physical, and that He went back to heaven having finished the work that the Father sent Him to do. Although there have been many attempts to discredit both the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, yet the evidence is overwhelming that Jesus was the Son of God, that He performed real miracles, that He taught as no other person has ever taught, that He died by crucifixion, that He was raised triumphantly from the dead, that He went back to heaven by ascension, and, we can add in the case of Mark's Gospel, chapter 13, which we concluded two Sundays ago, that He is coming again. That He came the first time fulfilling many OT prophecies, gives us confidence that He most certainly will come again. Prophecy is God's way of foretelling the future. Biblical history is the most accurate history that has ever been written. In fact, Biblical history is flawless! You can read any part of the Bible and know that you are reading the truth whether it has to do with the past or with the future. It is all God's Word.

Scanning through the chapter we see that these seventy-two verses give us some of the key events in these final days of our Lord before His death.

Verses 1 and 2 give us the setting of the chapter. Then our text for this morning tells us about what happened in the house of Simon the leper when a woman came in and anointed the Lord's head with very costly ointment.

In verses 10 and 11 we learn how Judas made arrangements with the chief priests to betray the Lord Jesus into their hands.

Beginning with verse 12 we read about what took place as the Lord observed the Passover with His disciples. In verse 26, as they went to the Mount of Olives, the Lord announced to His disciples how they would react when the Lord was taken into custody by the Jewish leaders. They

all denied that they would forsake Him, and Peter boldly declared that he would die before he would forsake the Lord. And all of the other disciples said the same thing.

Our Lord time in Gethsemane is given beginning with verse 32. He took Peter, James, and John with Him into the inner part of the Garden, asking them to watch and pray with Him. But instead of praying, they slept.

Verse 43 tells us of Judas coming with a large group of Jews into the Garden where he betrayed the Lord. In verse 53 we see that Jesus was taken away. Then the initial trial of the Lord took place. The Jews could only produce false witnesses against the Lord who did not agree with each other. But when they asked the Lord if He was the Messiah (v. 61), and He replied that he was, His enemies felt that they had all the evidence that they needed to condemn Him to death. Verse 65 tells how they began to mistreat the Lord.

The chapter closes from verse 66 on with Peter's denial of the Lord. And the chapter ends with Peter in tears. Matthew and Luke describe Peter's weeping as "bitterly," which means that he wept inconsolably. He was overwhelmed with grief for what he had done.

We will get to all of this in the days ahead, the Lord willing, but for this morning I want to look with you especially at the first nine verses which Philip has read for us.

As I have already indicated, in the first two verses we have:

I. THE SETTING (Mark 14:1-2).

It was just two days before the Passover which was immediately followed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Passover, I hope you will remember, was first observed on the night that the Lord delivered the people of Israel from their bondage in Egypt. The account of it in Exodus 12 gives us the most complete picture of salvation that we have in Scripture up to that point. It pictured Christ as the Lamb of God. The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:7 specifically said that "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." So it was really the most sacred, the foundational sacrifice, of all of the OT sacrifices.

But Mark tells us that these Jewish leaders, "the chief priests and the

scribes,” were not preparing their hearts for this sacred event. Instead they were plotting how they could take the Lord “by craft, and put Him to death” (Mark 14:1b). But they showed that they were cowards because they feared what the reaction of the people might be. Many of the people were inclined to believe that Jesus was their Messiah.

This is really a most despicable scene. Even if the Lord had not been the Son of God, it would have been unthinkable that the men who supposedly were the spiritual leaders of the people, would be contemplating the murder of anyone, but when it was the Son of God Who was the target of the evil scheme, it is truly unthinkable that they, of all people, would be planning to kill the Lord. But the fact remains that this is what they were intending to do.

But we move from that dreadful scene to one of the most delightful events to be found in all of the Bible. And it took place in a little village just outside of Jerusalem, a place where the Lord loved to go. This is where Mary and Martha and Lazarus lived. It was Bethany. But it was not in their home that this event took place, but in the home of a man known as “Simon the leper.” This was:

II. THE ANOINTING OF THE LORD JESUS (Mark 14:3-9).

Matthew and John record this incident; Luke did not. Matthew’s account is very similar to Mark’s account, and it is found in Matthew 26:6-13. John’s account is somewhat different, but because of the place that it had in John’s account of our Lord’s last days, and because of what Judas said, and because of the words that the Lord used in responding to the objection, it is generally agreed among expositors that this is the same event that Matthew and Mark referred to in their records of the life of Christ.

John is the only one who tells us who the woman was who poured the ointment on the Lord. But he said that she poured it on his feet, and wiped His feet with her hair. And it seems that Martha and Mary probably were the ones who prepared the meal, but that they did it in Simon the leper’s house. Matthew and Mark have said that this woman poured the ointment on the Lord’s head. But it is easy to see how, if it was poured on our Lord’s head, it would run down to His feet, where Mary wiped it up with her hair.

So I don’t think the differences between John’s account, as compared

with the accounts given by Matthew and Mark, are sufficient to say that these were different events.

We don't know anything specifically about "Simon the leper" since this is the only place that we know that he is mentioned in the Gospel – in Matthew and Mark's accounts. But David Brown of the JFB series makes the suggestion that he might have been the leper that came to the Lord right after the Lord had come down from the mount after giving His Sermon on the Mount. He came to the Lord, following down and worshipping Him, and said, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." And the Lord said, "I will; be thou clean." And immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. See Matthew 8:1-4. It all sounds reasonable, but it is only a suggestion. But we do know from Simon's title, "the leper," that he must have been well-known as one whom the Lord had cured of his leprosy early in His ministry. It is very evident that Simon wanted to show his gratitude to the Lord, and his love for the Lord, for healing him.

With all of the hatred that was directed toward the Lord by the Jewish leaders all during our Lord's ministry, isn't it refreshingly wonderful to see that there were people even in those days who truly loved the Lord and who wanted to express their love for Him because of what He had done for them. There always have been people like these people were, and I want to be like them.

Dr John G. Mitchell, with whom I worked for ten years, who also was one of my teachers at Dallas Seminary, is the first one who pointed out to me that three times Mary of Bethany is mentioned in Scripture, *and each time she is mentioned, she is at the Lord's feet*. The first time is in Luke 11:39 where we learn that Martha had a sister named Mary "which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His Word." The second time is in John 11, verse 32. The Lord had not come when first He was told that Lazarus was sick. In fact, He waited until Lazarus died. But when He came, He appeared to Martha first, and then to Mary. And the Apostle John tells us this that Mary did, and said:

32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at His feet, saying unto Him, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

And the third time is found in John's account of Mary's anointing of the Lord. These are the words we find in John 12:3:

3 Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair;

and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.

Then Dr. Mitchell summarized those three incidents in the life of Mary this way:

- 1) First, she was at His feet for instruction.
- 2) Second, she was at His feet for comfort.
- 3) Third, she was at His feet to worship Him.

Let's not miss the lesson that is here for all of us. And men, let's not hesitate for a moment to learn from our ladies who are devoted to the Lord. I don't know how long Mary had been saving up to buy the ointment that she poured out upon the Lord, but I do know that it was estimated to be worth 300 denarii. One denarius was the common pay for a day's labor. So this was about what a person could earn in a year with nothing taken out for food or clothing or taxes. Judas in John's account said that it should have been given to the poor, but he was a liar who didn't care for the poor; he just wanted to get his hands on the money. One of the accounts says that there were others who felt that way, and another account said that the disciples felt that pouring it out on the Lord was a waste. Mary gave this as an expression of her love for the Lord, and she probably felt that it was not nearly enough to give to the Lord.

But what did the Lord say? That is the important part. Look at verses 6 through 9 in our text.

He told them to leave her alone. It was none of their business. The important thing about her gift was *why she gave it*. Do you remember the many times in the Gospels when the Lord spoke to His disciples about His approaching death, and they either rebuked Him, or simply did not understand what He was talking about. But the Lord said, "She hath wrought **a good work on Me.**" And then He added, "She is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying." She evidently had come to understand that the Lord had come to die, *and she must have understood why He was going to die. She knew that He was going to die for her!* How could you put a price on that? But she was not trying to purchase her salvation; she was just seeking in her own way to express her gratitude to the Lord for His love for her.

But He said one other thing. You will find the words I am thinking about now in verse 9 of our text. **(Read verse 9.)** Notice the word, "this Gospel." *And here we are this morning doing the very thing that the Lord said would be done "for a memorial of her."* The important thing was

not the price of what she gave to the Lord, but the reason that she gave what she gave. There is nothing in Scripture that would lead us to believe that Mary and Martha and Lazarus were wealthy. I am sure that they were not. But when it came to giving as an expression of her love for the Lord, no amount would be too much. This was worship, true worship.

The people who watched her give (at least some of them) spoke, and spoke critically. The words of the Lord Jesus are very important and full of instruction for all of us. But Mary said nothing. She just gave. And the Lord was touched by her love for Him

Concl: The way ahead from this point on was very difficult indeed.

None of us will probably ever know how difficult it was. But how gracious it was of God to give such encouragement to His Son as the battle lines were being tightened, and the enemy of our souls was bringing all the forces of hell against our Savior. But it seems clear to me that that which brings the greatest joy to the heart of our God and of our Lord Jesus Christ, is when from our hearts we worship Him in love, grateful for all of the blessings that He daily loads upon us, and reveling in the intimate and priceless relationship that we have we have with Him. He is our God, and we are His people. Let us ask Him to teach us what it means to worship Him, and to live our lives with thankful hearts for all of His many blessings which daily He pours out upon us.