

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabile.org.

Date: March 13, 2011

Title: The Anointing - The Coming Crisis

Text: Mark 14:3-9

Theme: The coming crisis and the beauty of selfless worship by an unnamed woman (John 12 - Mary). Your personal popularity is not important; the object of your praise is.

Author: Patrick J. Griffiths ©2011

Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in the Storyline of the Bible. She is determined by design to have a God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching focused on personal discipleship through intentional and systematic instruction; a Global-impacting mission that resolves to be a church planting church; and a Grace-based fellowship where disciples are invited to live under a reigning grace characterized by a Gospel-driven sanctification that celebrates a divine monergism to the Christian life.

Becoming the People of the Resurrection
Lent - 2011

Date: March 13, 2011
 Title: The Anointing – The Coming Crisis
 Text: Mark 14:3-9
 Theme: The coming crisis and the beauty of selfless worship by an unnamed woman (John 12 – Mary). Your personal popularity is not important; the object of your praise is.

The “Felt” need for God’s embrace in Mark 14:3-9

- How many of us feel like social outcasts and feel distance between ourselves and our peers/classmates/co-workers?
 - Perhaps you are always the one picked last when sides are taken?
 - Perhaps you feel alienated and isolated by your classmates?
 - Perhaps your ideas at work are never entertained?
 - Perhaps you've been repeatedly passed over for job advancement?
 - Perhaps your spouse makes you feel less than accepted?
 - Perhaps your parents are always critical of your activity and your heart aches for their affirmation and approval?
- How many of us yearn to be forgiven of past transgressions? How many of us are still living in a present bondage because of past sins?
 - Perhaps you've committed a sin that no one knows of but you and God and you are so ashamed of it you would figuratively “die” if anyone else knew?
 - Perhaps you've been the victim of some heinous act?
 - Perhaps you are currently addicted to a destructive behavior whose knowledge would cause you to lose your job or be rejected by your peers?
- How many of us bring a partial offering and superficial worship when we know deep down there is more?
 - Perhaps you never read your Bible?
 - Perhaps you've never regularly given any money to the church?
- How many of us desire the favor/blessing of God but live in fear of never receiving it?
 - Perhaps you wonder if your current difficulty is a result of God's judgment and rejection.
 - Perhaps you wonder if God really cares and if He is actually hearing your prayers or if your prayers actually matter to Him.

Simon the Leper felt the unconditional love and acceptance of God. Mary knew the depth of God's forgiveness and poured out a year's worth of earning as an act of devotion and worship. Judas rejected God's kingdom and sought the establishment of his own. He willingly sacrificed the eternal on the altar of the temporal.

Somewhere in these three personas we find ourselves. Each contributes to our understanding of the Gospel. May the Holy Spirit help us to see ourselves in the text and may we be compelled to worship Him.

Introduction:

As we enter into Passion Week, there are “signs” pointing to the uniqueness of this moment. The message is public, but often we are deaf to its voice. This is no less true for us today. Jesus still speaks and often we are simply not listening or are afraid of what these changes mean for our own comfort and happiness.

THE BIG PICTURE:

Palm Sunday is the day we traditionally remember the Lord’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem--the Sunday before His passion and resurrection. The triumphal entry was a formal presentation of Jesus as Israel’s King. Relentlessly the events of the Savior’s life had moved toward His death on the cross. Following Peter’s confession of Christ as “the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Jesus “began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.” As He left Galilee for the final time to go up to Jerusalem, Luke tells us, “And it came about, when the days were approaching for His ascension, that He resolutely set His face to go to Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51). He was committed to the cross.

However, a number of events occurred the week before which were preparatory for the momentous event of Christ’s death for us on the cross. Jesus reached Bethany (only two miles from Jerusalem) six days before the Passover (John 12:1). Each morning He would journey to Jerusalem and then return in the evening to Bethany. He did this all week until His arrest. <http://bible.org/article/anointing-bethany>

It was the week of Passover; the Passover feast was only a few days away and Jesus was reclining (relaxing) at the home of one of His followers. The book of John identifies the woman as Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus. John also tells us she anointed Jesus’ feet using her hair as a towel (John 12:3).

The final shadows immediately prior to the full disclosure of man’s redemption is pictured through two venues: first, His anointing at Bethany (Mark 14:3-9) and then, His last Passover in the Upper Room (Mark 14:12-26). All of this will speak to the nature of the offering and the one who offered.

There are several prominent aspects to the initial “shadow”. “The anointing at Bethany is bracketed by two examples of furtiveness and deception. Mark 14:1-2 describes the chief priests and scribes’ desire to arrest Jesus by stealth and then kill him. Mark 14:10-11 relates Judas’ negotiations with the chief priests about betraying Jesus, followed by his search for an opportunity to betray. The juxtaposition of dangerous secrets with the deliberate candor and visibility of the woman with the ointment is striking. She has no fear of approaching Jesus openly; her faith and love propel her forward. In sharp contrast are the chief priests, scribes, and Judas, who cannot face Jesus. Their dishonesty compels them to lurk in the shadows. Perhaps Mark is asking us to examine our ability to face Jesus.”

http://www.mountsaintagnes.org/uploadedFiles/Resources/Research_Papers/In%20Memory%20of%20Her,%20The%20Anointing%20Woman%20-%20Mark%2014.3-9.pdf, “In Memory of Her, The Anointing Woman,” Mark 14:3-9, Brenda M. Johnson, M.A.

First, the event takes place in the home of a "leper" (v. 2). Second, the costly act was rebuffed by some (probably Judas; he held the money [cf. Mark 15:10, 11; John 13:29]). Third, although some shamed her by open indignation and public scolding, Jesus affirms the act and the individual and assures her of renown (v. 6). Fourth, the anointing is in preparation for His burial (v. 8).

Each of the four gospels record an anointing. Matthew, Mark and John provided complimentary elements to a single story; Luke 7 gives another anointing of a different kind. Our attention is on Mark 14 and the expanding elements provided by Matthew and John.

The Storyline:

<p>Mark 14:3 While He was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper, and reclining at the table, there came a woman with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume of pure nard; and she broke the vial and poured it over His head.</p> <p>4 But some were indignantly remarking to one another, "Why has this perfume been wasted?</p> <p>5 "For this perfume might have been sold for over three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor." And they were scolding her.</p> <p>6 But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you bother her? She has done a good deed to Me.</p> <p>7 "For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you wish you can do good to them; but you do not always have Me.</p> <p>8 "She has done what she could; she has anointed My body beforehand for the burial.</p> <p>9 "Truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her."</p>	<p>Matthew 26:6 ¶ Now when Jesus was in Bethany, at the home of Simon the leper,</p> <p>7 a woman came to Him with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume, and she poured it on His head as He reclined at the table.</p> <p>8 But the disciples were indignant when they saw this, and said, "Why this waste?</p> <p>9 "For this perfume might have been sold for a high price and the money given to the poor."</p> <p>10 But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you bother the woman? For she has done a good deed to Me.</p> <p>11 "For you always have the poor with you; but you do not always have Me.</p> <p>12 "For when she poured this perfume on My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial.</p> <p>13 "Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her."</p>	<p>John 12:1 ¶ Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.</p> <p>2 So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him.</p> <p>3 Mary then took a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.</p> <p>4 But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, *said,</p> <p>5 "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to poor people?"</p> <p>6 Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it.</p> <p>7 Therefore Jesus said, "Let her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial.</p> <p>8 "For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have Me."</p> <p>9 The large crowd of the</p>	<p>Luke 7:36 Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table.</p> <p>37 And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume,</p> <p>38 and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume.</p> <p>39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner."</p> <p>40 And Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he replied, "Say it, Teacher."</p> <p>41 "A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.</p>
--	--	---	--

<p>10 Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went off to the chief priests in order to betray Him to them.</p> <p>11 They were glad when they heard this, and promised to give him money. And he began seeking how to betray Him at an opportune time.</p>		<p>Jews then learned that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead.</p> <p>10 But the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also;</p> <p>11 because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus.</p>	
---	--	--	--

The Problem:

The following quote from Robertson's *Harmony of the Gospels* is given in connection with the accounts in Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; and John 12:2-8. The contrast being made is between these accounts and the one in Galilee, not the one in Bethany recorded in the other three gospels.

The anointing has nothing in common with that given by Luke, except the fact of a woman anointing the Savior's feet, and the name Simon, which was common. The former was in Galilee, this is at Bethany near Jerusalem. There the host despised the woman who anointed; here her brother is one of the guests, and her sister an active attendant. There the woman was "a sinner," a notoriously bad woman, here it is the devout Mary who "sat at the Lord's feet and heard his word" months before. There the host thought it strange that Jesus allowed her to touch him, here the disciples complain of waste. There the Savior gave assurance of forgiveness, here of perpetual and world-wide honor. Especially notice that here the woman who anoints is anticipating his speedy death and burial, of which at the former time he had never distinctly spoken. In view of all these differences it is absurd to represent the two as the same and outrageous on such slender ground to cast reproach on Mary of Bethany.

Outline:

Mark's narrative uses powerful words, words such as "very costly perfume of pure nard," "some were indignant," "they were scolding her," "what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her," and "went off in order to betray Him," and "they were glad when they heard this." There is much bare emotion laid before the reader. On what hand we have the abandonment of a broken, but zealous follower. Her worship is uninhibited. It is unashamedly "sloppy". She gives what she deems to be the best and all she possesses in order to honor the one who set her free. We often encounter those who willingly give all they possess in their pursuit of Jesus Christ. This text identifies the cost of the gift as a year's wage. Consider how much we make in one year and would we be willing to give that same substance to Christ and His Church? We are not told of her encounter with Jesus, but it was severe enough to warrant this unrestricted act of adulation. She could give no more than what she gave. All she had was now "wasted" in her service to Jesus.

The setting for the anointing speaks to three changes that are about to happen.

I. There is a change in social acceptance - "Simon the leper"

At the end of his Gospel John wrote, " And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books which should be written." Christians of all ages have wondered about those unrecorded events, and possibly one of the unwritten stories might concern Simon the leper.

"The house of ['belonged to'] Simon the leper," apparently one of the leading men of the village, who had been a leper, but had been cured of his leprosy by Jesus -- "and yet men called him Simon the leper still. You see how old names, like old reputations, stick. There would be many who could never talk of Simon, but they would add, 'Of course, you have heard that he was a leper once?' And yet I think that Simon loved his name" (G. H. Morrison).

http://www.studyjesus.com/lifeofchrist/lesson_85.htm

It is unfortunate, but we live in a context where secrets are kept. We do not want anyone to know of our dark past, but all of us here have a dark past. We no longer identify ourselves by our past misdeeds, but by our present position as Christians. Yet we were once all spiritual lepers.

A. His Grief

How he went from disease to deliverance is for us to surmise, but we need not look far. Leprosy was a terrible disease, the worst of the worst. It invaded the body like poison, paralyzing one's flesh, turning it pale white and rotting it away, leaving its victim disfigured. Lepers were cast out of their city and forced to find shelter in primitive, pitiful places with other lepers, totally isolated, feared and looked down upon by all.

B. His Gratitude

But here Simon the leper is home! He's not only home, he's hosting Jesus for supper! Some would suggest he is the parent of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Here is a family that had been visited by tragedy and now triumphs in the power of the Son. His life has been radically changed since meeting the master healer, Jesus the Christ. Instead of being in isolation, he is in celebration. Instead of dying with lepers, he is dining with the Lord. Simon's life has been forever impacted by the Son of God!

C. His Gladness

Who can capture the complete joy of a soul delivered from depression, disease, and death? Here we have his story.

II. There is a change in monetary value - “very costly ointment”

There is tremendous emotion in this text. First, that of Simeon the healed leper; second, that of a woman whose act was inadequate but all she had; then there is Jesus, who rests in the home of a friend and finds pleasure in the devotion expressed; finally, that of the hardened hypocrite. The energy in the room is palatable.

A. Her act was personal/selfless (“She did it”)

As if to declare the majesty of Simon's guest of honor, Mary of Bethany performs one of the most beautiful acts of worship recorded in Scripture. She anoints the Savior with Spikenard from her alabaster box Spikenard - a rare and costly perfume from India made with nard plants that are grown at the highest elevations of the Himalayas. Precious in its fragrance, Enormous in its value; kept in an alabaster box. A translucent stone used to make the finest jewelry boxes and perfume flask; valued at 300 pence by Judas, a whole year's wages. Mary's gift on the Savior represented the best she had to give. No doubt the perfume was her dowry; her chance at the thing all Hebrew girls desired, marriage. Mary's gift was a gift given only once. She broke the box, it couldn't be used again. Mary's gift was a gift that affected everyone in the house. John 12:3 says, “The house was filled with the odor of the ointment.” Mary's gift was a gift that was criticized by others. Judas and other disciples called it a waste, he said that she could have put her gift to better use (given to poor- no, more for him to steal).

B. Her act was priceless/sacrificial (“Very costly perfume”)

“But Mary has no intention of spreading out the use of her expensive nard, so she breaks the neck of the flask and proceeds to pour the entire contents on our Lord. In the light of the accounts in Matthew and Mark, it appears that she starts with His head, and lets the liquid run down on the rest of His body, ending up at His feet. I take it that she uses her loosened hair to wipe up the excess ointment, which would otherwise run onto the floor—a truly needless waste. And so it is that this woman pours out her love on the Savior, by sacrificing the most precious thing she owns. It is truly a beautiful act, and all are blessed by it as the sweet smell of this fragrance fills the house.”

http://bible.org/seriespage/sweet-smell-love-and-stench-greed-john-121-8#P3351_1294920

“This *aromatic oil*, if made of something like nard, would have been extremely expensive, costing up to a year's pay for an average laborer.” <http://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Mark+14:3>

- Median for all male full-time \$45,941; Median for all female full-time \$33,701; March 6, 2011 - \$40,000.

“The essence of this ointment was derived from pure *nard*, which is an aromatic herb grown in the high pasture-land of the Himalayas, between Tibet and India” (Hendriksen, vol. 2, p. 175, citing from M. S. and J. L. Miller, *Encyclopedia of Bible Life*, New York and London, 1944, pp. 204, 205).”

- C. Her act was prophetic/foresighted (“She has anointed my body beforehand for the burial”)

Mary’s gift was memorialized by the Lord. He forever linked it with the Gospel, which, like the woman’s pouring out of costly and precious ointment to anoint the Savior, proclaims the pouring out of the precious and costly blood of Christ to atone for the sinner. Mary’s gift was her ultimate act of worship. The pouring out of the ointment was symbolic of her heart poured out in adoration to Christ. Mary’s anointing can rightly be identified as “extravagant worship”. “Extravagance” goes beyond reasonable limits. We are extravagant in so many areas of our lives; homes, vehicles, clothing, dining out, jewelry, sports interests and hobbies, vacations, and gift-giving. Yet when it comes to worship we are often like the people of Malachi’s day; bringing the least we have to give or the worst we have to offer. Our God deserves extravagant worship - worship that goes beyond reasonable limits; worship that is costly and precious, fragrant and sacrificial, a pouring out of our hearts to God. Why should we offer God extravagant worship; because of God’s extravagant work in our behalf.

If I were a leper healed of my disease I would find what this woman did appropriate. Only those untouched by the Master would criticize such devotion and identify such acts as wasteful.

“John tells us a very important detail, not revealed to us by either Matthew or Mark: the one who incites the disciples to anger is Judas. Now things start to make sense. John not only informs us that Judas is behind all this reaction, he also informs us as to why. Judas, John indicates, is a thief. Now here is a bit of information we find nowhere else in the New Testament; yet this one bit of information causes all of the other pieces to fall into place.”

http://bible.org/seriespage/sweet-smell-love-and-stench-greed-john-121-8#P3351_1294920

The contrast is compelling.

III. There is a change in man’s perspective - “Anointed my body for burial”

A. The memorial - “she will be remembered”

We have no idea how far reaching our actions will carry us. Her intent was to simply serve her Lord and she has forever been immortalized by her selfless and sacrificial act.

B. The mission - “the gospel is preached in the whole world”

Jesus speaks of burial, but in this death there is resurrection and thus hope. The mission He embarks on has global consequences.

What His immediate disciples did not see, this unnamed woman did. What is equally striking through Passion Week is the role women will have. Here a woman understands the impending event. A man carries a water jug, and when all His male disciples flee it will be the women who stand by His side in dying.

The events unfolding are “gospel” and will encircle the whole world. What power lies in such simple statements; the death and burial we are about to face are “good news”. This gospel is going to be preached into the whole world. Such thinking is staggering.

The menacing hypocrisy of those who scolded her was a dirty endeavor to douse the white flames of her devotion as they exposed their own dead hearts. It was black and dead, empty of virility. Jesus knew and noted the deadness of faith and rebuffed them. He cuddles the warmth of her faith and notes the integrity of the act and guarantees her own renown.

Evil slithers back to the den of vipers and sets in motion the betrayal. In the fullness of time, when everything aligns according to *The Story*, then and only then will each piece be played in its proper place. The anointing is a necessary link in the chain forged for His people to become people of the resurrection.

All of these factors speak to larger, greater truths. The author allows us to peak behind the veil and see Judas betray him to the chief priests and officers of the temple police.

In 1495, Duke Ludovico of Milan asked the Florentine artist Leonardo da Vinci to portray (he dramatic scene of Jesus' last supper with His disciples as they gathered in the Upper Room before His crucifixion. The scene was to be painted on a large wall of the dining hall at Santa Maria delle Grazie monastery in Milan. Da Vinci, then forty-three years old and already famous as a painter, sculptor, and architect, agreed to take on the assignment.

Working slowly and with great care for detail, he spent three years completing the painting. The disciples were grouped in threes, two groups on either side of the figure of Christ, who sat at the center of the table. His arms stretched before Him. In His right hand He held a wine cup, painted with marvelous realism. At last the painting was ready, and da Vinci called in a friend to see it. "Give me your honest opinion" da Vinci said.

"It's wonderful," the friend told him. "That cup is so real I cannot keep my eyes off it." Da Vinci immediately took a brush and drew it across the sparkling cup. "If it affects you that way it must not remain," he exclaimed. "Nothing shall distract attention from the figure of Christ."

“The woman is the only one in the passage who clearly sees who Jesus really is. She acts on that understanding and does the very best she can to manifest her faith and love by offering Jesus some human comfort. With Jesus' promise of remembrance, we perceive that this act transcends the encounter in the house at Bethany, two days before the crucifixion. The woman with the alabaster jar of spikenard is every person who manifests faith and love for Jesus. By helping him prepare for the worst ordeal imaginable, the woman has earned not only Jesus' support and gratitude, but also immortality.”

http://www.mountsaintagnes.org/uploadedFiles/Resources/Research_Papers/In%20Memory%20of%20Her,%20The%20Anointing%20Woman%20-%20Mark%2014:3-9.pdf, "In Memory of Her, The Anointing Woman," Mark 14:3-9, Brenda M. Johnson, M.A.

The Church Calendar (i.e. Lent) is a time to reflect on one's place in *The Story*. It is possible to forget, to get lost, and to become consumed by all things temporal. The Church Calendar (i.e. Lent) is a time to remember, to find, and to become what one is. Perhaps you've lost yourself in the values systems of this world or perhaps in the politically-correct or socially-acceptable, and in so doing you've lost your way.

Friends, now is the time to once more awaken to the richness of God's *Story*. Will you now awaken and join me in this fantastical pursuit of knowing who He is, what He has done and who we now are in Him? Join me and you will never be the same.

Shepherding the Sheep: (What's the NEXT STEP?)

1. During the next 40 days how might you reach out to those who are considered socially unacceptable? Where might you serve them? How might you in your life group serve in the community over the next 40 days?
2. During the next 40 days what might you do differently as an expression of your devotion to the Lord? What gift might you bring to Him during this period? Perhaps you do not give any financial gift to the Lord or perhaps you do not serve Him in any tangible way. Maybe over the next 40 days you might start giving or perhaps start serving on Sunday Mornings or Thursday nights.
3. During the next 40 days I want to encourage all of us to be more intentional in our focus on the Lord and we approach Passion Week and Resurrection Sunday.