

PROFILES IN DEVOTION

Monday, August 28

Reading: Mark 14:1-11

Mark 14:4 *Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? 5 It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly. 6 "Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to Me.*

The event of Mark 14:3-9 is a flashback to the previous Saturday evening (John 12:1-8). John tells us this unnamed woman is Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. Mark places the story here to set up a contrast between the loving devotion of Mary and the treachery of Judas and the chief priests.

MARY'S DEVOTION: Mary anoints Jesus with an expensive perfume made from a root found in India. The jar and oil were worth a whole year's wages. Some in the crowd, including Jesus' disciples, rebuke her for this action. John's gospel tells us Judas leads the attack. But Jesus comes to her defense. He saw her action as a beautiful expression of love and devotion to Him. He says she did it in preparation for His burial and everywhere the gospel is preached her act of devotion would be told in memory of her love.

JUDAS' BETRAYAL: The chief priests were in a dilemma. They wanted to get rid of Jesus but were at a loss for how to do it without the adoring crowds finding out. Judas' betrayal solved their problem. Now they would know when Jesus was away from the crowds and could arrest Him secretly. It appears this last rebuke by Jesus had driven Judas over the edge and he agrees to betray Jesus for money.

POINTS TO PONDER:

1. "She Broke the Jar and Poured the Perfume on His Head." Mary worshipped Jesus with extravagance and abandon. She gave her very best despite the opinions and criticism of others. She did not care what others thought. She gave her all – money, emotions, spirit, will – in love for her Lord. Do you worship in this way or do you simply go through the motions? When have you been guilty of criticizing someone who is truly worshipping with all their heart?
2. "Judas Iscariot Went to the Chief Priests to Betray Jesus." The question that is usually asked is: Why did Judas betray Jesus? Like any sinful action, there was probably a combination of reasons. Greed was a factor because he accepted money for his betrayal. He was probably disillusioned with Jesus after the last few months of predicting His rejection and death and decided to get out and get what He could before it was too late. Ultimately Satan himself would enter Judas (Luke 22:3; John 13:2, 27). But Satan could not have controlled Judas if his heart was not already willing to despise and reject the One he had followed for the past few years. The life of Judas serves as a warning. He had walked and lived with Jesus for years. He was involved in the work of the ministry when Jesus sent the disciples out two-by-two. He witnessed all the miracles and teachings of Jesus. But somehow he had never given his heart to the Lord. You can attend church, hang around other believers, know all the jargon, and even do good things, but it is all worthless if your heart does not belong to the Savior. Let Judas' example be a warning to each of us to examine our hearts to be sure we are committed to the glory of God and not the glory of 'self.'