

from slavery (as recorded in the book of Exodus). As these men, who had each celebrated this special feast for many years, gathered around the table, what does Jesus begin to talk about?

How do you think these words struck those who heard?

How do they respond?

What is implied in the question raised by those there? They all were asking, "Is it I?" What does that suggest about what they understood about themselves? What they thought about the others around them?

These were the men who had walked, personally and intimately, with Jesus for three and a half years. If each of them could question his own faithfulness, what does that tell you about what is holding this "band of brothers" together?

What does that insight tell you about your own security in relationship with Jesus? How should you probably understand the foundation for your stability in life with Him?

Although Jesus raises the issue of the uncertainty of one of his closest follower's commitment to Him, there is something that never wavers: Jesus' commitment to His disciples! Spend some time today thanking Jesus for His enduring faithfulness to you. Settle down in your confidence in His ability to keep you—and not your ability to keep yourself—in His grace.

### Day Five

Mark turns his attention, for a few verses, to the institution of the Lord's Supper, what we sometimes refer to as "communion." Read Mark 14:22-25. What is your initial thought about what Jesus does here?

All of this is happening in the midst of the traditional Jewish Passover celebration. Read Exodus 12:1-51.

What was the purpose of the celebration of the annual feast of Passover?

What critical event, in the life of the nation, does Passover recall?

How do you think those celebrating Passover, year in and year out, would have thought about their own lives as they celebrated?

Jesus instituted a change in this traditional and defining celebration. In the Passover, God called for a lamb's blood to be spilled to provide deliverance for the people; the annual celebration commemorated that. How do Jesus' words and actions redefine God's saving work on behalf of His people?

After this re-configuration of the Passover meal, how do you think Jesus' closest followers would understand their relationship with the Living God? How does that change in thinking stir you to think about—and relate to—God?

### Day One

We pick back up in our devotions in Mark after Jesus has entered the city of Jerusalem and as He begins His final few days with His closest followers before His death. The city of Bethany is near Jerusalem, and this is where Jesus is staying during the time of the feast that is being celebrated at the Temple. Read Mark 14:3-9.

What do you know about leprosy? How has Jesus dealt with such situations before in Mark? (See, for example, Mark 1:40-45.)

For Simon to host a "dinner party" for Jesus and His companions, Simon must have been cured of his leprosy. With that in mind, what might this gathering have been like?

Jesus has repeatedly made it known that He was going to be killed in Jerusalem (e.g., see 10:32-34). Tension is obviously high in Jerusalem (see 14:1-2). What else might be influencing the feel of the gathering at Simon's house?

What is your initial reaction to what the woman did? Why?

The "ointment" mentioned (14:3) was a very costly and somewhat rare perfume that came from India. (Those who commented on her actions said that the perfume itself was worth 300 denari—a year's wages for an average laborer.) She broke the flask and emptied the whole of the contents on Jesus. What kind of act is that? How would you describe it?

Jesus appears to be treating lightly the concern for the poor raised by some who were there. Do you think Jesus is calling for His followers to ignore the poor in their midst? Why or why not?

Jesus insists that what this woman has done is so important that “wherever the Gospel is proclaimed . . . what she has done will be told.” Clearly, He saw what she did as tremendously significant. What is so important about her seemingly extravagant, wasteful action?

Earlier, Jesus spoke about losing what is seemingly of value in order to gain what is of real value. (Look at how He said it in Mark 8:34-38.) How might the woman’s actions serve as an expression of the truth that Jesus taught back in Mark 8?

How does this woman’s example stir your thinking about how *you* respond to Jesus?

### *Day Two*

Judas. What comes to mind when you think of him?

A small spotlight shines on him as we read about Jesus’ final week in Jerusalem. Read Mark 14:10-11.

There has only been one other mention of Judas in Mark up until this point. What does Mark tell you in 3:13-19?

What do you make of Jesus’ “appointing” Judas to be one of those who would “be with him” (3:14)?

Apparently, Judas participated in the missionary “journey”

of the twelve, as recorded earlier in the Gospel (6:7-13). We are not told, explicitly, what Judas himself personally did. How would you understand what could have happened as he went out with another of the twelve?

Mark uses a word “betray” (14:10) that means “to hand over to” another. Look at some of the other places where this word is used by Mark: 1:14 (translated “arrested”); 9:31; 10:33; 13:9, 12. What sense do you get for this word?

Mark tells us that the chief priests were “glad” when Judas came to arrange for Jesus’ betrayal. The word means that they were glad, expressive in joy.

How can you make sense of Judas’ betrayal and the chief priests’ delight? What would lead them there?

Perhaps one of the ways to understand what is going on with Judas and the priests is to compare their reactions to Jesus with that of the woman we met in 14:3-9. Reflecting on her response to Jesus, what thoughts come to mind that might help explain the actions of Judas and the priests?

### *Day Three*

Mark gives us some of the details about Jesus’ journey into the city of Jerusalem for the celebration of the Passover. Read Mark 14:12-16.

What do you think it would have been like to be one of the two disciples who were sent ahead in search of the place to gather? What would you have experienced?

Jesus could have gone into the city by Himself or even with the whole entourage of disciples in order to locate the room that they would meet in for the Passover celebration. That being the case, His sending two disciples on ahead must have been for some reason. What reason can you think of that would justify such action?

It would seem that Jesus intended the disciples (both the two and the rest, once they heard the report of the two) to learn something from this experience. What do you think the two would have shared with the others on their return?

What do you think the twelve would have seen or understood through the experience of the two? In other words, what “lesson” is inherent in the experience?

Perhaps part of the way to grasp what is going on in this little account is to focus on the phrase “just as He had told them” (14:16). What impact would it have had for the disciples to realize that what they were experiencing was “just as He had told them”?

How would that lesson serve them in the days and weeks to come? What has Jesus told them about the next few days? What does He want them to understand?

Although you didn’t personally live through this little moment in time, what do you learn about Jesus from what Mark writes here?

### *Day Four*

The Passover was to be celebrated annually by all Jews. And, the best place to celebrate was in Jerusalem. This is what Jesus and his followers begin to do in Mark 14:17-21.

The Passover was a time to remember how God had dealt mercifully and graciously with Israel in delivering them