

Wednesday: Unrestrained Devotion

For today's journey, read Mark 14:1-9

REFLECT

Wednesday is quiet for Jesus...for the most part. It is the “calm before the storm.” However, there is one controversial thing that we are told happened at some point today. Jesus is invited to the house of “Simon the leper.” Simon was likely someone who Jesus had healed. Jesus sits down for the meal when, out of nowhere, a woman comes forward to anoint Jesus’ head with a jar of perfume. Mark wants us to be sure of one thing, this was an expensive endeavor. Mark called this jar “very costly.” And the disciples called her reckless for wasting it. Jesus has already had His feet washed with expensive perfume five days before this at Lazarus’ house (John 12:1). But Jesus says this anointing is different. This anointing is to prepare His body for burial.

The contrast is palpable. In the first 9 verses in Mark, one group is plotting to put Jesus to death while one woman is preparing Him for it. This unknown woman boldly slips into a private dinner setting to complete a loving and devoted action of allegiance. Her anointing is meant to express one thing: her devotion to a king - living or dead. And her passion to express her devotion would not be restricted by death, insults, or threats. Unrestrained devotion to Jesus will make us stand out in our world. It may give us feelings of uneasiness or even shame when others mock it and don't understand. When this happens, remember this unnamed woman in Mark 14. Remember her loving act of sacrifice. And remember the honor Jesus paid her for her unrestrained devotion; “wherever the Gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be spoken about.”

ASK

- How does the woman's act of anointing Jesus with expensive perfume demonstrate her devotion?
- Why didn't the fact that Jesus was going to die affect this woman's act of devotion to Him?
- Why do you think the woman was willing to endure verbal insults and potential social backlash in order to anoint Jesus?
- In what ways might our society today discourage or even mock expressions of faith and devotion? How can you overcome these obstacles?

Pray that God would give you the boldness to serve Him with unrestrained devotion, even in the face of opposition and misunderstanding.