

Mark 14:1-11
The Most Excellent Way

Warm Up

Have you ever done anything extravagant as an act of love for someone? An over the top proposal? A surprise holiday for your spouse? An expensive gift for an anniversary?

Background and context

There are two occasions when Jesus is anointed by a woman. One with perfume on his feet and wiped off with the woman's hair. The other, perfume is poured on His head. In both, the response to the woman's action is indignant outrage; "A waste of money." Jesus's reaction was very different. The perfume, worth a year's wages, (£40,000 in modern money) would have been a dowry, her emergency savings or an investment for the future. She gives it all in an extravagant act of worship.

Thinking it through: Main discussion/activity



READ Mark 14:1-11. What are the surprising things in the passage? What is new? What don't you really understand?

1. There are two 'plots' in this passage. The woman plots (plans) to anoint Jesus. She has thought about it carefully. What is the other plot? What does it reveal about responses to Jesus? Where is Jesus in our plotting and planning?
2. What was the reaction of the disciples (cf: Matt 26:8) to the woman's action?
3. Why do you think they might have had this response? Was it genuine concern for the poor or was a sense of guilt at her greater devotion to Jesus?
4. Have you ever found yourself commenting on the action of others regarding how they use their money? What is the motive behind these thoughts and comments?
5. Are there times in our Christian experience when we 'judge' others because their devotion and worship is greater than ours? Why might we do this?
6. **Read Deuteronomy 15:11.** How does Jesus use this verse to shut down the disciples' complaints?
7. What is Jesus' response to the woman's actions? Why does He react this way?
8. How does Jesus connect her actions to His future?
9. What was Judas' response to this incident? Our knowledge of Judas is limited, why might he have responded this way? (John 12:6, Luke 22:3-6, John 6:70-71)
10. There are two legacies in the story, the woman's and Judas'. How do they differ?

Discipleship and Application



11. How can we, as Christians, behave like the woman towards Jesus?
12. How can we guard against reacting like the disciples when we see the generosity of others?



Try to leave 15-20 mins to talk about prayer needs of the group and to pray.

There are many creative ways of praying together: writing prayers, using candles as a focus, reading prayers or praying for each other in pairs.