

**Sermon Title: The King is Anointed, The Final Week, Week Four**

**Preacher: John Beeson**

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**Sermon Questions:**

1. In Mark 14:3–9, why does Jesus say the woman’s act of anointing him is “beautiful,” even though others call it a waste? What does her action reveal about her understanding of Jesus’ mission?
2. Compare the woman’s act of devotion in with Jesus washing the disciples’ feet in. What do these two scenes teach us about the kind of king Jesus is and the kind of followers he calls us to be?
3. The woman broke a costly flask to honor Jesus. What “flask” in your life feels hardest to break open for him—your time, reputation, resources, comfort, or something else? What might extravagant love for Jesus look like in that area?
4. Jesus tells Peter that unless he lets Jesus wash him, he has no share with him. Where do you struggle to receive grace or be served by others? What makes it difficult for you to accept Jesus’ care in that place?
5. Jesus washed the feet of every disciple—including Judas. Is there someone in your life whose “feet” you are avoiding washing? What might it look like to serve them in the way Jesus has served you?

**Transcript**

One of the greatest things that a movie can have is a plot twist. I don't know your favorite movies with plot twists. I think of the first time that I watched the Usual Suspects and the Aha or the Sixth Sense and the Unveiling. And here's the amazing thing about a plot twist is once the plot twist comes, it's not just a twist. It changes everything that you viewed before the whole way that you look at the story.

We're going to step into our text today. There's going to be three scenes and one plot twist. Now, if you've been a Christian for a while, I want to encourage us and challenge you to see the text with new eyes, because odds are you've seen this text so long and for in the context and through the twist that you've missed the twist that you've forgotten just how shocking the twist is. We're navigating this sermon series called the Final Week. And as we navigate it, we come to Wednesday of the final week of Jesus life.

And we're gonna navigate through both Wednesday night and then we're gonna shift over.

We're gonna go into Thursday night as well, and we're going to talk about the anointing of Jesus and then move into the washing of the feet. And we're going to land in communion in the Last Supper together and celebrate that together. In the middle of that, we're going to see in the beginning of that, we're going to see a woman who sees a woman who sees what no one else is, has been able to see a Savior who has come, a king who has come not for a throne, but for something very different. So let's open up our text.

We're gonna start in Mark 14, and we're gonna meet this woman on Wednesday, two days before Jesus is crucified. Let's open up our text. It begins this way. It was now two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. So this is Wednesday of the final week of Jesus life.

Jesus will be crucified on Friday on the Passover feast. The text continues, and the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him. For they said, not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people. You see that the plot is hatched. We've seen this bubbling as we've navigated this final week of Jesus life.

And it crescendos now with a timeliness. The leaders now say, we need to arrest Christ, put him to death, and the time of that has to happen before Passover. We don't want to intrude on Passover with the crucifixion, the killing of this man. This threat to us continues in verse three. And while he, Jesus, was at Bethany in the house of Simon the Leper.

I'm just going to pause us there. Jesus in this final week, we've seen him going back and forth from Bethany two miles to the east of Jerusalem, into Jerusalem, back and forth, night by night. This Wednesday is called Silent Wednesday, actually, because Jesus spends the entirety of that day in Bethany with Mary, Martha, Lazarus, with his apostles. And as that night comes to a close, on Wednesday, they all joined together at the house of Simon the Leper. Now, what's interesting about this, and you could easily just read right over this, this is the only the time Simon the Leper is mentioned in Scripture.

One of the little hacks that you can see in scripture is when somebody's name is mentioned. Specifically somebody's name is mentioned. Who. Who doesn't come up very often in Scripture. That's kind of like an aha.

This is probably. It's put there. The name is put there for a reason.

John Mark is saying, hey, if you want to go and fact check this, go talk to Simon. He's in Bethany. If you're in that area, you can go find Simon the Leper. Now, also notice this little thing about him. Simon the Leper.

People are gathering at Simon the Leper's house. Now, that's an odd thing, because a leper is

someone that you could not, would not have contact with people. So how are people gathering at his house? Well, likely it's because it's Simon, the former leper, no longer a leper. How is he no longer a leper?

Likely because he's experienced the healing power of Jesus in his life. And so we meet here, just this little glimpse of a man who's likely experienced the miraculous healing of Jesus. And it's at his house, this amazing anointing happens. And John Mark just kind of drops that name in there and says, hey, check it out. Check out the testimony of this Simon the Leper.

Now, one other thing to note in this text. We're about to meet a woman who's going to anoint Jesus. It's a beautiful scene. Now, what's interesting is that each gospel has an anointing from a woman of Jesus in the Gospel. And so there's lots of debate.

Are the four gospel accounts giving us the sharing of one anointing, or are there two Anointings or three anointings. And I don't want to get too much in the weeds here. Pretty much all scholars agree that Luke's anointing. If you've read the story, it's the woman who used to be demonized. That happens earlier in his ministry.

And that's a separate anointing. So there's at least two anointings. And Greg and I would take the position that there's actually three anointings, because John's anointing. And John names the woman. It's Mary, Lazarus sister, who anoints Jesus.

That happens on Saturday. This anointing happens on Wednesday. It's likely the anointing on Saturday happens at Mary, Martha and Lazarus house. This one happens at Simon the Leper's house. If you want to, you can read Matthew and Mark are the two gospels that share this same account.

We're reading in Mark now. So let's continue the story. As Jesus was reclining at the table. This is verse three. Still a woman came with an alabaster flask.

That would have been a soft, translucent stone that would have been formed. Very expensive type of flask of ointment, of pure nard. Nard is the root of a flower. Would have had a musky, sweet, woody scent to it. Maybe akin to like something like cedar wood.

Very costly. It says. And she broke the flask and poured it over his head.

She breaks the flask and pours it over Jesus head. Now just pause here. What we have here is a scene of anointing this woman. We don't know this woman's name, sees something, knows something about Jesus, knows that he is the promised king and anoints him as a king. This is how every king was anointed.

You can go back all the way back to David and the anointing of David, of Samuel, anointing David. And notice that she takes this flask of expensive ointment. We're going to learn that it's worth 300 denarii. Denarii is a day's wage, so about a year's worth of wages, whatever your salary is, put that in yearly terms. That's essentially what this flask of nard costs.

Expensive. Expensive. And she breaks it over his head. This is not a screw top. She doesn't pour out a little part of it.

She doesn't pop off the cork on it. You have to break the head of it. This is an all in type of flask. You break the whole thing. And so she spills out over Jesus head the Oil the nard.

And it spills over his head, down his body. She anoints him as king. Now notice this week we've had two times that people have responded to and and hailed Jesus as king. We've seen that at the triumphal entry on Sunday, people have hailed Jesus as king. Beautiful scene of praise and of worship.

But there's something about this scene in particular the intimacy of it, the cost to her. That is a beautiful scene, a beautiful declaration that Jesus the king has come. And as the oil spills over Jesus head, let us not forget that that oil would have hung on Jesus for the last days of his life. This is not a culture with, you know, daily showering almost for sure. Jesus would not have showered between Wednesday night and the time in which he's taken on trial and put on the cross.

And so, as Jesus kneels the next night to anoint his disciples feet as his hair flows down, he's going to be smelling the nard of anointment. As Jesus breaks the bread at that table with his disciples, he is smelling the fragrance of this woman's offering in front of him. As he's arrested and put on trial and falsely accused. He smells the promise of the anointing nard of this woman as he's flogged, as he hangs and is crucified. Between the sweat and the blood, he smells the nard of anointing.

She has anointed him. She has beautifully and powerfully and in a costly manner declared the person of Christ. The text continues in verse 4. There were some who said to themselves indignantly, why was the ointment wasted like that? For this ointment could have been sold for more than 300 denarii and given to the poor.

And they scolded her. Don't you understand what you just did? You wasted money. What a waste.

It will always be the case that for those who don't fully understand Christ, the expensive, the costly worship of his followers will always, always be unfathomable. How could you waste your worship like that? What are you doing?

Are we uncomfortable with other people's extravagant worship? Are we uncomfortable with the costliness of the discipleship, the followership of those around us?

This woman has seen something greater.

This woman sees a moment that will come once in history.

A moment of the King, a moment unfolding. The question is, do we have eyes to see Jesus and his worth as this woman does?

It was 30 years ago. I'm feeling old by just saying that. That DC Talk released their song Jesus Freak. If you know it. You know it if you don't look it up.

This afternoon I remember listening to that as a senior in high school and reflecting on that question. Am I willing to look like a fool in the eyes of the to be a follower of the one true Lord?

She is called a fool and called a fool by other followers of Jesus. Jesus responds to her tenderly and compassionately. But Jesus said to her, verse six leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me.

He accepts her worship. He accepts her offering. What they have named as foolish, Jesus names as beautiful. Do you not see the beauty of this act? Jesus says continues in verse 7 for you will always have the poor with you and whenever you want, you can do good for them, but you will not always have me.

It is not because Jesus lacks a care for poor. In fact, Jesus whole ministry is for the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized, those who are outcasts. His heart leans in toward the poor. You, Jesus says, keep doing and keep caring for the poor. But don't miss this.

You will have me with you for 48 more hours. And this sacrifice, this sacrifice is beautiful. The costliness, the beauty, the profundity of anointing me continues in verse 8. She has done what she could. She has anointed my body beforehand for burial.

Let's pause here. This is our first plot twist. She has anointed my body, he says, not as king, but for burial. Now it's not because she has not also anointed him as king. Everyone would have seen this act as an act of responding to an anointing as a king.

And there's truth and there's power in that. But the twist comes in this. Jesus says, Jesus receives this anointing fundamentally and primarily as an anointing for burial. Even more shocking for burial. It's interesting.

Jesus makes many prophecies throughout his ministry. This perhaps is one of the most shocking and most time tested prophecies in all of his ministry. Because what he is saying is not just that I am going to die as he says other times in his ministry, but that I am going to die and I am going to die soon. Because this anointing is anointing unto death. It will hang with me unto the grave.

She has anointed me for burial. The leaders plotted Jesus death and this woman, this woman anoints him for death.

The people of God received Jesus as king and only if he was king on their terms.

She receives him as king unto death. Here's the plot twist in this Whole story. That the king came not for a throne, but for the cross. That the king of kings came not to claim what was his, but to lay down his life for those who were his.

The king has come, and the king has come for burial.

The text continues in verse nine. And truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her hundreds of followers, thousands of those who thronged to Christ. And one woman understood his worth, his kingship, and that he came to die. Judas then slips out that night. It's Wednesday night when Judas goes straight from here, straight to the leaders, and he sells out Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.

Fast forward to our next scene of this story. On Thursday night, flipping over to John, we see the beginning of that final meal with his disciples. Begin John 13, starting in verse 1. Now, before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

Jesus has given his life for those he has called to follow him. And what's most profound, John points out, is that he loves this group to the end. Jesus sits at that table in that upper room and shares this meal. And one of them, one of the twelve, will remain with him at the cross. Ten will flee, will abandon him in the next 24 hours of his life.

One will betray him, indeed, has already betrayed him, only one. And yet he loved them to the end. Verse 2. During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Judas heart is in this place of wrestling. He is happy to follow Jesus the king so long as Jesus the king does what he wants Jesus the King to do, as long as that cashes out for him, for his flesh, for for his own desires in ways in which it benefits him.

But now, seeing the writing on the wall, he is out. And don't miss this. Judas struggle is a spiritual struggle. Every one of our struggles is with our flesh and with the spiritual powers and principalities of this world. Will you choose the king and his path toward the grave, or will you choose your flesh as king?

And Judas chooses his flesh. Verse 3. Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hand and that he had come from God and was going back. You see this twice in the first three verses, John underlines this point. Jesus is not just being played, he's not being duped.

He's not oblivious Jesus is an active participant in the events that are leading to his death. In fact, he knows exactly what's going to happen. He understands the purpose of God has sent him for in this world and he walks the path straight to the cross. Now can we just pause here for a moment of reflection?

I think it's human nature. I'll just speak for myself. When people abandon me, when people betray me, do you know what I do? I self protect, I put a seal, I put up walls in my heart. That won't happen again.

I won't let them do that. But Jesus already had been betrayed. He knew the abandonment was coming. And he releases those walls of self protection and he entrusts himself to the Father, Son to death.

The text continues in verse 4, Jesus rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments and taking a towel, he tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples feet and to wipe them with a towel that was wrapped around him. And here we have the second twist. It's the same twist 24 hours later, that the King came not to be served, but to serve.

And let's just pause and reflect on what's happening at this moment culturally. So as a Jew in a walking culture, you know, a sandaled culture along dusty roads would have been very important for both ritual purification and also, let's just be honest, just for the sake of the room that you wash your feet in such a context. In fact, after all, they're reclined at the table, they're not sitting at tables, they're on their elbows with a low table in front of them, feet very close to each other. You want those bad boys washed? Okay.

And so like it was known, especially in the context of a high holy day of a Passover, if you're preparing the meal, you get a servant. And it can't be a Jewish servant because this is too low, this is too unimpure, this is too dirty for a Jew to do. You need a non Jewish servant servant to take the lowliest task of washing each other's feet. I love this little scene. And how if anybody's watched the chosen, how they kind of have this play out as the disciples realize it was their job to set up the meal.

And then. Oh, who, who, who got the foot washer? Guys? Awkward.

Okay, are we gonna run out and get another foot washer? We're not gonna, we're not doing the foot washing, right? Like none of us. And then Jesus rises up, the king, the Messiah, the Savior and he wraps around himself the towel, and he bends and begins to wash the feet who would abandon him and betray him?

He steps into the impurity. He steps into the dirt. He steps into the grime. And he serves. He serves.

He washes their feet. The text continues as we see the response of Peter. God bless him. He came to Simon Peter, verse 6, who said to him, lord, do you wash my feet? Jesus answered him, what I am doing, you do not understand now, but afterward you will not understand.

And Peter refuses the washing initially, no, no, no, no. Nope, nope. You're rabbi, you're king, your Lord, your Messiah. This. This transaction's not happening.

Super uncomfortable, Jesus.

And Jesus says, no, no, no, you don't understand.

To become one of my followers, you have to receive. To become a servant, you have to be served.

One of the fundamental distortions of the gospel in America is this false quote from Scripture. It is not a quote at all from scripture. God helps those who help themselves not found in Scripture. But boy, is it American.

Boy, is it American. You go get yours and God will help you get more of that. It's not the gospel. The gospel is that we are beggars in need of grace, sinners in need of a Savior. To even begin on this path, we have to receive the grace of God.

We don't work out our salvation by serving enough, by giving enough, by enough good things. We receive the salvation of Jesus Christ, and then we pour that on others.

Peter doesn't understand.

My hunch is a lot of us don't understand either.

Jesus then says this, verse 12. When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments

and resumed his place, he said to them, do you understand what I have done to you? You call me teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I, then your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that you also should do just as I have done.

Truly, Truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. I've not just come to download information on you. Jesus says, I've not just come to give a dump of. This is what you're to do. These are the right things to believe.

And now you're to pass those things on. I've come as an embodiment of an example of what life with God looks like. Life poured out, given over for others. And as I have done, as you've received my service, now go and serve followers of Jesus Christ look like Jesus Christ. And what does Jesus Christ look like?

One who comes and gives himself to the end. You see the woman who broke that flask on Jesus head and the oil dripped over a year's wages. A beautiful sacrifice. She was outdone by the one whom she anointed because he gave it all. Everything.

Nothing remained. Not even a breath in his lungs.

So let's land this in three applications before we turn to the table and reflect on that final, that third scene of communion. The first application is, what are you holding in your alabaster jar?

What are you clinching onto? Wrestling with God that he might be asking of you this day to release. Is it time?

Is it finances? Is it job security? Is it a relationship?

Is it the stuff in your life that fills you to the brim and you just. You have so much fomo, you can't miss out. What's in your alabaster jar?

Release it. Release it. Step into life with Christ to releasing what you have. What if what's in that jar was never intended to be for you? What if what's in that jar was intended for the head of someone else as an act of worship for someone else?

What's in your alabaster jar number two? Where are you resisting being served? Where are you resisting being served? Where are you afraid to receive? Where is Jesus kneeling down in front of you, maybe through someone else's action, and you're like, whoa, that's uncomfortable.

I can do the service. But, mm, mm. Where's the pride in your heart that's resisting the service,

the love, the compassion, the grace of God in your life? Where are you too proud, too ashamed, too self protective to receive the grace of. Of Jesus?

Maybe that's the very place that Jesus wants to meet you.

There's a time angel and I were in both in seminary in New Jersey. I was an intern at a church there, and we had just had our firstborn, Camille. And so beautiful thing to be, new parents, not much income, though, in our lives at that point. We're talking like a part time landscaping gig for me. And then the hospital bill comes due and we're like, I'm having a conversation with one of the pastors at the church who's my supervisor.

He's like, how are you guys doing? Are you doing okay financially? Like, not really. We're struggling. It's okay.

It's gonna be all right. Like, we'll make payments on this thing. And he said, john, we've been talking about this, and we want to have benevolence come in and help you and Angel? And I was like, no, mm, mm. That's for really needy people.

And he's like, john, why won't you receive it? What's the pride in your heart? What's the arrogance in your heart that won't let you receive the gift of God that we're offering? Oh, that's a little convicting.

Where is it that God says, I just want you to receive right now that you are resisting his work in your life? First, what are you holding in your alabaster jar? Second, where are you resisting being served? Third, whose feet are you avoiding? Whose feet are you avoiding?

Jesus kneels down and he washes the feet of the one who has 30 pieces of silver in his pocket for betraying Christ unto death. He kneels down and 10 others. He washes their feet, knowing they're about to abandon Him. Leave him in his greatest moment of need. And he does so with love in his heart.

Where is Christ asking you to serve that feels so painful? Who is he asking you to demonstrate his love, his gospel, his grace to. Even to someone who's hurt you deeply. Or maybe it's the act itself, the service itself just feels too costly.

Somebody else will take care of that ministry. Somebody else will serve in that place. Just going to keep receiving. I'm good here. And Jesus nudges and he nudges, serve.

I've come to serve you. My followers are given to and invited into service. Whose feet are you avoiding? Before we come to the Lord's table together, I just want us to pause and I want us to run over those questions. So we're going to put those questions back up on the scene, on the

screen, and then we're going to take a little bit of time here to meditate in silence and just ask the Lord what he has for us in that.

And then in both of our campuses, in Gladden and Cortero, we're going to step into communion together into the third and final scene of the plot twist. The week before Jesus was crucified. So let's pause, let's pray, and let's reflect.

Spirit of God, we thank you for your conviction. We thank you for Jesus Christ who came not to seek his own glory, but to give his. His glory up that we might receive your glory through his sacrifice. Help us to walk into his footsteps this day in Jesus name. Amen.

Amen. So I want to invite us as we step into communion now, I'm going to invite anyone who's a Follower of Jesus Christ to participate. Communion is a way of us stepping into this pattern of Christ, of walking into his brokenness, of receiving it and being transformed by the broken bread and by the spilled wine, spilled blood of Jesus Christ. So if you're a follower of Jesus Christ, we invite you to participate. If you're here at the Cortero campus, we'd love to invite you.

Up at the front we have elements. In the back we also have elements, we have elements that are gluten free. Back in this corner over here you're welcome to grab those. So let's stand and let's come forward and respond. If you're watching at home, we'd love for you to participate with us.

You can grab elements there and join us in communion. Now let's come forward.

Sa.

Sam.

After Jesus had washed their feet, he began to serve a meal to them. And as he did, he invited them to see those elements in a new way. Changed the way they reflected on the reality of following him, changed the way they even saw him until that day. It says this in Mark 14:22 and as they were eating he took the bread and after blessing it he broke it and gave it to them and said, take this, this is my body. Jesus took the bread, simple bread, simple matzah given to the people of God to remember that salvation, that rescue that God had brought them in Egypt.

And he broke it.

And he connected himself statement not just to the bread but also to the sacrifice, to the brokenness of God that he came to take on our brokenness that we might receive his grace and his light. He said, this is my body broken for you. Whenever you eat of it, do so in memory of

me. So let's eat together.

Thank you Jesus for being broken, that we might be healed for serving, that we might serve. Thank you Jesus, that you came for us not just as the anointed king, but as the king anointed for burial continued that night. Verse 23 and he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them and they drank of it. And he said, this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many. Truly I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new and the kingdom of God.

Jesus took that cup.

Having poured it, he said this, this is the new way in which you are connected to God not by your works, but by my blood, the blood that frees you and purifies you from your sin, that frees you from the bondage that your flesh, that this world has on you. And as we drink it, we say, we are sealed with you, Jesus Christ. We are committed to you. We are connected with you unto eternity. And when we raise our glasses in eternity, as we will, we will raise our glasses to the Lamb who took away the sins of the world, that we might be his people.

And so let's drink together.

Jesus. Jesus, how precious are you. How beautiful are you that you spilled out your blood as an anointing for us to separate us God from this world, to separate us from the stain, from the clutches of the enemy in this world, and to make us your chosen one, your children, inheritors of a kingdom of God forever and ever.

Bless your name, Jesus Christ, O Lamb of God. Amen. And amen. Let's respond by standing in song and praising his name together.