

## Lesson #3 – A beautiful thing

Let's begin in prayer, saying together:

*God, we thank you that you are living and active, that you are present here with us, and that you reveal yourself by your Word and Spirit. Lord, give us eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts that understand what you want to teach us about yourself, and about our lives in you. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.*

Next, read or listen to the story. As you do this, keep the following questions in mind:

- Is anything unclear in the story? What questions arose in your mind as you read or listened?
- What do you learn about Jesus in this story? Is that what you expected to see, or did it come as a surprise?
- How did the people around Jesus respond to him in this story? How might you have responded if you had been there?

### **Mark 14:1-11**

#### Jesus Anointed at Bethany

<sup>1</sup> Now the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were scheming to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. <sup>2</sup> “But not during the festival,” they said, “or the people may riot.”

<sup>3</sup> While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.

<sup>4</sup> Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? <sup>5</sup> It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly.

<sup>6</sup> “Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. <sup>7</sup> The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. <sup>8</sup> She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. <sup>9</sup> Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

<sup>10</sup>Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. <sup>11</sup>They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

### **Responding:**

Spend some time responding to the general questions below, using the space provided to record your thoughts.

- Is anything unclear in the story? What questions arose in your mind as you read or listened?
- What do you learn about Jesus in this story? Is that what you expected to see, or did it come as a surprise?
- How did the people around Jesus respond to him in this story? How might you have responded if you had been there?

Now, spend some time drilling deeper into the story, and the meaning it might hold for your life, by responding to the following additional questions:

- Have you ever been the recipient of an outrageous gift (something that was so utterly awesome it almost made you feel bad accepting it 😊)? What was it? Who gave it to you?

- How did you receive such an outrageous gift? Were you able to do so freely, full of gratitude? Or did you feel a little self-conscious and shameful in doing so? Why do you think you responded in this way?
- What do you make of Jesus' response to the gift of this woman? Does it surprise you at all? If so, why? How would you have expected Jesus to respond? Why do you think he responded in the way he did?
- Put yourself in the shoes of the woman in this story... how would Jesus' response have made you feel? In contrast, if he had responded with the same indignation as the other dinner guest, how would that have affected you?
- If Jesus were here right now, how might you want to respond to him? Like this woman, have you ever felt moved to offer a deep expression of love to Jesus? What might this look like coming from you? How would Jesus receive it?

Conclude this lesson with a time of prayer, speaking with God as a friend (remember... ***The Lord is here; His Spirit is with us!***) about anything that you have noted above, or anything else that is on your heart and mind.