

What will You Give Me for Jesus?

Thomas Robinson, *God's Kingdom Breaks In!* 1, January 22, 2017

Matthew 26:6-22 (Cf. Mk 14:3-17; Lk 22:3-14; Jn 12:1-8; 13:21-24)

⁶ Now when Jesus was at **Bethany** in the house of **Simon the leper**, ⁷ a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of **precious fragrant oil**, and she **poured it out on his head** as **he reclined at table**.

⁸ And when the **disciples** saw it, they were **indignant**, saying, "**Why this waste?**" ⁹ For this could have been **sold** for a large sum and **given to the poor.**"

¹⁰ But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why are you making trouble for the woman? For she has done **a beautiful deed** for me. ¹¹ For you always have the poor around you (Deut 15:11), but you do not always have me. ¹² In pouring this **oil on my body**, she has done it to **prepare me for burial.** ¹³ Truly, I tell you, wherever **this gospel** is proclaimed **in the whole world**, what she has done will also be told **in memory of her.**"

¹⁴ At that point **one of the twelve**, called **Judas Iscariot**, went to the **chief priests** ¹⁵ and said, "What are you willing to give me, and **I'll personally hand him over to you?**" And they set out for him **thirty pieces of silver.** ¹⁶ And from then on he began to look for a good time to **hand him over.**

¹⁷ Now on the **first day of Unleavened Bread** the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where will you have us prepare for you to eat **the Passover?**"

¹⁸ He said, "Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, '**The Teacher says, My time is near. I'm keeping the Passover** at your house with my disciples.'"¹⁹ And the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover. ²⁰ When it was evening, he **reclined at table with the twelve.**

²¹ As they were eating, he said, "Truly, I tell you, **one of you will hand me over.**" ²² And deeply grieving, one after another they began asking him, "**It's not me, is it, Lord?**"

Matthew 25:34-36

³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me."

Matthew 26:1-5

¹ When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, ² "You know that after two days the Passover is happening, and the Son of Man is being handed over to be crucified."

³ Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, ⁴ and planned together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him.

⁵ But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."

1 Samuel 10:1 Samuel anoints Saul as king of Israel (Cf Psa 133:2)

¹ Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on Saul's head and kissed him and said, "Has not the LORD anointed you to be prince over his people Israel? And you shall reign over the people of the LORD and you will save them"

Exodus 21:32

³² If an ox gores a slave, male or female, the owner shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver....

Seeing Jesus' Crucifixion and My Place There

Matthew's final sections focus on the supreme moments of the Gospel: Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Mt doesn't approach them as doctrines but as events that were complex, astonishing, life-transforming. The whole NT is a quest to grasp their impact and meaning.

These stories were told thousands of times in many forms by eye-witnesses and new believers.

Mt (using Mk) leads us through, selecting details to focus on, to help us see, be grasped by what happened. We're his concern, with a privileged view, watching many characters.

Jesus is clearly at the center, challenging, mysterious, inviting. We're behind the scenes too with chief priests and others. We see one-time individuals like the woman whose actions or words reveal something significant. Especially we watch the disciples as they learn, falter, grow. But Mt often challenges our feeling superior to the disciples as the events unfold.

Jesus taught in the Temple in the week leading to Passover, the great feast of deliverance. He's ended his final teaching (Judgment of the nations). He knows the "Son of Man" (Dan 7:13-14) (universal authority) is being handed over (no control) to be crucified (Romans). The high priest Caiaphas and leaders have other plans. Who's in control? The one being crucified?

A Silent Woman's Eloquent Deed

Jesus isn't fleeing but eating with a man to whom he gave life. A woman wordlessly enters and pours precious oil on Jesus' head. Jesus simply receives her act. What does it mean?

We know scripture: It's like the anointing of kings – Jesus is Messiah, anointed by a woman!

We watch the disciples. They miss entirely the idea that Jesus is being anointed Messiah!

They've just heard Jesus teach about helping the poor. They're sure he will condemn the woman's waste of resources. They jump in first to express their concern for the poor.

But Jesus surprises. He rebukes the disciple. The woman's action will never stop them from helping the poor. But readiness to judge blinds them to the beautiful, meaningful act of grace in front of them. Imagine the disciples' confusion. We nod our approval.

But Jesus surprises us too! He changes the oil on the head (as king) to "oil on my body" for burial. If Jesus is to be king, it will be like no anointed king before. We're not nodding anymore. A Messiah dead and buried? What can it mean? This, Jesus says, is the heart of it, always retold. But if he's dead there's no Good News, no "whole world!" Jesus?!

Judas Gives Up on Jesus

Judas has had enough. All this talk of crucifixion and burial is not the hope, Exodus, kingdom victory that Judas had signed on for. Jesus wants to feed the hungry but then accepts a woman's extravagance anticipating burial! No sense! If it's a kingdom, Judas is ready! If Jesus is planning defeat and death, it's time to get out. He feels like he's been had.

He goes to the chief priests not to bargain but to say he'll personally hand Jesus over. What will you give me? Not much for either; the traditional price of a slave. He's waiting for his time.

Watching the Disciples – "It's not me, is it, Lord?"

The disciples set up Passover. Jesus sends the word: "My time is near!" My time? Not Judas' time? It's Passover! Deliverance Day. God's faithfulness. Everyone's here. Banquet!

As the meal unfolds (lamb, herbs, unleavened bread, wine), Jesus spoils everything: "One of you will hand me over." Judas knew! Surely the rest too. Instead of yesterday's confidence, they feel the world shifting under them. Do they know what's coming? Do they know themselves? Jesus chooses to receive anointing for burial? Where am I? It's not me, is it?