

Jesus Prepares for His Upcoming Death

Lesson 05 of the series "Jesus in Action"

1. A woman anoints Jesus with perfume in anticipation of his upcoming death.

"Meanwhile, Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon, a man who had previously had leprosy. While he was eating, a woman came in with a beautiful alabaster jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard. She broke open the jar and poured the perfume over his head. Some of those at the table were indignant. "Why waste such expensive perfume?" they asked. "It could have been sold for a year's wages and the money given to the poor!" So they scolded her harshly. But Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. Why criticize her for doing such a good thing to me? You will always have the poor among you, and you can help them whenever you want to. But you will not always have me. She has done what she could and has anointed my body for burial ahead of time. I tell you the truth, wherever the Good News is preached throughout the world, this woman's deed will be remembered and discussed." Mark 14:3-9 (NLT)

Note: It was customary to anoint bodies of deceased loved ones with perfume and spices before burial.

"Saturday evening, when the Sabbath ended, Mary Magdalene and Salome and Mary the mother of James went out and purchased burial spices so they could anoint Jesus' body." Mark 16:1 (NLT)

Note: The woman's extravagant display of love and devotion demonstrated that she willingly gave her best to Jesus.

"I will not present burnt offerings that have cost me nothing!" 1 Chronicles 21:24 (NLT)

Life Application: We must give our best to Jesus even if others don't understand.

"Obviously, I'm not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant." Galatians 1:10 (NLT)

2. Jesus explains to his disciples the significance of his upcoming death at the last supper.

"On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, Jesus' disciples asked him, 'Where do you want us to go to prepare the Passover meal for you?' So Jesus sent two of them into Jerusalem with these instructions: 'As you go into the city, a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you. Follow him. At the house he enters, say to the owner, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?' He will take you upstairs to a large room that is already set up. That is where you should prepare our meal.'" Mark 14:12-15 (NLT)

Note: The Passover meal reminded the Israelites of God's deliverance from slavery in Egypt and protection from the angel of death.

"These are your instructions for eating this meal: Be fully dressed, wear your sandals, and carry your walking stick in your hand. Eat the meal with urgency, for this is the LORD's Passover. On that night I will pass through the land of Egypt and strike down every firstborn son and firstborn male animal in the land of Egypt. I will execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt, for I am the LORD! But the blood on your doorposts will serve as a sign, marking the houses where you are staying. When I see the blood, I will pass over you. This plague of death will not touch you when I strike the land of Egypt. This is a day to remember. Each year, from generation to generation, you must celebrate it as a special festival to the LORD. This is a law for all time." Exodus 12:11-14 (NLT)

"Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us." 1 Corinthians 5:7 (NLT)

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave *it* to them, and they all drank from it. And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many."

Mark 14:22-24 (NKJV)

Note: Through Jesus we have a new covenant with God.

"With his own blood—not the blood of goats and calves—he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever... Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. That is why he is the one who mediates a new covenant between God and people, so that all who are called can receive the eternal inheritance God has promised them." Hebrews 9:12,15 (NLT)

Life Application: Jesus offers as a gift to us a new covenant with God based on His righteousness and His sacrifice. We must take it.

For God says, “At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you.” Indeed, the “right time” is now. Today is the day of salvation.” 2 Corinthians 6:2 (NLT)

3. Jesus prays about his upcoming death in the Garden of Gethsemane.

They went to the olive grove called Gethsemane, and Jesus said, “Sit here while I go and pray.” He took Peter, James, and John with him, and he became deeply troubled and distressed. He told them, “My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.” He went on a little farther and fell to the ground. He prayed that, if it were possible, the awful hour awaiting him might pass him by. “Abba, Father,” he cried out, “everything is possible for you. Please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.” Then he returned and found the disciples asleep. He said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Couldn’t you watch with me even one hour? Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak.” Then Jesus left them again and prayed the same prayer as before. When he returned to them again, he found them sleeping, for they couldn’t keep their eyes open. And they didn’t know what to say. When he returned to them the third time, he said, “Go ahead and sleep. Have your rest. But no—the time has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.” Mark 14:32-41 (NLT)

Note: Jesus expressed his true feelings to his Father while obediently surrendering his will.

“While he lived on earth, anticipating death, Jesus cried out in pain and wept in sorrow as he offered up priestly prayers to God. Because he honored God, God answered him. Though he was God’s Son, he learned trusting-obedience by what he suffered, just as we do.” Hebrews 5:7-8 (MSG)

Life Application: We must keep watch and pray so that we won’t give in to temptation when times are hard.

“Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your Christian brothers and sisters all over the world are going through the same kind of suffering you are.”

1 Peter 5:8-9 (NLT)

“Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.” Matthew 6:9-13 (KJV)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions

1. Read Mark 14:3-9. What is the most extravagant act of love and devotion you have ever witnessed? How did it make you feel?
2. Have you ever been hesitant to worship or serve God because you were afraid of what others might think? If so, what were the circumstances? Now read Galatians 1:10. What would Paul say?
3. Read Mark 14:22-24. What does the Lord's Supper mean to you? Why did Jesus command his disciples to remember him this way?
4. Read Mark 14:32-41. Can you relate to the disciples in this story? Why? Why not? Have you ever agonized over surrendering to God's will as Christ did? What happened?
5. Read Matthew 6:9-13. What does the Lord's Prayer mean to you? Which parts of this prayer are easiest to pray? Which are the most difficult? Why?
6. When did you first realize the significance of Jesus' death? How did this realization impact your life?

Quotations to ponder:

"All to Jesus I surrender, all to Him I freely give. I will ever love and trust Him, in His presence daily live. All to Jesus I surrender, humbly at His feet I bow. Worldly pleasures all forsaken, take me, Jesus, take me now. I surrender all. I surrender all. All to Thee my blessed Savior, I surrender all." Judson W. Van Deventer

"A concentrated mind and a sitting body make for better prayer than a kneeling body and a mind half asleep." C. S. Lewis

"On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me." In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this to remember me as often as you drink it." For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again." Paul (1 Cor. 11:23-26)