



**TEXT:** Mark 14:1-11

**TITLE:** A Beautiful Thing

**SPEAKER:** Brad Evangelista

**DATE:** August 4, 2013

*1 It was now two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him, 2 for they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people."*

### **Packed with irony**

The Passover (Exodus 12) and Feast of Unleavened Bread are pointing back to when God rescued his people from Egypt. And, that great rescue, accomplished by the sacrifice of an unblemished lamb, ultimately pointed forward to Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. It also shows that our deepest need for rescue is not from Egypt, or this world, but from God. And yet, the chief priests and scribes, those who knew the Scriptures most thoroughly, missed this.

### **This should make us humble**

The priests and scribes were very familiar with the Old Testament and the details of the story, but they were reading it with their heads down. This demonstrates the point that that we can know the Bible but miss the gospel that it points to.

*3 And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head.*

### **Not just your average dinner party**

Simon the leper is only mentioned here. He may have been healed by Jesus and possibly was the father of Lazarus, Mary and Martha. John's account of this scene (John 12) tells us that this was a banquet celebrating Jesus' raising of Lazarus.

### **Jesus and women**

It was a huge breach of etiquette for a woman to interrupt male fellowship unless serving food. Yet, Jesus does not rebuke Mary, he commends her. Jesus' interaction with and commendation of women as examples of faith in Mark is remarkable. He praises the faith of the woman hemorrhaging blood in Mark 5 and commends the faith of the a Gentile woman in Mark 7. This was paradigm smashing for first century Jewish culture for Jesus to affirm women so strongly. Contrast this with our culture's objectification of women in the name of progressiveness and liberation.

*4 There were some who said to themselves indignantly, "Why was the ointment wasted like that?  
5 For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they scolded her. 6 But Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me.  
7 For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me. 8 She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. 9 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."*

### **The preeminence of Jesus.**

Jesus' clearly puts himself forward as preeminent and as having priority, even over good things like helping the poor. In other words, worship of Jesus is the first aim for the Christian, and then all good works necessarily flow from that. He's not primarily a teacher of ethics, he is the God-man who is to be worshiped.

*10 Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. 11 And when they heard it, they were glad and promised to give him money. And he sought an opportunity to betray him.*

**THE POINT OF THIS PASSAGE SUMMARIZED IN THREE STATEMENT:**

**1. Seeing Jesus rightly causes worship.**

1.1—It is possible to see but not perceive.

1.2—Mary worshipped Jesus because of what He has done.

**2. Worship is a total being response to the object we most love.**

2.1—Mary's response flowed from her seeing Jesus rightly.

2.2—Response of worship that comes from beholding Jesus will not make sense to this world.

**3. Jesus is the most worthy and beautiful object of worship that exists.**

3.1—Seeing this is essential to the Christian life, fighting sin, etc.

*"The only way to dispossess an old affection is by the expulsive power of a new one . . . In the Gospel do we so behold God as that we may love God. It is there, and there only, where God stands revealed as an object of confidence to sinners...The Spirit of Adoption is poured upon us, it is then that the heart brought under the mastery of one great and predominant affection is delivered from the tyranny of its former desires, and is the only way that deliverance is possible." –Thomas Chalmers (Scottish pastor from the early 1800's)*