

Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 26: March 15-22

Mark 14:1-26

The first part of chapter 14 contains two important events leading up to the cross. The first event is the anointing of Jesus at Bethany. This story is also recorded in Matthew 16:6-13 and John 12:1-11. However, this is not the same event recorded in Luke 7:36-50. Luke's story was an anointing that took place much earlier in the ministry of Jesus by a different person and in a different place. The anointing recorded in Matthew, Mark, and John is a preview of the death and burial of Jesus.

Read Mark 14:1-11 (NIV)

¹ Now the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill him.

² "But not during the Feast," they said, "or the people may riot."

³ While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as 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.

⁴ Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume?"

⁵ It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly.

⁶ "Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me.

⁷ The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me.

⁸ She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial.

⁹ I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

¹⁰ Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them.

¹¹ They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.



The most famous depiction of Mark 14:18 is "the Last Supper" by Leonardo Da Vinci. He worked on his masterpiece for nearly three years, painting the scene on the wall of a church at a monastery in Milan, Italy. Ludovico Sforza, the Duke of Milan commissioned Da Vinci with this project in 1495. However, the scene that everyone around the world recognizes as "the Last Supper" is nothing like the actual event recorded in the Gospels. The painting below gives us a more accurate picture of what that 1st century Passover meal probably looked like.



Allen Black writes,

The Passover meal was an annual memorial to the Exodus, when the Lord “passed over” the Israelite homes and took the firstborn of each Egyptian family, provoking Pharaoh to let the Israelites escape into the desert. The Exodus was the benchmark event of Old Testament history just as the death of Jesus would become the benchmark event of New Testament history. It was no accident that Jesus’ last meal and the meal during which he established the Lord’s Supper memorial was the Passover meal.¹

17. Why was Jesus being so careful about keeping the location of the Passover meal a secret? (14:13-15)

Mark has already recorded the fact that the leaders in Jerusalem were making plans to kill Jesus (11:18; 12:12; 14:1). And Jesus knows that He is going to die for the sins of the world. But all the prophecies about His death must be fulfilled. And Jesus still has a lot to tell His disciples before He goes to the cross. So He keeps the location of the evening meal a secret especially from Judas (14:11).

18. How did Jesus’ predictions compare to what the disciples actually found when they got into the city? (14:16)

The upper room where the disciples ate the last supper was probably the in the home of John Mark, who would later write this gospel. Mark Moore comments,

He sends Peter and John to look for a man carrying a water jar. This fellow would stick out like a sore thumb. After all, carrying water jars was typically “women’s work.” They are to follow him to his house and then tell its owner that Jesus is ready to use their upper room. This is quite possibly the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where Jesus first appeared to the Eleven (Lk 24:33-36; Jn 20:19), where the early church met for prayer (Acts 1:13-14; 12:12), and where the Holy Spirit first descended on the disciples (Acts 2:1-4).²

¹ Allen Black, *The College Press NIV Commentary: Mark* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1995), 244.

² Moore, *The Chronological Life of Christ*, 559.

1. What were the religious leaders planning to do to Jesus? (14:1)

2. Why did the Jewish leaders not want to arrest Jesus during the Feast of Unleavened Bread? (14:2)

3. Where was Jesus reclining in verse 3?

Verses 3-9 are probably a flashback in time to Saturday, the day before Palm Sunday. John’s account says that this event took place six days before the Passover (John 12:1). Mark Moore writes,

This event actually took place about five days earlier.

Chronologically it fits between the time Jesus arrived in Bethany and the Triumphal Entry. Matthew and Mark place it here to show the ignorance of the apostles.³

Matthew and Mark are also making a strong connection between this event and the and burial of Jesus. John, on the other hand, emphasizes the connection of this event to the raising of Lazarus.

4. What did a woman do while Jesus was reclining at the table? (14:3)

5. Mark does not tell us the woman’s name, but John, writing much later, reveals her identity. Who was the woman who anointed Jesus at Bethany? (John 12:3)

6. Why did people criticize Mary and “rebuke her harshly”? (14:4-5)

7. According to John, which disciple started complaining about Mary’s wasteful actions? (John 12:4)

8. What did Jesus say about this Mary’s actions in verse 6?

This was not the first time someone criticized the sincere devotion Mary had for Jesus. In Luke 10:38-42, Martha complained about Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus instead of helping in the kitchen. Here in Mark 14, the disciples completely miss the beauty of Mary’s act of love and gratitude for Jesus.

³ Mark Moore, *The Chronological Life of Christ* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2007), 556.

Kent Hughes observes,

What an astounding moment! Mary, who loved to sit at the feet of Jesus (Luke 10:39), unexpectedly approached her reclining Lord, bearing a priceless alabaster vial of imported Indian perfume (very likely a family heirloom), snapped the narrow neck of the flask, poured a generous portion on Jesus' head, anointing him, and then poured the rest of the contents on his feet—humbly, worshipfully wiping his feet with her hair. It was an intensely fervent expression of devotion, as fervent as found anywhere in sacred Scripture!⁴

9. What did Jesus say about the poor in verse 7? What did He mean by that?

10. How did Jesus use this event to predict His death? (14:7-8)

Mark Strauss notes,

Jews did not embalm; they anointed bodies with perfume and spices as a sign of love and honor and to cover the stench of decay. It is unlikely that the woman did this intentionally or was aware of Jesus' impending death. Hers is an act of love and devotion. But Jesus' mind is on his coming fate, and he sees in the woman's actions an expression of reverence in preparation for his burial. We have here another (implicit) passion prediction (8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34; 12:7-8).⁵

11. How did Jesus say the actions of this woman would be remembered? (14:9)

12. What did Judas do in verse 10?

13. How did the chief priests react to Judas's visit? Why? (14:11)

14. What sacrifice or act of devotion can you make for the sake of the gospel?

Read Mark 14:12-26 (NIV)

¹² On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

¹³ So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him.

¹⁴ Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'

¹⁵ He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."

¹⁶ The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

¹⁷ When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve.

¹⁸ While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me--one who is eating with me."

¹⁹ They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely not I?"

²⁰ "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me.

²¹ The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

²² While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."

²³ Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it.

²⁴ "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them.

²⁵ "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God."

²⁶ When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

15. What did the disciples ask Jesus in verse 12?

16. Who went to make the arrangements for the Passover meal? (14:13)

In verse 12, Mark jumps forward to "the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread." This was the day when Jews would sacrifice a lamb for their Passover meal and thank God for their deliverance from Egypt.

⁴ R. Kent Hughes, *Mark* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 332.

⁵ Mark Strauss, *Mark: Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2014), 609.

The Last Supper was probably served on a low U-shaped table called a Triclinium. In the first century, at special feasts like Passover, Jews would recline on pillows or couches rather than sit in chairs. In John 13:1-17, we see Jesus going around the table before meal and washing the feet of each disciple. Craig Keener comments on John's account of the Last Supper,

John intertwines foreshadowings of the betrayal and cross with foot-washing...The couches would be arranged around tables containing the food, with the upper part of each person's body facing the food and their feet away from the table. Jesus would go to the outside of this circle to wash each person's feet.⁶

19. What did Jesus tell the disciples while they were eating the Passover meal? (14:17-18)
20. What was the reaction of the disciples to Jesus' prediction of His betrayal? (14:19)
21. How did Jesus specify who would betray Him? (14:20-21)
22. The central emphasis of the Passover meal was traditionally the sacrificial lamb; where did Jesus place His emphasis? (14:22-24)
23. What prediction did Jesus make in verse 25?
24. How did Jesus and the disciples conclude their Passover meal? (14:26)
25. After all the teaching and training Judas received from Jesus and after all the miracles he experienced, why do you think he still chose to betray Jesus? How should this be a warning for us?
26. What can we learn about the practice of Communion through this passage?

⁶ Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1994), 296-97.

Sermon Notes 3/15/20

"Wherever the Gospel is Preached"

Mark 14:1-26

Where is the gospel preached in our lives?

1. Wherever we spare no expense to _____ Jesus.
Mark 14:3
John 12:2-3
2. Wherever we endure _____ for the sake of Jesus.
Mark 14:4-5
Matthew 5:10-12
3. Wherever we make Jesus our first _____.
Mark 14:6-7
Mark 12:29-30
4. Wherever we _____ the gospel.
Mark 14:8-9
Mark 8:34-35

Sermon and Bible Reading Schedule

Date	Sermon	Bible Reading
3/15/20	"Wherever the Gospel is Preached"	Mark 14:1-26
3/22/20	"When the Rooster Crows"	Mark 14:27-72
3/29/20	"The Trial of Jesus"	Mark 15:1-20
4/5/20	"The Death and Burial of Jesus"	Mark 15:21-47
4/12/20	"The Resurrection of Jesus"	Mark 16