

The Agreement and the Anointing
Mark 14:1-11

I'm sure you've been to either a memorial or a funeral of some sort or you've heard people even talked about that have since passed from this life, and the word legacy can often get used. Someone left a legacy of some sort, and it gets said about people for various reasons; yeah, they've left a legacy of such that there is, you know, now a strong commitment to some ideal that they were a proponent of, a legacy of leadership, maybe a legacy of what it means to be successful, a legacy of what it means to be profitable and all the money that was left. Right? Or, a different legacy of impact in some way or some fashion that they try to make sure it lives on by naming a building after someone or in some way or another. But these legacies can form because some person has made some impact in some way that's so grand, whether that's through their money, through their hard work, through their friendship, through their generosity, whatever it might be - this concept of legacy that forms.

And when we look at this morning's passage in Mark 14, we see, really, two legacies that form before us; a good legacy, one that we could model and be excited about and hopefully be encouraged by, and a bad legacy, one we need to avoid and stay far from. And that's what we find in our text this morning as we have this shift into the, really, the final moments here in Christ's life. Let's look at Mark 14, and turn our attention to verses 1-11 this morning; "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, for they said, 'Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people.' 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. There were some who said to themselves indignantly, 'Why was the ointment wasted like that? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.' And they scolded her. But Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. 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. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. 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.’ Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. And when they heard it, they were glad and promised to give him money. And he sought an opportunity to betray him.” Two legacies that form out of this text this morning.

And where we come to is a change; it is a shift from where we were in Mark 13. Although in reality, the time frame of all this is really jammed right on top of each other, really close together. When we jump back and we realize it’s just a week here, this final week, this week where the Jews come and gather in Jerusalem for this great festival of Passover, and as our text says “...the Feast of Unleavened Bread...” that follows Passover. Right? One of these three major festivals, Passover, Pentecost, and then also Tabernacle, is where the Jews were then told to come to Jerusalem to celebrate and to have this time of memory and really remembering what God had done for them in different significant moments. And Passover being massive because it was really the birth of their nation as they were freed from Egypt to go out and worship God, receive His Law at Sinai and become a more distinct people that He would use in the Old Testament.

And so, we have this gathering, and because of this, we’ve seen Jesus now interact in a more direct fashion with the people (right?), not just with the average Jewish people there, but with the leadership. Jesus came in and, of course, the Galilean Jews and the massive crowds and thousands were excited that He was entering into the city, and they’re welcoming Him like a king and treating Him like a Messiah. And then He came back into the city the next day, and He cleansed the temple. And so that got the attention of these religious leaders, so they rose up, and they wanted to debate and challenge Jesus. If they could throw Him off, if they could make Him look stupid and foolish at one moment, then they could make Him lose all credibility, and they could keep their position of power and authority. Obviously, that didn’t work out so well; they got put in their place time and time and time again to the affect that Jesus was in control. Jesus was teaching. He was the one influencing the people, and there they were wondering what would become of their power and rise to power.

Well, in Mark 13, we finally saw the shift off of that busy Tuesday, that busy unending day of controversy and debate where they finally left the temple. They left the temple complex. They left, and they crossed over the

Kidron Valley and went up onto the Mount of Olives. And that's where the disciples asked about the temple, and that prompted Jesus' own sermon the Olivette Discourse, the sermon on His second coming. And so, that's where we've been looking. We've been seeing the end of that day, the end of that long Tuesday where Jesus has been teaching on the end times.

And now, we come to chapter 14. And now we shift, and we really see the emphasis go toward these final moments where Jesus must and does necessarily set His course ultimately to be arrested and killed. That is where we find ourselves. The desire to have Jesus put to death is rekindled in verse 1-2 where we see the plot form. I say the word "rekindled" because the reality is they've been thinking this. Right? This isn't news. This isn't like finally they got the bright idea, finally they thought, you know what? We need to end this guy. They've been thinking this for a long time. Actually, when we look down at our verses here, "It was now two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread." So, that gives us a time frame to understand a little bit here as we look at this "...two days..." This could be in reference to after that day of which this is taking place, two more days followed. Or, it included that day and one more day, and then it was Passover. But we get an idea that we're right there at the end where we're coming to Passover, where we know the outcome, where Jesus will go to the cross. This is the timing. This probably takes place then, as far as this plotting's concerned, maybe Tuesday night, maybe Wednesday, somewhere in the middle of the week as we find this.

And we see, "And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him..." Like I said, this plotting has been done before. This planning has been at work. If we go all the way back to Mark 3 and the Galilean ministry when Jesus was up in Galilee doing so much of His teaching and so much of His ministry to others and miracles and when He was healing on the Sabbath, this is what got the attention of the Pharisees, so strongly that they wanted to kill Him. They wanted to destroy Him. But notice, not only do we have a rekindling of that desire to kill Jesus, notice the emphasis here. Right? The emphasis is their desire to do this in stealth, in stealth. Why? Why do they have to do this in stealth? Well, it's pretty simple as our verses go on to explain; "...for they said, 'Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people.' " They kind of realized the tough spot they're in now. They're in a very difficult position. They're at this point where they have essentially allowed things to go in such a course,

in such a manner, that they are now on the defense, and they somehow have to win back their authority in some way. Alright? They have looked foolish in front of the people.

Jesus has got the ear of the people even if they aren't all sincere followers. Many people are intrigued by Jesus and entertained and wanting to see what He'll do next, so these Jewish leaders realize, well, we can't just go arrest Him. We can't just go and be done with this and say we have the power, just kill Him. They realize what that would do for their standing and how that would not look good and then not give them the authority that they desire. They could get an uprising from the people. So, because of Jesus' acquiring of the attention and the following of the people, not just through the triumphal entry, but through His interactions with them, they now have to do this stealth. And I love this. Look at their plan; "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people." A very clear statement here. What we have is a very definitive statement. They were making this plan. They knew something needed to be, and what did they at least conclude in their plan? We've got to do something, just not right now, just not during the feast; that was man's plan. That was what they decided. Evil mankind decided at least we can get this much detail; we're not going to do it during Passover.

Well, we all know the story. We know what happens; come Friday, come Passover, what happened? Jesus is crucified. He will die. So, we think, wow, what happened there? Here they are trying and planning and deciding that they don't want to do it during Passover, but we all know that that is exactly what takes place. Jesus is crucified on Friday. That will happen, and this is just another testimony to the reality of who's really in control here. This is God's business. This is what God wants. Jesus is doing and accomplishing the very mission that His Father has set for Him to accomplish, and if God want's His Son to die on Passover, He's going to die on Passover. And if God wants to draw attention to that - for them to realize that instead of slaughtering this lamb and its blood being a symbol of God passing over the Israelites and instead killing the first born in Egypt, and instead of the lamb being slaughtered, now His Son is slaughtered, and He goes to His death on the cross and His blood is shed to offer forgiveness once for all for mankind - then God can do that. If God wants to bring in that significance and let the Passover now be totally completely substituted with now His Son doing it once for all, then that is God's plan, and that is God's doing. That's exactly what happened. I love it. We have a statement here by man's plan. What

they want to do. And what does God do? Whatever He wants. He's the One that sits in the heavens. He's the One that does what He pleases.

So, if God is so sovereign, so in control, the King of all things, there's not a rebellious molecule that He can't move and work to make even the most evil and wicked deed ever here of the crucifixion of the Son of God, the perfect Messiah - if God can move and make that happen exactly how He wants, how much more so is God in control of every other detail that's taking place? I mean, we like to think of God's sovereignty, and we like to think of the more generic and simple things. Right? I'm so thankful God's in control of the future. I'm so thankful that God has a plan for my life. I'm thankful that God has a plan for what my job will be, who I'll marry, or what school I'll be going to. And we kind of generally talk like that, and we like that. We're thankful that God is in control, but then when we come to evil and wicked and difficulty and hardship, it's not fun to talk about God's sovereignty. Right? We don't want to talk about it. We'd rather talk about something else. We'd rather put the blame on someone. But here it is; God is in complete control of all the details. So, is it true then that in whatever evil you're experiencing whatever difficulty you're going through that God is working in that as well? Absolutely! If He had His hand to work, to make it so that His Son would be in fact crucified on Passover and have this evil moment take place for the good of mankind and His own glory, how much more so can He work in every single detail. He will do that. This is our God. He is a sovereign God. And this is what takes place here so that Paul can say in 1 Corinthians 5:7, "...For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed." We don't look to animals anymore. Jesus has filled that spot once and for all as a Passover Lamb. This is God's sovereignty at work.

Then we see a shift in our passage in verse 3 where we move to a house, and we see this preparation that forms in verses 3-9, this preparation that forms in this meal that takes place at a house, this meal at Simon the lepers house as they're reclining at table. What takes place at this house is not just the meal, but specifically in verse 3, the anointing - the anointing in verse 3. Verse 3 again, to remind us; "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." Now, this is a popular account. Some of you might think, oh yeah, I know this one. I've heard this story before. I've read this before in the gospels. And so, you have one in each gospel, but there's

one in Luke 7 that's mentioned, and it's actually a different account. It takes place probably up in Galilee actually, at a Pharisee's house. Right? And you think, but his name was Simon, so it has to be the same. Well, it turns out Simon is like one of the most popular names at this time, so there's several Simons. You read Josephus the Jewish historian, and he records over twenty Simons. Right? There's just so many Simons so this really isn't the same as that Luke 7 account; that's a whole other account. But you have it in Mark. You have it in Matthew, and you also have this account in John 12. And so, this is this anointing that takes place.

And so, Mark gives us some vagueness in this. We don't really know this woman. We know that they're in Bethany; that's this location that's a reminder of how they worked and operated during this Passover week. It was so crowded in Jerusalem - it's not like everyone could stay in this city - so, so many people had to stay overnight outside of Jerusalem not too far away. Then during the day, they would go into the city to interact with people and do what they did and then at the end of the day obviously retreat and sleep wherever it was they were staying. For Jesus and the disciples, it was in Bethany, a place, you know, a mile or so away from Jerusalem, not very far. This is where they are; they're at Bethany. And this is where this anointing takes place when this woman takes this ointment, this perfume and anoints Jesus. Well, initially, we would say this must take place two days before Passover as we kind of read at the beginning of chapter 14, but then, we say hold up. This is interesting because you can read in other gospel accounts and you see different numbers used, and you start to wonder what's taking place. This is often what takes place in the gospels. You have to try and reconcile or harmonize these things. How does this work? How does this fit? I mean, you could obviously come to the conclusion and just say, well, someone's wrong. Well, that's obviously a difficult thing for us to say. If we say the Holy Spirit wrote Scripture through these men, then that would mean God's wrong, so that's out. We're not going that route.

So, how do we harmonize and reconcile this? Because John says of this same account that it was "Six days before the Passover..." And as we look back at verse 1 in our account; "It was now two days before the Passover..." That's not even, like, close. Right? Two and six days, that's kind of off. Right? We're having a hard time with this. Well, it's important to be as specific as possible when we're reading this. In our account in chapter 14, we've got to note, what exactly is the two days prior to Passover? What is

that referring to? And as you call tell, it's referring to that plotting right there. It's referring to what we just talked about, the plotting that they were doing in verses 1-2. It's talking about these chief priests and these scribes and what they were seeking to do and what they were planning to do and their decision to not do it during the feast, to not arrest Him when everyone was there in the city. That's important. However, in verse 3, we have a vague introduction to a new scene; "And while he was at Bethany..." When? It doesn't say. It just says, "And while he was at Bethany..."

Well, when was Jesus at Bethany? As we've already discussed, every day. Every day He went to Bethany during that week. Right? He would go into the city and retreat and go back to Bethany, go into the city and retreat and spend the night in Bethany. So, we don't know what day this was. Sure, it could've been two days before, four days before, six days before. The point is He was there often, and Mark doesn't specify. So, there is a way to kind of put these things together as we look at this, and we realize that Mark has simply taken this account of what took place and moved it right here, to try to put a contrast between what takes place in our account with what Judas does at the end. We see a difference between this woman who leaves this good legacy and Judas who leaves this terrible legacy in verses 10-11. And so, Mark tries to emphasize this and show it, and he's not specific. So, he's not trying to deceive you or throw you off, and so as far as the details of when this took place, we go with what John says; this was "Six days before the Passover..." This was "Six days before the Passover..." So, this is a flashback at Mark's point in his gospel. It's a flashback to an earlier event when this took place.

So, what about this anointing that took place? "...a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly..." So, we get this picture here, this perfume, this perfume described as "...pure nard, that is very costly..."

Well, we get a little more detail in John 12. If you were to keep reading, we realize this woman is Mary. So, which Mary? Mary who is the sister of Martha and who is the sister of Lazarus the one that died, and Jesus actually brought back to life. This is a Mary that we've seen, and we're familiar with in John's gospel. That's what we find out; this is the Mary although Mark doesn't give us her name. So, this is the one that is doing this, and she uses

this "...pure nard..." And what do we know about nard? What can we find out about that? One commentator states, "It was highly prized and probably the most expensive perfume mentioned in the Bible, made from a plant whose oil was imported at some expense from India." Alright, so this isn't your everyday kind of average perfume that you're grabbing and putting in someone's stocking. This is expensive. This is precious. This is obviously valuable in a very obvious sense because Mark says it's "...very costly..." Notice also that Mark describes it as "...pure nard..." Alright? He describes it as "...pure nard..." indicating that this was not diluted in any sense. This wasn't something that they were trying to make last longer, and so they added water to it and other things to try and make it longer lasting and to go further, but this was "...pure nard..." This is valuable.

And what she does next though, when you realize this, it's shocking; "...and she broke the flask and poured it over his head." Why is it significant that "...she broke the flask..."? The reality is, if you want to use something more than once, you don't break the flask that it's in. Right? You simply uncork it and do whatever you're doing and use a drop of it, use a little bit of it, whatever you need, whatever for the moment, and then you put it back, and you store it. But that's not what she does. She's not clumsy. She's purposeful; "...she broke the flask and poured it over his head." This is pretty clear. This is an intention that this is not to be used over multiple occasions and multiple usages and multiple people. This is a one-time use for one person, for Jesus. That's what Mary has done. And we might think this is an odd scene; now you're just soaking Him with this "...pure nard..." That's really weird. I mean, do we do that? I don't know if any of you had a Christmas meal where you dunk someone with perfume. So, how does this relate? Is this totally out of the norm? Well, the reality is, in a culture as they lived in at that time, there's just dirt everywhere, and they're walking all the time. You recall Jesus even washing the feet of His disciples in John 13. Alright? This concept of how dirty it was and how you traveled everywhere and how it was just dirty smelly in terms of you moving around and then even staying with a crowd of thousands of people in this small area of Jerusalem, this was the time they lived in. And so, perfume in many ways, in this kind of functioning and usage of it, was a means of almost some type of deodorant even you could say (alright?) because of just how smelly and how terrible it was in that time.

Now, still she dumps the whole thing on Jesus. Is that necessary? Is that really what she needed to do if she was trying to say, hey, Jesus, you need to freshen up a little bit. Right? No. She wouldn't need to dump the whole thing on Him. So, I think that would obviously bring about a strong smell. I mean, can you imagine the smell filling the house? Alright? I mean, I remember just when I was a teacher and I remember when students would come in when I had class after lunch, and what had they been doing all lunch? Playing basketball and getting very sweaty and stinky and smelly. Right? And I remember desperate students trying to grab the Axe spray and spray themselves real quick (right?) and how that little spray stunk up the classroom and almost made it worse. And it's, like, who did it? Right? This is terrible. And in the same way, you could imagine if you had this strong expensive perfume, and you overuse it a little bit, that might be pretty noticeable for everyone that's trying to eat a meal. Right? There's no question that Mary pours an excessive amount, but she's making an obvious statement, taking the most valuable thing she has and using it all at one moment on one person. John tells us almost in an obvious fashion in chapter 12:3, "...The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume." You could imagine. Alright? I bet it was.

So, how do people respond to this? Just a really startling action, right? It's a startling moment that she would do such an anointing in this way. How did they respond? Well, in verses 4-5 we see, not so happy. There is anger from the disciples. Verses 4-5; "There were some who said to themselves indignantly, 'Why was the ointment wasted like that? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor' And they scolded her." Even Mark doesn't say necessarily that these are the disciples that are saying this to themselves and scolding her, but in Matthew's account, we get more specific, and it's clearly the disciples. The disciples saw it. They were indignant saying these things. Well, John gives us even more info as we've already seen. And in chapter 12:4-6, we learn that it's Judas Iscariot that's leading the cause here; "But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, 'Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?' He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it." Wow! That gives you a little bit more of the picture. That gives you an understanding; it's Judas the one who's in charge of the money for the disciples and Jesus as they travel around, the one who has been dipping his

hand into it and embezzling it and taking money for himself. It's him that speaks up and notices this waste and says, why this waste for such value? And as John tells us, "He said this, not because he cared about the poor..." Judas caring about the poor was not the case at all, but he's the one that's leading this indignant and angry response.

So, how is this exactly a waste in their minds? Well, consider the value of the ointment. We get a statement made for us that "...this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii..." We have to ask ourselves, what does that even mean? Well, "...three hundred denarii..." is one year's salary, a whole year of income (right?), one year's salary. You know, you want to bring it into modern times, the median income in California in 2016? \$67,000. That's a Christmas gift, right? A \$67,000 thing of perfume, this is expensive. What would you even do with that if you had it. You would obviously know, it's not like Mary didn't know. Everyone knew that this was valuable and thus caused the outrage. And so, Judas in order to justify his anger and to try and get the other disciples with him, mentioned this idea; this could've been "...given to the poor." Think of this waste that has just happened. And some have stated that it's possible that there would've been some giving to the poor that takes place in things like Passover and Pentecost and Tabernacles because you have this time where there's a lot of people together, and this was probably a part of those seasons, those festivals where there was some giving. But even if it was a practice of giving to the poor, the reality still stands of what John tells us about Judas. Is this his heart? No. The Holy Spirit through John declares very clearly Judas has no desire to give to the poor. Judas was the thief. He's the one that has these embezzling practices. He's the one that's taking the money for himself. There's no legitimate desire to give to the poor here, not at all. That's not what's taking place.

They're so swayed by Judas' comments that the disciples are actually described as scolding her; "And they scolded her." for what she's just done. What were you thinking Mary? What are you doing? Do you even know what you have? Do you realize what you're doing? It gets so bad that Jesus has to speak up, and He gives an answer in verses 6-7. In verses 6-7, we get Jesus' answer to this situation where there's an outrageous anointing and then a response of anger. So, Jesus answers, "But Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. 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.’ ” Jesus tells the disciples to back down in their scolding of this woman. And notice how He does it though. He doesn’t say guys, guys, guys; I got this. I got this. You know, Mary, we really need to talk about stewardship. That just probably wasn’t the greatest idea. I’m soaking now, and you really could’ve used that for some other things. And let’s talk about your financial situation. No. That’s not what Jesus does. Right? He says guys back off to the disciples, and then, He turns and actually endorses and supports what just took place. He actually supports it; “She has done a beautiful thing to me.” ... “She has done a beautiful thing...”

And then, He goes on to say something startling in verse 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.” And that’s a bit startling. Right? Because I think the conception that most people have in the picture of Jesus is that He’s all about helping the poor, and He wants to give to the needy, and He wants to heal the sick, and this is what Jesus is all about. And clearly, there’s a lot to back that up. He does do that often. You think about some of His teaching, things that He said, you think about Matthew 6:2-4, Jesus stating, “Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” And then, you think of Jesus interacting with the rich young ruler; “...go, sell all that you have and give to the poor...” Jesus interacting with Zacchaeus, and Zacchaeus has this response of wanting to pay, use half of his income to help pay and to give to the poor. Right?

These statements and these examples show that Jesus cares about this. Jesus doesn’t think this isn’t important at all, He obviously cares. He teaches on it. He acts on it. He actually endorses other people doing it. But then we have a statement like this in verse 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.” Jesus is making a judgment call here. Jesus is giving full approval of Mary’s decision to “waste” the entire flask of pure nard on Himself rather than giving any of it to the poor. It’s pretty amazing. Why? That’s the question. Why is Jesus fully in support of this? Jesus is acknowledging the uniqueness of the time in which they were living. As He states very clearly,

the poor are our constant throughout our society - the rise and fall of nations, and what do you always have? You will always have the poor. They'll always be with you, but on the other hand, how often do you have Jesus the Messiah the Son of God on this earth offering Himself as the only way to have forgiveness of sins? That's unique. That's different. This is a moment in time that was special. And so, what Jesus has to do and what He really is doing, in this situation and in this statement, is He's zooming out for a moment. Right? He's wanting to take advantage of this and say disciples hold on a second. Come with Me, and let's just see the big picture of all this.

And for you and me, it's the same thing. We can zoom out and realize there is the big picture. What are we to be all about? What should we be doing? What're we striving for? What are we ultimately to be about? Giving to the poor is a great thing to do alongside of several other good works that we could do, looking after orphans, and considering and helping widows, and on and on and on we could go with good works that can be done, including the poor as one of the categories. However, the question is what is most significant in life? What is most important? What demands our full attention? That's the question. And that's what Jesus is doing. Let's zoom out here. What is the most important thing? Jesus points to the greater goal of His life and God's goal all along, and that is for Jesus' mission to come and bring salvation for the lost souls of mankind. That is, Jesus did not come to merely feed the poor and heal the sick, He did not come to be a miracle worker, period, end of story. That's not what He did. Jesus didn't come to fixate and focus on those things and to be known in that way, but guess what? People remember Him in that way. That's what they choose to focus on, but that's not what He's doing here. He's taking that specifically and saying even that's not what it's all about. It's good. It's a good thing, but that's still not it all. The good works that Jesus did were secondary to "the work" that He came to do. He came to offer Himself as a perfect, spotless lamb once and for all. He came to shed His blood that there might be forgiveness of sins for mankind.

So, why was Jesus' work on the cross more significant than feeding the poor? You think, wow, that's a bold statement. His work on the cross is more significant than solving world hunger? You bet it is! Because the poor, the sick, the downcast, those are all symptoms of the problem. They're not the problem in and of itself. Since mankind's tragic leap into sinfulness, since man chose to sin against God and to depart from fellowship with Him,

and to really fall in Genesis 3 in the garden with Adam and Eve, since that, what has happened for man? Has life somehow gotten better? No. Since Adam and Eve sinned against God, life has only gotten worse for mankind. Mankind has experienced sickness. Mankind has experienced pain, grief, sadness, and sorrow. Man has sinfully responded to all these things by only making things worse in their depression, their anger, their anxiety, their fear. Additionally, man continues to take it out on one another and to sin against each other and to have this gossip and envy and slander, this hatred, this coveting, this, maybe, this theft even, this adultery, murder. It just continues to pile up, and you see more and more and more of how things have only gotten worse for mankind. The problems have only expanded.

So, why paint this vivid picture of mankind's existence since the fall? Because it helps us identify the problem. What is the problem? Is it solving, really, world hunger? Is that the problem? Absolutely not! Poverty is not the problem; sin is the problem. Let's be clear to the world. Let's be clear. We're not saying feeding people is bad, but if we're going to prioritize something, and we're going to be the most excited about something and putting all our resources and energy into something, it's to fixing sin, not hunger. Sin is the problem. Jesus' point is you can and should help the poor anytime you can, but something more important is at work here. One commentator states it this way, "Poverty is a symptom of a much greater problem. The fallenness of humanity and all creation." That's the problem. Mankind has fallen and from that you get all other problems. This is important for us to emphasize and to be aware of. Why? Because helping the poor and reaching out to those that are sick and doing these things, those are easy causes that many people get behind. Many churches, many religions, many nations, anybody will get behind these things and say this is a great cause. Let's move toward this. Let's try to solve this problem. We don't want people hungry. And so, people spend all of their resources moving toward that, trying to fix that problem, and churches get into it, and they make that essentially the priority. This becomes the priority for that church.

However, we must ask ourselves, is this the priority? Is this God's priority? Jesus makes it clear that He is the priority - an opportunity to take thousands upon thousands of dollars as we would see it and to use it for anything, and it goes all toward Him and His preparation for being buried and going to His death. And Jesus says, yes, why? Because He is to be glorified and honored above all else. Why is He the priority? Because He is the only One that can

actually put an end to all the pain, all the grief, all the symptoms that we see. All the problems of mankind that have been identified, He's the answer to it. He is the only One that can reverse the curse that started it all to begin with. What is our priority? Is it proclaiming Christ, or is it improving mankind? Don't get me wrong; it is okay, and it is a good thing to help people, to help the poor, to take these things to action. However, when we do that, and there is no explanation of Jesus Christ, and there is no mention of sin, and there is no desire to tell people about their eternity and where they're going, we've missed it completely. We've missed it. Our priority is clear; it is Christ. We must proclaim Christ in all that we do. The reality, too, is that if we do fixate on Christ, and if we do fixate on the gospel and making that primary and priority in what we do, all the other problems do start to go away. It's not that we ignore them, they are addressed finally in the correct way through Christ.

Then Jesus acknowledges the legacy of this woman in verses 8-9. In verses 8-9, we see Him acknowledge this woman; "She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. 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." What a beautiful legacy that this woman leaves. Jesus again is predicting His death. Actually, He's reminding everyone there in the room again. She has actually prepared My body for burial, anointed My body for going to the grave, for going to the tomb. Jesus is still aware of and very much set upon His task of going to the cross. And then, how does He speak of this woman. I love the way that Mark records it. He doesn't even give us her name. We only know her name because of John, but Mark doesn't give us her name. What does Mark focus on? He focuses on the very things she did; "...what she has done will be told in memory of her.", this work of devotion and sacrifice of everything unto Christ the Messiah, the King, that will be made known, that will be a legacy in and of itself. A beautiful example. A beautiful legacy to be left behind.

Obviously, we get a contrast of this legacy that we get from Mary. A contrast comes in verses 10-11 where we see the plan that forms between Judas Iscariot and these chief priests. Verse 10; "Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. And when they heard it, they were glad and promised to give him money. And he sought an opportunity to betray him." You know, we don't really know exactly why it was that Judas decided to betray Jesus. We have

certain responses and obvious answers, that it is - Satan entered into Him even to do this work that it was prophesied in Scripture - God had even ordained and planned for this to happen - There is a possibility that Judas was disappointed that Jesus just didn't become the political leader (right?) then and there that he wanted Him to. But I think there's something significant of what Mark's doing here in placing this account and then what Judas does, Judas the man who was greedy, embezzling, taking money from the money bag. And here he is now going out and doing the opposite of what Mary does. He now uses Jesus and leverages the situation as a way for him to get more money, to betray, even being so intimate and so close with Jesus as one of the twelve, he now becomes a traitor just for the more of money. Mary who would be willing to give up all of it and sacrifice it because Jesus is worthy, and Judas abusing it, using it for his own end and his own gain.

I think we have a contrast here of legacies, of Mary being known for sacrifice, devotion in the fullest sense unto Christ and nothing and no one else. Judas, on the other hand, being a legacy of self-centered greed, wanting to be known, wanting to have it all, wanting to even use the Messiah, who was sent to save him, as a means to get more for himself. Many legacies can form because of, as we said in the beginning, different desires and different things that people have done with their lives. People have a legacy because of their money, because of their power, their leadership, their friendship, their generosity in what they do. The reality is none of these matter if they don't point to the greater legacy of Jesus Christ and the good news of forgiveness of sins through His death on the cross. This is what we need to be about. We need to be consumed with this. We need to be obsessed with this, that it's all about Christ. He is primary. We don't ever get confused. We don't start to throw in other things, Jesus and some other things in there as well. We stay focused on Jesus. We let Him be the prize and possession in our own lives, and we portray Him as such for the world, that's what we need to be about doing. The second we start to derail, we now bring down Jesus and all His glory and the treasure that He really is. Let us be fixated on Christ so much so that the legacy is so clear; it's not us, it's Christ and Christ alone.