

The Anointing at Bethany

Mark 14:3-9

Prepare to Hear the Word:

- Find Bethany on a map, it is very close to Jerusalem.
- This story takes place following Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, where he was proclaimed as 'King' and immediately prior to Jesus' betrayal by Judas and the crucifixion.
- 'Reclining at table' means 'having a meal with' Simon the leper.
- This unnamed woman, both proclaims Jesus as the 'messiah' or 'anointed one' and prepares his body for burial.
- Mark names the owner of the house, nothing to do with the story, but leaves the woman unnamed.

You will need:

- 6 Puppets: Jesus, woman, Simon the Leper, disciples.
- Bone felt circle
- Mat for house, household items eg vegetables, basket.
- Perfume Bottle
- Village backdrop.

When children are seated in a semi-circle ready to listen to the story, place the gold box/bag, containing the materials you will need, carefully beside you.

On the bone felt circle place the 'mat' and household items in front of the village backdrop. Place Simon and Jesus on the mat.

Indicate with your hand Simon and Jesus and say:

Jesus went to the house of Simon the leper in Bethany, he was reclining at table...

Move the woman into the house with the jar of perfume and say:

when a woman came in with an alabaster jar of perfumed oil, it was costly, genuine spikenard.

Take the lid off the jar and mime pouring the contents over Jesus' head, say:

She broke the alabaster jar and poured the contents over Jesus' head.

Indicate with your hand the disciples

The disciples were indignant.

"Why has there been this waste of perfumed oil? It could have been sold for more than 300 days wages and the money given to the poor."

Move the disciples slightly, say:

They were furious with the woman.

Indicate with your hand that Jesus is speaking, say:

Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Why do you make trouble for her. She has done a good thing for me."

“The poor you will always have with you, and whenever you wish you can do good things for them, but you will not always have me!”

Move Jesus slightly closer to the disciples, say:

“She has anointed my body for burial. I say to you wherever the gospel is proclaimed, what she has done will be told in memory of her.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Response: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

I Wonder

- I wonder why the woman anointed Jesus' head?
- I wonder why she used such an expensive oil?
- I wonder why she is not named. Jesus said “what she has done will be told in memory of her?”
- I wonder who the disciples were angry with?
- I wonder did Jesus know this woman?



The Anointing at Bethany

Mark 14:3-9

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.

Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly.

"Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. 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."

Prepare to hear the Word: Teachers

- In the time of Jesus women were expected to provide service but Jesus says of this woman that “she has done a good thing” and “what she has done will be told in memory of her.” Yet Mark does not name her.
- In the ancient Near East anointing signified luxury or festivity, Kings and prophets were anointed and bodies were anointed for burial. This woman recognises Jesus as the Messiah.
- For Mark’s readers who already knew the story of the resurrection, the woman’s actions are prophetic. She anoints Jesus in anticipation of his death.
- Mark stresses the value of the woman’s gift, this is much more than a polite greeting.
- Jesus’ reference to the poor is more about the fact that the disciples will not have Jesus present among them much longer but they will always need to continue to assist the poor. Rather than an acceptance that there will always be poor people.

Teaching Scripture – The Gospel of Mark Marg Carswell 2001