

# BETRAYED

Mark 14:1-21

Albert Schweitzer, a prominent German theologian of the previous century, wrote a book titled *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*. In it, he expressed his opinion that Jesus was a victim of the events that overtook Him in Jerusalem in 33AD. He wrote:

*There is silence all around. The Baptist appears, and cries: "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand." Soon after that comes Jesus, and in the knowledge that He is the coming Son of Man lays hold of the wheel of the world to set it moving on that last revolution which is to bring all ordinary history to a close. It refuses to turn, and He throws Himself upon it. Then it does turn; and crushes Him. Instead of bringing in the eschatological conditions, He has destroyed them. The wheel rolls onward, and the mangled body of the one immeasurably great Man, who was strong enough to think of Himself as the spiritual ruler of mankind and to bend history to His purpose, is hanging upon it still.<sup>1</sup>*

According to Schweitzer, Jesus simply overplayed his hand and as a result was mangled like a doll in the merciless gears of history....<sup>2</sup>

Nothing could be further from the truth. Jesus knew full well what awaited Him in Jerusalem. On three separate occasions Jesus foretold His rejection, murder and resurrection (8:31, 9:30-32, 10:32-34). What's more, His death and resurrection were essential elements of God's redemption plan.

Even as Jesus' enemies schemed to arrest and kill Him, Jesus was aware and took steps to protect His disciples.

## JESUS' ENEMIES PLOT TO KILL HIM (14:1-2)

Mark 14:1-2 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> 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, <sup>2</sup> for they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people."

Passover commemorated Israel's liberation from Egyptian bondage. Now, under Roman bondage, a million Jews crammed into Jerusalem thinking about liberation was a powder keg waiting to explode. It's not difficult to understand why Jewish leadership was jittery during the Passover season. Popular as Jesus was, they could not risk inciting a riot. But at the same time, they could not let Him slip away again to Galilee.

According to John, they put word out on the street they were looking for Jesus (John 11:57). They were looking to capture Him when He was alone, away from the crowds.

## EXTRAVAGANT LOVE (14:3-9)

Mark 14:3-9 (ESV)

<sup>3</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus* (New York: Macmillan, 1959), pp. 370, 371.

<sup>2</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Mark: Jesus, Servant and Savior*, vol. 2, Preaching the Word (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1989), 152-154.

she broke the flask and poured it over his head. <sup>4</sup> There were some who said to themselves indignantly, “Why was the ointment wasted like that? <sup>5</sup> For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.” And they scolded her. <sup>6</sup> But Jesus said, “Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. <sup>9</sup> 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 Apostle John tells us that it was Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who anointed the Lord (John 12:3). The ointment with which she anointed the Lord was extracted from a plant that grows in India. Her detractors estimated its monetary value at 300 denarii; one denarii equals a day's wages. What she did for Jesus was wildly extravagant. It expressed her deep, deep love for Jesus – her friend, Messiah and the One Who had resurrected her brother Lazarus from the dead (John 11:38-44).

On the eve of Passover, it was customary to give gifts to the poor thus provoking the criticism leveled at this extravagant “waste” of the ointment.

But Jesus rebuked Mary's critics. The opportunity to do good for the poor would persist; not so the opportunity to do good for Jesus in this temporal way. Mary had chosen the better part. Intentionally or not, she had anointed His body for burial (a rite He will be denied). And true to Jesus' word, here we are in 2016 reflecting upon her incredible expression of love for Jesus!

Though the ointment's fragrance filled the room, not everyone there was filled with love for Jesus.

### **JUDAS ISCARIOT AGREES TO DELIVER JESUS (14:10-11)**

Mark 14:10–11 (ESV)

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

We will never know with certainty why Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus. John Mark put Mary's anointing and Judas' betrayal side by side to contrast her extravagant love over against his heinous betrayal.

This was another aspect of our Lord's suffering.

Have you ever been betrayed by a friend? It's extremely painful. How much more so to be betrayed by a man in whom you've invested and whom you've trained for 3 ½ years?

Our Lord's suffering began not with the wounds of a whip, but of a friend.

Even in Judas' betrayal, Jesus was not caught unawares. Consider the steps He took to evade discovery until He was ready to be taken.

### **JESUS EVADES DISCOVERY (14:12-16)**

Mark 14:12–16 (ESV)

<sup>12</sup> And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, "Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?" <sup>13</sup> And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him, <sup>14</sup> and wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' <sup>15</sup> And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us." <sup>16</sup> And the disciples set out and went to the city and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

This reads like a scene out of a spy novel.

Jesus made arrangements for the Passover meal without the knowledge of any of His disciples. Except for the two who went before, the rest of the disciples had no idea where they would celebrate the Passover meal until they arrived at the upper room. Judas himself did not know and could not tip off the chief priests.

In this way Jesus evaded discovery until He was ready to be captured. This time in the upper room was important not only because of the Passover celebration, but because Jesus had much to say to His men (cf. John 13-17). It was only at the conclusion of this time when Jesus lead His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane, that Judas could tip off the chief priests as to Jesus' whereabouts.

We see again that Jesus was not taken by surprise, but was clearly aware of what was happening. He was not captured until He had accomplished what He needed to accomplish including moving out of doors so His disciples could escape capture.

While they were reclining and eating the Passover meal, Jesus informed them of His betrayal.

### **JESUS DECLARES HIS BETRAYAL (14:17-21)**

**Mark 14:17-21 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> And when it was evening, he came with the twelve. <sup>18</sup> And as they were reclining at table and eating, Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me." <sup>19</sup> They began to be sorrowful and to say to him one after another, "Is it I?" <sup>20</sup> He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me. <sup>21</sup> For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born."

Why did Jesus announce His betrayal?

The passage doesn't tell us.

Perhaps it was to explain the secrecy surrounding the upper room.

Perhaps it was to help them understand what was going to take place later that night (cf. 14:43-50).

Perhaps it was both these things and an appeal to Judas Iscariot.

If it was an appeal to Judas, it was not for the purpose of saving Jesus from the cross. Jesus clearly affirmed He was going to the cross as foretold in the Hebrew Scriptures (Psalm 22; Isaiah 53). The appeal was not to save Himself, but Judas. At the Great

White Throne Judgment, terrible judgment awaits the one who betrayed the Messiah. Jesus didn't want that for Judas Iscariot. Out of love Jesus appealed to Judas to repent and not follow through on his plans.

Just as Mary showed Jesus extravagant love so Jesus showed Judas extravagant love.

## **REFLECTIONS**

Jesus was not a victim of circumstance. He was aware and engaged in such a way that He was not captured until He was ready.

Jesus' initial suffering was not physical but relational.

Jesus' love for Judas was even more extravagant than the love shown Him by Mary.

You may be a Christian, but you've wandered away from Jesus and done things for which you are ashamed. If you doubt whether Jesus will have you back, think about His appeal to Judas, His betrayer.

Perhaps you've done some really bad things in your life. A favorite lie of the Devil is to tell you that Jesus won't forgive some of those really bad things you've done. But Jesus was ready to forgive Judas the worst thing a human being could do. The blood Jesus shed on the cross has the power to forgive all sin, every kind of sin. Jesus willingly gave His life for you. He loves you that much. He wants you to be with Him now and for all eternity. Trust in Him today and enter His love.