

## **PECULIAR RESPONSES DURING A PECULIAR TIME**

Mark 14:1-11

### **How Have You Been Responding To This Covid Crisis?**

In the news: 1) A Pennsylvania woman's coughing attack 2) A Bellevue dentist's odd unmasking  
3) Three UK cellphone towers downgraded to zero-G 4) A locomotive's loco motive in San Pedro

It's during times of trial/tribulation that reveal what our lives are truly made of.

### **Mark's "Bookending" Writing Style Highlights Three Critical Responses**

Mark's narrative has reached its crisis point!

First bookend: Verses 1-2: *"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."*

Second bookend: Verses 10-11: *"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."*

Between the two bookends: Verses 3-9, the story about a woman who demonstrated extravagant adoration towards Jesus by lavishing Him with costly perfume. (John 12: Mary, the sister of Martha.)

Ultimately, when push comes to shove, how we respond to Jesus is either like the Jewish leaders and Judas who chose against Jesus, or like Mary of Bethany who worshipped Jesus with all that she had.

### **Observing Each Critical Response For Self-Examination and Discipleship Today**

#### **The Chief Priests and Scribes**

Their motive: They wanted to protect their own position of authority and control.

Life Lesson: We must humbly surrender our agenda and understanding to the Lord and seek His.

#### **Judas Iscariot**

Judas' motive: Greed and possible anger towards Jesus for not living up to his expectations.

Life Lesson: We must humbly surrender our expectations to the Lord and trust that His plan is best.

#### **Mary of Bethany**

Mary's motive: A desire to love Jesus more fully, in response to all that she had learned from Him.

Life Lesson: Mary sets the example of always being found at the feet of Jesus, serving as a picture of our daily spiritual practices. In Luke 10:38-42, Mary sat at Jesus' feet as she received His Word. In John 11:32, Mary wept at Jesus' feet—a picture of honest prayer. And in John 12:1-2, Mary worshipped at Jesus' feet as she lavished Him with all her love and devotion. It's no wonder she truly knew Jesus!

### **How Will You Respond To Jesus When Crisis Living Becomes The Norm?**

### **Mark 14:1-11 (ESV)**

*“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.”*

*<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 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.”*

*<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.”*

### **John 12:1-3**

*“Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup> So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. <sup>3</sup> Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.”*

### **Luke 10:38-42**

*“Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. <sup>39</sup> And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.” <sup>41</sup> But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, <sup>42</sup> but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”*

### **John 11:32-33**

*“Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” <sup>33</sup> When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.”*

### **SOME QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DEVOTION:**

1. In what ways do you feel your daily activity has been different during this Covid pandemic? (What have you been doing more of? Or doing less of?) Do you find yourself spending more time with God, or less, or about the same? Reflect on how your relationship with Jesus is doing at this time.
2. Re-read Mark 14:1-11. In what way(s) might you, like the Jewish leaders, seek to protect the position/control that you think is yours? Likewise, like Judas, how might you be feeling cheated or forgotten by God because a life expectation didn't pan out the way it did? As you reflect on these things, please talk them through with God, who understands you and faithfully loves you.
3. Mark places the story of Mary between the bookends of vv. 1-2 and 10-11, as she demonstrates extravagant love towards Jesus. How did Mary come to truly know Jesus, when the other disciples didn't understand Him? How might you begin to devote your time at Jesus' feet daily by listening to His Word, praying honestly to Him, and expressing your love and devotion, especially at this time?