**BCM Bible Study – Nov. 10/11**

**Mark 14:1-52**

**Getting Started:** Jesus continues to move resolutely toward the cross and tonight’s passage ends with his arrest. Other significant moments abound in this passage as Jesus is anointed as a foreshadowing of his burial, he guides the disciples through the last supper and Gethsemane, and he predicts Peter’s denial.

**Jesus Anointed at Bethany**

Discussion starter: **When you give a gift to a family member or close friend, is it more likely to be uber practical and something needed or somewhat frivolous and fun?**

Read Mark 14:3-9. Consider the responses in Mark’s account of Jesus’ anointing at Bethany, a unique moment that none of them expected to witness. **When an unexpected situation or opportunity comes up, do you tend to be optimistic or pessimistic about the changes or possibilities in front of you?** How we initially “define the moment” can make a big difference. **How did the woman define the moment?** (She saw the incomparable worth of Jesus.) **How did the disciples and others define the moment?** (They saw intrusion and waste.) **How did Jesus define the moment?** (He saw her act as hugely significant.)

Jesus said some powerfully descriptive things about the actions of this woman and foretold that her story would be told wherever the gospel is preached. It is like he is saying, “When they tell the most important parts of my story, they will tell her story.” **What stands out most to you in his comments about her? Why did he lift up her story and her example as such an exceptional one?**

This woman’s actions lavished love, value, worship on Jesus. Read Ephesians 1:7-8a – “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us.” **In view of how Jesus has lavished his grace on us, what would be seem modern day expressions of how we might lavish Jesus with love and gratitude for what he has done for us?**

**Last Supper**

As the disciples enter into the evening, they do not know this will be their last supper with Christ and that he would show them symbols of God’s greatest act of deliverance coming in the very near future. Their focus is on the Passover and all it represented about God’s deliverance in the past. “His death transforms the meaning of Passover for Christians, for they do not remember Passover as the time when God struck down the firstborn in the land of Egypt and liberated Israel from the bondage. Instead, they associate it with God’s beloved Son being struck down to deliver all humankind from the bondage to Satan and sin.” (Garland) **Is there a symbol or story from Scripture that stands out as being the most consistently meaningful to you in your faith journey?** (Ask if there are a few who might share theirs.)

Read Mark 14:12-16. The way Jesus directs them seems similar to the way he sent them to get the donkey for the triumphal entry into Jerusalem in Mark 11. Both seem as if Jesus had made an online reservation and was simply asking them to do the pickup! In both of these errands that disciples carried out, they had to believe him and trust him with details. I Peter 5:7 says, “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” **Which areas in life are the ones that are most anxiety ridden and the hardest to follow and trust God with the details – academics, finances, relationships, decisions, conflicts, other?**

Read Mark 14:17-26. For so many of us, we have heard the story of the Last Supper and/or taken communion so many times that we can be dulled to the power of what Jesus was communicating to his disciples. **Do you regularly take communion at a church? If so, how do you personally practice communion in a way that keeps it from getting so familiar that it loses its sense of meaning?**

Mark’s account has three points of emphasis in the words that Jesus shares with his disciples:

1. He gave them the bread and told them, “Take it; this is my body” **Consider this quote:** “The metaphor tells us that Christ is absolutely indispensable. Bread was the staple of life in those days. Spiritually it is impossible to live without Christ.” (Hughes) Communion is both deeply sobering (He humbly gave his live and allowed His body to be broken – all to pay for our sins) and hope generating (He offers our only path spiritual life). **When you take communion, what usually hits you the most, the sobering part, the hope generating part, or a mix of both?**
2. He passed the cup and told them, “This is the blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.” All of the Jewish sacrificial system had been taught and practiced for centuries all to point to this week in history.
3. He added, “Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.” **Though they may not have understood it when Jesus spoke it, in what ways could this provide hope for them later when they remembered these words?**

**Peter’s Denial Predicted**

Read Mark 14:27-31. People quickly remember that Peter was the one who denied Jesus three times, but we often forget the other disciples also falsely declared that they would never disown him (verse 31) yet they all ran away. **Why do you think Jesus told his disciples (first all of them then specifically Peter) that they would “fall away” and “disown” him? And why does Jesus mark this as a moment of prophecy fulfilled as in v.27 he quotes Zechariah 13:7? What purposes did Jesus meet by this prediction of denial and highlighting of prophecy?**

**Gethsemane**

Read Mark 14:32-42 - **What most grabs your attention in these verses…**

* **To see Jesus deeply distressed and troubled (33) and falling to the ground (35)?**
* **To see Peter, James, and John fall asleep three times (37,40,41)?**
* **To see Jesus ask his disciples to rise as he leads them to meet his betrayer (42)?**

**Why does that particular happening grab your attention the most?**

It seems that it is Gethsemane that the author of Hebrews seems to be referencing in Hebrews 5:7, “During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.” **How do this verse and Mark 14:32 help you better understand the agony of what Jesus was willing to go through to free us?**

Challenge for this week – Going back to the first verses we studied tonight, think about “lavished love and grace” – how the woman lavished love to Jesus by anointing him and how Jesus has lavished grace upon us. When walking across the drillfield or doing mundane tasks this week, let those be a reminder to focus on gratitude to God and lavish love on him in prayer and worship as you recount what he has done for you.

**Additional Notes**

Additional thoughts on **Jesus Anointed at Bethany**

* John 12:3 reveals that the woman is Mary (sister of Lazarus and Martha). Jesus is in the home of one who died, had been prepared for burial, and rose again. Pretty cool foreshadowing, huh? The account of Lazarus’ death and resurrection is just one chapter earlier in John 11.
* John comments that “the house filled with fragrance of the perfume.” In each of the gospel accounts, just as quickly the room is filled with the stench of indignation and judgement.
* Another distinctive point of John’s account is that it is Judas who leads the way in the objections.

Additional thoughts from **Jesus Arrested**:

* Mark 14:46 - “…one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.” John 18:10-11 tells us it was Peter wielding the sword that cut off the ear of the servant (who was named Malchus). We also see Jesus command Peter to put his sword away.
* Mark 14:51-52 tell of a “young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment” who was following Jesus. “When they seized him, he fled naked, leaving his garment.” The following is not earth-shattering Biblical truth, just merely interesting – because of the way this is told as a detail with no other story connection, many scholars theorize that the fleeing young naked man is likely to be John Mark, the author of the gospel.

If you have extra time, you may want to cover the last verses of this section:

**Jesus Arrested**

Mark 14:43-52

**Based on the party the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders sent to arrest Jesus, what were they anticipating?** (Based on the number of people and the swords and clubs, they were likely anticipating resistance, possibly even fighting those that followed Jesus.)

“A God who is in control when the foundations of his own earthly existence are crumbling is a God who can be trusted to sustain us when it appears our life is tumbling in.” (Hughes) **How does Jesus display of calm here as he humbly heads to his death reinforce for you the beautiful power and trustworthiness of Jesus?**