



**COMMUNION:** Remembering Jesus over a Meal, Sharing How the Gospel is Changing You

Last week we talked about being “on guard.” Did you sense any of that happening this week?  
How might we keep our times together from becoming information without transformation?

**COMMANDMENT:** Being formed by the Story of God

Text: Mark 14.1-11

Summary of Text: *this is for you, group leader... to help you in preparing & thinking about discussion!*

The contrasts in this passage serve to underscore the meaning of it. As the religious leaders are plotting and planning and seeking to destroy Jesus, Jesus is being scandalously anointed by an unnamed woman in the home of a leper. Jesus is once again hanging with the wrong crowd, eating with the unclean and being loved by the religious outsiders and culturally marginalized.

At this point, however, the story takes a turn for the worse. These next few chapters trace the final days and hours of Jesus as he is rejected and betrayed by almost everyone around him. Judas is, of course, the main focus in the betrayal, but Mark gives us no hint as to motive or reasoning behind his actions, indicating that perhaps we shouldn't spend a whole lot of time trying to discern one. Rather, we should see the contrast between this outsider's costly act of love and the insider's easy act of betrayal. The point Mark is making is that Judas was as close to Jesus as anyone – “one of the twelve” – and yet he was so far away! Proximity is not the same thing as intimacy! Just going through the motions with Jesus does not mean that we actually know and love him. Rather, we know that we love him by our actions – are we willing, like this woman, to worship him, embrace his death, and risk being ridiculed in order to identify with him?

Discussion:

Take a few moments and allow each person to read the passage in silence.

Ask: what jumped out at you about the passage? Notice the contrasts.

Look at how Mark has organized the information – do you notice the “sandwich” technique?

Why do you think he has told the story this way?

What intrigues you about the woman's actions? (ideas: broke the flask, the cost, the waste, etc)

Why are the disciples “indignant” at this woman and her actions? Is it really care for the poor?

Jesus says it is a “beautiful thing.” Why?

Have you ever done something extravagant for someone because you love them?

What does this kind of costly love for Jesus look like in our lives?

Challenge Point: *try to land the discussion here!*

Do you love Jesus? Is your life & heart really, truly, honestly consumed with Him?

Or are you more like the disciples, near to him, but not fully surrendered and committed to him?

**COMMISSION:** Together for Restoration, Redemption, and Relationship

The care of the poor is near to Jesus' heart – he seems to make it second to our love to him! Are you as a group caring for the poor, the needy, and the outcast? Should you be?