

Mark 14:1-26
The Sacrificial Lamb

Introduction

1. As we come to the last three chapters of Mark, we are firmly imbedded in what is referred to as Passion Week which covers the last week of Jesus' human life
2. Throughout his gospel, Mark has been revealing Jesus to us as both Messiah and the Son of God and we see those repeated here in these closing chapters
3. However, we also see something else of interest and it relates to a number of different roles that Jesus served:
 - a. The sacrificial Lamb through His anointing and the Last Supper (14:1-26)
 - b. The stricken Shephard in the Garden of Gethsemane (14:27-52)
 - c. The rejected Messiah throughout His trial (14:53-72)
 - d. The condemned King during His sentencing (15:1-21)
 - e. The crucified Son of God at His death (15:22-47)
 - f. The risen Lord through His resurrection (16:1-20)
4. In our passage today we will see Jesus as the sacrificial lamb through His anointing, betrayal and revealing of Himself as that lamb:
 - a. Throughout the New Testament Jesus is referred to as a sacrificial lamb:
 - 1) John the Baptist twice referred to Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29, 36)—an allusion to the morning and evening sacrifices required every day by the OT Law to make atonement for sin
 - 2) Paul, Peter and John all refer to Jesus as a sacrificial lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7; 1 Peter 1:19; Revelation 5:6; 21:14)
 - b. This was in fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy:
 - 1) It began with the establishment of the Passover in Exodus 12 when God commanded the Israelites to select a perfect lamb, set it aside for a few days, kill it and then put its blood on the doorposts of their home to be spared from the 10th plague: death of the firstborn
 - 2) The Israelites were to repeat the Passover celebration every year as not only a reminder of God's deliverance, but as a foreshadowing of the Messiah who would serve as the ultimate sacrificial lamb
 - 3) The Law also commanded that a young lamb be sacrificed morning and evening every day to atone for sin
 - 4) Isaiah 53 and Jeremiah 11 identify the coming Messiah as the ultimate sacrificial lamb that will take away the sins of the world
5. This is the backdrop for our passage today

A. The Sacrificial Lamb Anointed (14:1-11)

1. The first 11 verses of chapter 14 are like a sandwich:
 - a. The first two verses describe the religious leaders plot to kill Jesus

- b. The next seven verses describe the anointing of Jesus by an unnamed woman
 - c. The final two verses return to the plot to kill Jesus and Judas' role in betraying Him
2. It appears Mark arranged these events in this way to show a contrast between the wickedness of the leaders and Judas' betrayal and the devotion of the woman
 3. We will come back to the first two and last two verses in a bit but for now we will focus on the anointing of Jesus
 4. While Jesus and His disciples were in Bethany at Simon the Leper's house a woman enters and begins to anoint Jesus with oil (3): **"While He was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper, and reclining at the table, there came a woman with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume of pure nard; and she broke the vial and poured it over His head."**
 - a. According to John's account, this happened six days before Passover (not two days before as Mark 14:1 says—that applies to only verses 1-2 and 10-11 with the middle verses being a flashback by Mark)
 - b. Also according to John's account, Mary, Martha and Lazarus are also there and Mary is the woman in question
 - c. The perfume is described as **"an alabaster vial of very costly perfume"**:
 - 1) This was no ordinary perfume
 - 2) It was made of pure spikenard which means it was highly prized perfume imported from India
 - 3) Later in v. 5 we learn that it was valued at a year's salary
 - 4) Even the jar it was in was expensive (alabaster was a translucent form of gypsum) suggesting the perfume might have been a family heirloom
 - d. Anointing the head with oil was a common practice in the ANE and a sign of fellowship, but a number of things in this passage suggest more is involved:
 - 1) John indicates that there was a **"pound"** of oil
 - 2) The fact that the woman broke the jar indicates she intended to use all of it
 - 3) The text says she **"poured it"** not just some of it over Jesus' head
 - 4) One commentator suggests that she drenched Jesus with the oil, and Jesus' comment in v. 8 that she anointed His **"body"** might imply this, as does John's account which states she anointed Jesus' feet (as well)
 5. Jesus' disciples failed to see the significance of Mary's actions and object to her actions (READ 4-5):
 - a. They were **"indignant"** wondering amongst themselves about why the oil was being "wasted"
 - b. They argued that the oil should have been sold to help the poor (something Jews were indeed expected to do by the Law)
 - c. John's account indicates that Judas may have been the first one to object, and not because of his concern over the poor but because he was a **"thief"** and controlled the money for the group
 - d. They were so upset they **"scolded"** Mary
 6. Jesus rebukes His disciples for chastising Mary because she has done a **"good deed"** to Him (READ 6-9):
 - a. They would always have the poor to help, but they would not always have Jesus (He would soon be crucified and return to His Father)

- b. She had (likely unknowingly) anointed Jesus' body "**beforehand for the burial**" (8)
 - c. She would be remembered "**wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world**" for what she had done (e.g. we're talking about her today!)
7. This anointing for His burial is what ties this to Jesus' role as the sacrificial lamb because it foreshadows His death as that sacrificial lamb of God

B. The Sacrificial Lamb Betrayed (14:12-21)

1. In this next section of our passage we have the stage being set for Jesus to reveal Himself as the sacrificial Passover lamb (READ 12-16)
2. However, before He does that He reveals some disturbing news:
 - a. In 14:10 we were told that Judas sought out and cut a deal with the chief priest to betray Jesus and even began to plot a way to do it
 - b. Throughout chapter 14, the word betrayed and related words are used at least seven times which means it's a significant part of the story (10, 11, 18, 21, 41, 42, 44)
 - c. While they were eating the Passover meal, Jesus reveals the plot to betray Him (READ 17-21):
 - 1) His betrayer would be one of the 12
 - 2) It would fulfill what was written about Him (according to Matthew, this was a fulfillment of Zechariah 11:12-13, though He attributes it to Jeremiah because the Jews sometimes referred to the whole of the
 - d. Each of the disciples ("one by one") denied that it was he, but John's account reveals that Jesus identified Judas as His betrayer and called on Judas to do what he was about to do, but the disciples didn't know quite what to make of it (John 13:21-30)
3. So, just as Jesus' anointed earlier pointed to his role as the sacrificial lamb of God, so too does His betrayal because it was a necessary part of God's redemptive plan—for without His betrayal there would be no death

C. The Sacrificial Lamb Revealed (14:22-26)

1. In our final section today we see Jesus reveal Himself as the sacrificial lamb and He did this by taking some of the elements of the Passover meal and assigning new meaning to them (READ 22-26)
2. The first element is the bread:
 - a. Traditionally, the unleavened bread at the Passover meal represented the haste with which Israel had to leave Egypt (because they didn't have time for the yeast to rise)
 - b. Here, Jesus assigns new meaning to the bread—it now represents His body as the sacrificial lamb which was sacrificed for our sins (22): "**Take it; this is My body.**" (Luke adds, "**which is given for you**")
3. The second element is the wine:
 - a. In the traditional Passover there were four cups of wine each representing one of the four "I wills" from Exodus 6:6-7:
 - 1) "**I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians**"

- 2) **"I will deliver you from their bondage"**
 - 3) **"I will also redeem you"**
 - 4) **"I will take you for My people and I will be your God"**
- b. Here, Jesus assigns new meaning to the wine (24): **"This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I say to you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."**
- 1) It now represents His blood which was shed to secure forgiveness, redemption and eternal life for all mankind:
 - a) The Old Covenant required regular ongoing sacrifices which ultimately served as a reminder of sin
 - b) According to the author of Hebrews, there is no forgiveness without the shedding of blood (9:22), but the blood of bulls and goats could not take away the guilt of sin (10:3)
 - c) Only Jesus could do this when He offered up Himself once-for-all as the perfect, unblemished Lamb of God (Hebrews 9:11-14)
 - d) Peter wrote it this way, **"...you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ"** (1 Peter 18-19)
 - 2) It also serves as a sign of the New Covenant (Hebrews 9:15): **"For this reason [because He obtained redemption through His blood] He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgression that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance."**
 - 3) It serves as a reminder of that future time when He will drink it anew in the Kingdom of God with us
4. What we have here with Jesus assigning new meaning to the bread and the cup is His revealing of Himself as the sacrificial Passover lamb