**Week of April 14, 2019**

**Matthew 26:1-13**

1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, 2 Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified. 3 Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, 4 And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty and kill him. 5 But they said, not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people. 6 Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, 7 There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. 8 But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, to what purpose is this waste? 9 For this ointment might have been sold for much and given to the poor. 10 When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye\* the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. 11 For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. 12 For in that she\* hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. 13 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever\* this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman\* hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

**Understanding the Scriptures**

Today’s lesson examines the last days of Jesus’ life before his death and victorious resurrection. Jesus spent time with the disciples to prepare them for the events that would come. The religious leaders of the day were against Jesus, so they made a plan to kill Him. All the religious leaders gathered at the house of Caiaphas. Caiaphas was the ruling high priest, who had the power to decide whether Jesus lived or died. He had been a high priest for a long time approximately eighteen years, which indicated he had favor with the Roman government. He was the first to recommend Jesus death.

Passover is an important Jewish holiday. Jews celebrate the Passover t remember and to celebrate their freedom from slavery in ancient Egypt. Because Jesus was very popular with the Jews, the religious leavers did not want to arrest Him during the Passover for fear a riot would ensue if the people saw Jesus being taken away. The woman in the passage is Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. Alabaster jars were considered to be a valuable possession. Even more valuable than the jar was the oil which was contained inside. Mary anointed Jesus’ headed with the oil. Mary scarified a special give that could have brought her a lot of money. Showing Jesus reverence was more important to Mary than cashing in her perfumed oil for money.

The disciples reacted negatively to Mary’s actions to honor Jesus. Bible scholars suggest that Judas was outraged the most. Judas was driven b greed and status. He could not understand how the woman could waste such a precious gift on Jesus. Jesus praised the woman for her sacrifice and vowed that she would always be remembered throughout the world. The woman honored Jesus, and Jesus returned honor to her.

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