

Preparations for Death

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[0 : 00] Let's open your Bibles to the Gospel of Matthew in the 26th chapter, Matthew chapter 26. Matthew 26.

And the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified. Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him.

But they said, not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people. Now, when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon, the leper, a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask, a very expensive ointment.

And she poured it on his head as he reclined at table. And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, why this waste? For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.

[1 : 29] But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me.

In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. Truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.

Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priest and said, What will you give me if I deliver him over to you? And they paid him thirty pieces of silver.

And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him. Let's pray together. Dear Heavenly Father, we again want to thank you for your word and pray that you would open to us your word to make it clear, to help our understanding, to bless the preaching of it.

Lord, even that we would just be in awe of this Savior. We pray this all in Christ's name. Amen.

Well, you may remember we have spent a number of weeks going through the Olivet Discourse in chapter 24 and 25.

[2 : 39] And we see here in verse 1 of chapter 26 that Jesus concludes the Olivet Discourse. When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples. So the Olivet Discourse is concluded and Jesus now changes the direction and says something different to them.

Now you may remember, as we've said in the last weeks in looking at the Olivet Discourse, the Olivet Discourse really dealt with the coming destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, the destruction of the temple that also happened at that time.

And then it also dealt with his future return and then in the end of the age, which is what we've seen in the last few weeks of our sermons. So he's finished this discourse and he finishes it by immediately telling them that he will soon die.

And really we've seen the glory of even his judgment on Jerusalem in the temple, the glory of Christ revealed there in that.

We talked about how he will be revealed and seen, his glory, how he will be seated on his throne. So his glory is revealed in that judgment. His glory is also revealed in his return and his final judgment upon the world.

[3 : 46] And that's contrasted greatly with the humility that we see with Jesus willingly going to the cross. This glory that he has to judge the world and to judge the people of Israel contrasted with this humility to himself go to the cross and die for a people.

We've seen in Matthew's gospel that he's spoken three times about his death already. And each time we get a little bit more information, it's building and building, and we come now to even more specifics here.

So back in Matthew 16, verse 21, Jesus explained that his death was the purpose for his going into Jerusalem. Remember the triumphant entry? Before that ever happened, he told the disciples, we're going to Jerusalem for the purpose of being killed.

So Matthew 16, 21. From that time, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, which are the same group we just read of, and be killed and on the third day be raised.

And then again, he repeats this in Matthew 17, 22 and 23. He says, as they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, the son of man is about to be delivered into the hands of men and they will kill him.

[4 : 58] He will be raised on the third day. And they were greatly distressed. And then back in chapter 20, verse 18, he says, see, we're going to Jerusalem. The son of man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flawed and crucified.

And he will be raised on the third day. So again, he repeats each time. Who's the group that's going to do it? What's the same group that we see meeting and we're going to talk about in just a moment? But we see progressive information each time.

And we see it moving all the way to the point that he'll be handed over to the Gentiles who will actually flog him and then crucify him. But now as we look at what Jesus says here, we see Jesus actually giving the time frame for this, which again kind of fits with what we've seen of Jesus speaking of the time of the judgment on Jerusalem.

And that there would be no time given for his second coming. But now he speaks of his death in terms of definite time table. He says the Passover is coming in two days and that he will die.

Maybe you notice this, and I'll bring this up probably again in just a little bit. But we're going to talk about the plot to kill him. But you notice in verse 5, those who are applauding said, not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.

[6 : 16] And so there's already a conflict that we see presented in these first five verses. Jesus is saying, I'm going to die at the Passover. And they're saying, we're not going to do it during the Passover because of the crowds. But we see Jesus predicting his own death.

So I've entitled the sermon, Preparations for Death. What we see in this passage, I think the connection with all of them is that Jesus is being prepared for death. Or preparations are being made for Jesus' death.

We are headed to the cross. We're getting there. We're almost there. So you think about what we have in the weeks to come. Just understand that what's going on now is preparing Jesus to be put to death.

So let's look at those preparations. Two in particular in this passage. Which other than if we want to say Jesus is affirming or prophesying that he will be put to death.

Let's look first at the plot of those to kill him. Now I said there were two. You guys may see as well that this passage is easily divided into three parts.

[7 : 17] But as we think about the plot to kill him, I want us to look not only at the plot of the religious leaders. But also I've included in that, we're going to skip a little bit and look at verses 14 through 16 in this.

With Judas' plot as well. And so together we see a group of men, Judas included, who are working to put Jesus to death. And so the first, we see the chief priest, which would include the scribes.

Or maybe even be synonymous with the scribes. The elders and the high priest Caiaphas that are all joined together in this plot. Now together that group would form what we call the Sanhedrin.

So the Sanhedrin gathers together. They are the great council of Israel. The religious leaders, cumulatively, they would comprise the religious leaders of Israel.

And so we could say all the religious leaders of Israel are gathered together for a plot, a plan. All along they have opposed Jesus.

[8 : 13] They've sought to trap him with a number of questions. We've seen them and the Pharisees send people to Jesus to ask questions, hoping they can catch him in something that would lead to him being arrested or would enable them to arrest him.

And so here we see now they've taken a step further. They're not just trying to trap him in words. They're not trying to have some reason to arrest him and to stop him from talking. They want to ultimately stop him from talking. They are now plotting to figure out a way to kill him. How can we

put Jesus to death?

And we see as well that they plot to do it secretly or by stealth. So as we think about the plot, the plan, not all of it's given to us, but they come together. The agreement is we're going to put Jesus to death.

What's the plan? How are we going to do it? Well, it needs to be done secretly, stealthily. We're going to try to keep this under the table or not let many people know about this plan. We see that there in verse four.

[9 : 12] And as I've already mentioned, we see them adding in verse five and not during the feast of the Passover. Now, those two things fit closely together. Why would it be hard to do it secretly during the feast of the Passover?

Well, during the Passover is one of the times in which at least all the males in Israel are expected and many of the families would come to Jerusalem to participate in the Passover. Right?

So the nations gather together right now in Jerusalem. The population is swollen exponentially.

Now is not a good time if you're going to pull something off in secret.

Right? There's people everywhere. You can't walk around without bumping into people. And so they want to do it at a time other than the Passover when the crowds won't be there. And, of course, with that as well, I would say that their desire for avoiding the Passover isn't out of reverence for God.

It isn't because this is a sacred holiday. We're worshipping the Lord and we don't want to do it during this time. Now, we don't have a church service that goes on for a week. But just imagine if you were to say you have some plot that you're going to kill somebody, but let's not do it at church.

[10 : 19] That might be inconvenient. Right? Well, we can understand that. I mean, we're coming to worship God. If you're going to kill somebody, you're going to hide. Now is not a good time, is it? Because of the worship. But that's not the reason.

Their concern isn't for the worship of God. Their concern is there'll be too many people there. We don't want the crowds to see it. And I think it's not just a numerical problem. It's also the concern that some of the crowds in the outlying regions where Jesus has been ministering may be followers of Jesus.

There may be a number of people who would be bothered by us doing this. They believe him to be a genuine religious teacher, maybe a prophet. If we put him to death in front of them, they would oppose it. So again, just to be clear, the religious leaders don't want to put Jesus to death during the Passover out of fear of man.

They're afraid for their own power, that there might be opposition. And so there's a desire to do it secretly, which in some way may necessitate that they wait until after the feast is over.

And the feast lasted for seven days after the Passover meal itself. So when they say after the feast, they're actually talking about, you think about when Jesus is actually put to death, their plan was to do it sometime around eight days or longer in the future.

[11 : 30] So as we consider their plot, we know Jesus will be killed during the Passover. And so there are two plans going on right now.

We see Jesus tells them two days away from now is the Passover and I'll be put to death. And we see right after that, the religious leaders gather together and say, we're going to put Jesus to death. Well, of course you are. Jesus has said you were. I mean, not in their presence, but we know it's God's plan for them to put Jesus to death. But their plan is we're going to wait until after the Passover is over.

But that's not God's plan. And we know what comes to pass is that Jesus is actually put to death on the Passover. Why? I wish I had the time to explore this even more, especially considering in a little bit we'll be taking the Lord's Supper.

But it's because Jesus is the Passover lamb. It's because the Passover was a shadow and a type of the reality that Christ is. It's pointing to Christ. So they're having a whole feast, a festival that's focused upon a Passover lamb that takes away the sins of God's people.

[12 : 40] And here's Christ, the Passover lamb, in the city at that time, ready to be put to death as that Passover lamb. And they want to make sure he's not killed during that time. But I found it remarkable that they make their plans, but God's plans are the ones that come to pass.

We think of Proverbs 19, 21, many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand. This is exactly what we see happening. Jesus is told when he'll die, and even

the plans of man can't stop it.

But nonetheless, we see that they're plotting to put him to death and to do it secretly. So we see an escalation. No longer is it just can we trap him, but the escalation is to we reach the point where the religious leaders have decided Jesus must die, and we're going to be acting to see that happen. So as we think about our sermon title and where we're moving in terms of preparations for Jesus' death, we're seeing a transition happen. It's exactly what Jesus said, I go to Jerusalem to be put to death.

You may remember even back at the beginning of the Olivet Discourse, he said, can a prophet die outside of Jerusalem? The fact that he's going to Jerusalem is because these are the people who kill the prophets, and they're going to kill the prophet.

[13:51] They're going to kill that Passover lamb. And so Jesus' whole purpose in coming is for this moment. And so we're two days away, and Jesus knows where he's heading. He's telling them that this is where he's heading.

And as he tells them, we see that they're plotting to pull this off, though not exactly how he's planned. Yet his plan is the one that prospers or is fulfilled. And then we can connect, I think, as well, although I'll have to overlap a little bit, but we can connect as well.

Skipping for now, what happens in Bethany, we see in verses 14 through 16, Judas' plan to betray Jesus. So religious leaders are planning, we're going to do it in secret, but Judas is the one who actually provides the means to pull off the plot.

We're not told the whole plot or how it's going to work out. Maybe they don't have all the details worked out. How are we going to do this? How can we keep it secret? But it's actually Judas who provides for them the means. He's going to betray Jesus.

He's going to give Jesus over into their hands. Now, again, I haven't really talked about the anointing we read through that section already, but really there's this stark contrast between Judas' desire to put Jesus to death and the kindness that's shown to him that precedes it in the passage before.

[15:09] And so I think there's something intentional that Matthew is doing. As we talk about the time in Bethany, it may be that Matthew hasn't followed the chronological order, that the time in Bethany probably happened earlier in the week.

It's possible at least. We'll talk about that in a moment, but for now at least understand there's this contrast that's being set up, this great kindness that's shown to Jesus and then Judas' response of wanting Jesus put to death.

The anointing of Jesus in Bethany may actually be what pushed Judas a little bit too far. Again, I said there's overlap. I haven't talked about the anointing yet, but John 12, 4 through 6, here's the account that John gives.

But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, he who was about to betray him, said, why was this ointment not sold for 300 denarii and given to the poor? He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief.

And having charged in the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it. So again, we'll talk about the anointing in a little bit, but the value of the oil that anoints him is somewhere around a year's worth of wages for the working man.

[16:21] So we're talking even in American dollars, if we try to convert it, at the least \$24,000, maybe close to \$30,000 that this was worth. And we see in our passage, it said that the disciples saw it and they were indignant saying, so that's in verse 8 there, but we learn from John in particular that it's Judas who voices his indignation.

He's upset that this ointment was wasted on Jesus. And we know the reason is because he hoped that they could sell it and he could pocket some of the money. He could embezzle it.

And so again, it's not out of love for Jesus. But we see that contrast. And again, I'm saying that that anointing may be what pushes Judas over the edge. He's upset because he missed out on this payday.

He sees that things aren't going his way. I think there's at least one other reason for this that we'll touch on in a second. But it's noted in verse 14 that he's one of the 12.

Jesus is one of the disciples, one of those chosen by Jesus to be his closest friends and students of all that Jesus taught. He was a disciple. What does this mean for us?

[17:33] I just, I want to be clear that Jesus doesn't get it wrong. I'll touch on that more in a moment. But Jesus wasn't deceived.

He wasn't misled. He didn't think that Judas was going to be some great disciple. And Judas somehow pulled one over on Jesus. And we'll talk about that in a minute. But again, as we think about even going back to our eschatological study, if we think about even amongst the disciples, there's one who's a servant of Satan amongst the disciples.

Again, I think we should be reminded that there's not much hope or really no hope for us within the church that there will ever be a pure church, that there will ever be a church that's comprised simply of those who are Christians and we're not going to be deceived.

I'm saying Jesus wasn't deceived. But all the other disciples thought Judas was one of them. We see no indication that they thought Judas could be a false disciple. I want you to notice as well that it's actually Judas who initiates the betrayal.

He actually goes to the Sanhedrin and tells them that he will turn Jesus over. They're not, as far as we know, they're not secretly going to the disciples. Hey, would one of you guys be, if we paid you enough, would you turn on him?

[18:48] But it's actually Judas who initiates this. He tells them he will deliver Jesus over to the Jewish leaders. And I think what's implied here is even that Judas will do it at a time that fits with their plot to do it secretly and stealthily.

So obviously Jesus was there in public. He was teaching it multiple times, but they did not want to take him in public. So how are they going to know where he was and how are they going to get in to get him?

Judas is saying, I'm going to make that happen. I can get you to him at a time where he's alone or when he's with a small group and I can make it so that you can arrest him with very few people knowing about it. I'll give you over to him.

So what he's offering to do is not just betray Jesus, but do so in a way that would serve the plot of the Sanhedrin. I also find it interesting that he doesn't offer to testify against him.

You know, what they really needed was not just to arrest Jesus, but they needed someone to testify against him at the trial. And Judas doesn't offer to do this. And we know from God's word that, I mean, he's not a follower of God, that he's under, in some way, the oversight, power, authority of Satan.

[19:59] And yet he doesn't offer to testify against him. And I think, again, we see a witness to the fact that there's no charges that can be brought against Jesus. He was a holy man. There was no sin in him.

There was nothing for which he could accuse him without lying. And so all he offers is that he would betray him or turn him over to be arrested. We see his motivation for this is temporal gain.

And remember, contrast this with the fact that he's upset about the ointment being destroyed and him not making any money off of that. And he goes to them and he says, what will you give me? And I think, really, that's the revelation of what's motivating him.

Why does he want to turn Jesus over? Well, he hopes to profit from that. And, of course, that's consistent with the fact that he's been embezzling funds from the purse all along.

He's been taking money all along, and now he's looking for another way to garner some money. And they decide or they offer to him or give him 30 pieces of silver or shekels of silver.

[20:57] And it's interesting that in Exodus 21-32, that that's the place that we see in God's word where 30 shekels of silver is mentioned. That is the price of a slave that's murdered by accident.

So, for example, the situation set for us in Exodus 21, that perhaps you own an ox or some kind of form of farm equipment. Back then was animals. And your animal, in some way, killed the slave of another person.

Well, what would that person do if you killed their slave or your animal killed their slave? So an accidental death happens to the slave of someone else where you're to pay them 30 shekels of silver. And so here's Judas giving Jesus over, and their valuation is basically equivalent of a slave who was put to death.

You're giving him up. We're giving you the 30 shekels of silver. Now, again, as we think of Judas' motivation, I think there was probably growing dissatisfaction or disappointment in Judas that Jesus was not the Messiah that he had expected or hoped for.

Now, we've talked about that as we've gone along in Matthew, that all the disciples seemed to have had this expectation that the Messiah was going to come and reign on earth to sit on David's throne on earth in Jerusalem.

[22 : 18] And to do so meant that he would trample down foreign armies. He would defeat Rome. He would set Israel free. He would set up his kingdom, and he would rule here on earth.

And we understand that was never the implication. That's not what was intended even by the Davidic covenant. That's not what was meant. It was always to be a heavenly kingdom. Again, as we think of eschatology, again, this is another reason why our goal isn't to set up Jesus' throne in Jerusalem.

That's not what the intention was. The intention always was that Jesus' kingdom would be a heavenly kingdom. But for the disciples, there was growing disappointment about this. And we saw that even as Jesus says, he's going to Jerusalem, but you put to death.

And you can picture them going, whoa, no, wait, wait, wait, wait. No, no. Jerusalem is where your throne will be. We're going to Jerusalem for you to become king. Get this through your thick head. You're not going to die.

You're going to become king. And Jesus, no, I'm going to die. And it says they were greatly disappointed or distressed at this, is what it says in Matthew that we read earlier.

[23 : 25] They were greatly distressed at this. Why were they distressed? Because it's not fitting their plan. If you're one of Jesus' closest friends and he becomes king of Israel or the whole world, you're in a pretty good spot, aren't you?

You're in the cabinet. You're sitting, remember what they fight over? Jesus, when you come into your kingdom, which one of us will be the greatest? Who will get to sit on your right hand in the kingdom?

And again, their expectation isn't the new earth and the new heavens or even heaven as it is now. When they think of Jesus sitting on his throne, they mean in Jerusalem. So when you come into your kingdom, which of us is going to be the greatest?

So all the disciples are fighting over this. And I think over time, as God by spirit works in the disciples, they grow in faith to trust in Jesus. And we see even Peter struggle when Jesus is arrested.

But ultimately, 11 of them are saved and are trusting in that eternal Messiah, that heavenly king. And I think the reality is Judas isn't accepting that.

[24 : 28] Judas has become more and more disappointed and upset that he's not going to be the greatest in Israel. He won't be sitting at Jesus' right hand.

He's not going to gain that earthly position of power. Now, when you think about that in connection with the fact that he's just missed out on a \$30,000 payday, you see the growing resentment in Judas.

Jesus isn't who I thought he was. And again, that's not a denial of the fact that he was holy, that he was without sin. But he's not going to overthrow Rome. He's not going to gain some position of power.

He just told them he's going to die. And if that's what's going to happen, then I think Judas wants no part of that. Maybe we can ask the question, or maybe the question going through Judas' head is, what good is the dying Messiah?

If he's going to be the Messiah that's going to free his people, he's going to set up this kingdom, what good is it to us if he comes and dies? And of course, he's missed altogether the point of it. I mean, he's missed even the point of the Passover feast that they're participating in.

[25 : 41] It was always meant to be this dying Messiah. Now, I mentioned earlier, I want to come back to this point, that Jesus isn't deceived about Judas. Though Judas is used by Satan, it was God's purpose that he be one of the disciples because it's God's purpose that Jesus go to the cross.

So Judas is the means by which Jesus ends up going to the cross, as are several other factors, the Sanhedrin and others. This is exactly what was foretold.

Acts 1, 15 through 16, we read, In those days, Peter stood up among the brothers. The company of persons wasn't all about 120. And he said, Brothers, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.

So Peter's own interpretation is, Judas is the fulfillment of David. What David said prophetically came to pass in Judas. David was speaking of Judas.

And where did David get those words from? From God. Right? God's not surprised by this. Jesus isn't taken off guard. Judas was appointed for this purpose.

[26 : 53] Again, in Acts 4, 27 through 28, we read, Though this doesn't include Judas, I think you get the message. Again, in preaching, or excuse me, the brothers say after being released from prison, For truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

Guys, I think that's huge as we move into these last two days of Jesus' life and his death. Why are these things happening? Is Jesus' plan foiled? Let me ask it this way.

Did Jesus come to be the Messiah of Israel only to be rejected and put to death by them and now we're on plan B with the church? No. Why? Well, what we see here is that both Herod and Pontius Pilate along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, so that includes everybody who was involved in the death.

The peoples of Israel would include the Sanhedrin as well as Judas, the Gentiles who were present, all of them together, it says, were anointed to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

So God had predestined, he had planned from before the foundation of the world that Jesus would come and be the lamb slain. But for that to happen, people actually had to put him to death.

[28 : 17] And so, Judas is one of the tools that God uses to put him to death. At the same time, we see he's also a tool of Satan to put Jesus to death.

But I want you to understand as we go and look at Jesus' death that this is the plan of God. God's plan has not been overcome. Satan hasn't won the battle.

Now, this was always God's purpose and his plan. And as we said, even the Passover pointed to that and the fact that he would be killed in the Passover. Now, I want to briefly look at the anointing that we see in verses 6 through 13.

I won't reread it, but you're welcome to look back there. So we're told there that this anointing happened in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper.

Bethany is actually on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. So it's been a while since I did the geography lesson back in Jerusalem. And then as you leave Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives is on the east side.

[29 : 20] And we talked about the Olivet Discourse. They were going up the Mount of Olives and Jesus turns back and he looks at the temple from the height of the mountain. They're looking back at the temple and saying, he talks about the temple and the destruction of the temple.

And he teaches them probably on the top of the Mount of Olives. As you descend, so you're continuing to move east. As you descend the Mount of Olives, Bethany's on the other side. It's roughly 1.8 miles away from Jerusalem, so a little less than two miles.

For us in cars, two miles seems like very little to nothing. I think even for those who are accustomed to walking every day and traveling where they went, this isn't a very long distance. And so what we gather, at least we see in the first couple of days that Jesus is ministering in Jerusalem, is that he is staying in Bethany.

So this is where Jesus is lodging. It's very possible that he's actually staying in the house of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus who live there in Bethany as well. And so we saw early in the week that that's where he stayed.

Now we're told that this miracle happens, excuse me, this anointing happens in the home of Simon the leper, so it's not in their home, it's in another home where he was gathering to eat. But again, it's in the same city.

[30 : 30] This is a minor question, but one of the questions is, so is Jesus teaching in the Mount of Olives? Does he descend and now this happens? It's at least possible because of the dating by some of the other Gospels that probably are more chronological that this actually happened when Jesus first got to Jerusalem.

And so it's possible that Matthew's listing this out of order to make a point in connecting it with Judas and Judas's desire to put him to death and when it happened, making that contrast.

But either way, we understand that Jesus is in Bethany. He's in the home of Simon the leper. It's possible that Simon was a leper that Jesus had healed. It's especially likely that considering people are in his house, a leper would have been considered unclean.

You would not have been able to go into his house. You wouldn't be able to touch him. And now they're in his house and they're dining together. It's very likely that this is one of the lepers that Jesus has healed. And so he's now having Jesus and the disciples there for dinner. And a woman, and we're told in the Gospel of John that it's Mary Magdalene, but a woman pours this expensive ointment or perfume over Jesus' head we see in verse 7. Jesus declares that it's a beautiful thing and he makes it clear that this is to prepare him for burial.

[31 : 45] So she seems to have understood better than the disciples who are still struggling with the idea that Jesus is going to the cross. She knows Jesus. Maybe she just believed what Jesus has said. He said over and over again that he's going to Jerusalem to be put to death.

So as now he's in Jerusalem or maybe even headed into Jerusalem, she anoints him to prepare him for burial. Now, again, as we think of God's plan, God's purposes, do you guys remember after Jesus is put to death that three days later they go to actually anoint his body and when they get there Jesus isn't there because of the resurrection?

So there is no burial anointment that happens for Jesus after his death as would be typical. And so what she does actually accomplishes the purpose of preparing him for burial in a way that nothing else will do.

Typically it was done after death and a few days after death they would come back and they would prepare his body to remain in the tomb. But that can't happen for Jesus because of the resurrection. And so Jesus is anointed beforehand.

So if Jesus were hypothetically to arrange everything, this is exactly how he would arrange it. And as I've said already, this is all according to God's purpose, his predestination. So this is exactly what God intended to happen, that he would be prepared for death.

[33 : 00] And we're told as well, Jesus praises her service and says that it's always going to be remembered. And I think, how remarkable is this? This simple act of service and it's always going to be remembered.

There have been many great men who have lived in the world who have done probably many great deeds that we know nothing about that weren't recorded in history, that were forgotten. But this one act is remembered in the gospel and retold as we go through the gospel each time.

It was a sacrificial gift. We've already discussed that it was worth a year's worth of wages. Again, depending on the work week, 300 days worth of work is what it was equal to.

So, I mean, we could probably even be more specific if it was a five or six day work week. 300 days would have exactly covered one year. It may have been slightly more than a year. But we're talking somewhere in 24 to 30 thousand dollars worth in today's money.

And we read as well that she broke the jar. There's not that she poured a little bit out. I've got this really expensive perfume or ointment that I'm going to put on Jesus. I'm going to give him a little bit.

[34 : 09] But she breaks the jar. She gives everything that she has to him. She gives it all. And so, again, a sacrificial act, an act in which she gives it all. And it's an act of service that God remembers and that we now remember as it's told in the gospel.

And again, we saw that the disciples were indignant. And maybe this is just Judas. Maybe Judas is the one who speaks and he's betraying some of the attitude of the other disciples.

But there's some opposition to what she's done. And Jesus defends what she's done. He actually says this phrase or the saying that maybe could be somewhat troubling for us.

Verse 11, For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. I just want to be clear if we struggle with this at all. Jesus isn't opposing helping the poor.

He's just acknowledging the fact that right now there's a pressing need. Maybe we can think back to when Jesus was speaking with the Pharisees and he was saying to them that you don't mourn while the groom's still with you.

[35 : 14] You mourn after the groom's gone. And so, too, what he's saying is I'm here now and this is the moment. This is the moment of preparation. I'm about to die. Now's the time that this has to take place.

We're going to have the whole time in this kingdom until Jesus returns to take care of the poor. That won't change. Keep on taking care of the poor but right now there's a pressing need and she does what's needed in that moment in service to the Lord.

So what are some applications for us? What does this mean for us and what can we learn from this passage? What I think is we look at Judas who's this disciple of Jesus one of the inner circle

following Jesus who turns away.

I think we ought to evaluate our own hearts. Evaluate your heart and consider for a moment what is your motivation for following Jesus if you even claim to be a follower of Jesus. What motivates you to follow Jesus?

You may remember Paul and his interaction with Demas. Demas turned away from serving with Paul because of love for this world. I think that's exactly what we see going on in Judas.

[36 : 20] And the realization is that the church around the world has seen many give up on the church. In this moment in time even with COVID going on there becomes a very easy excuse for us not to participate in the life of the church and so we take advantage of that easy excuse and I think we've seen many turn away with the smallest hindrance and I do mean that the smallest hindrance and just consider for a moment if that were persecution on a grand scale what if one day it becomes illegal for us to gather together for worship if we think that a virus is enough that we're turning away what's going to happen when we can be arrested or put to death?

I can tell you what will happen because we've seen it happen in church history over and over again. Persecution always ends up purifying the church. There are always those who hung around the church who claimed to be followers of Jesus Christ until it became hard to do so and the moment it becomes hard I'm not interested and so I think what we see in Judas is a moment for us to say what is it that motivates us to follow Jesus Christ?

Why do I come to church on a given Sunday? And for us to realize that there are a whole host of reasons that may be motivating us I think with Judas there's a love of money and Jesus isn't that kind of Messiah and so he turns away Demas it was a love of money there could be a whole host of reasons what is it that's motivating you to be here and follow Jesus when persecution comes will you turn away?

I think there will be many who are close to Jesus and I mean that not in a salvific way but they look by all accounts to be believers they look close to Jesus even as Judas was who when the persecution comes they will turn away they're not going to follow him until the end so only let's take it away from money I can make it broad and say are you only following Jesus for what you hope to get out of it in this life?

are you following Jesus because you imagine there will be some benefit? I said before this to me is the biggest problem with those who are promoting the health, wealth and prosperity gospel why would you want to believe in that Jesus?

[38 : 39] because you can get something out of it in this life and I think apart from that knowing that's not what we teach there could still be some of you in this room who think I want to follow Jesus because I think it's going to make my life better here and now at the same time I want to say it's not as though Jesus doesn't promise blessings for those who follow Jesus but our hope is not in the present life our hope is in the eternal our hope is in that kingdom yet to come or be consummated and so as we look at Judas evaluate your own heart don't assume yourself to be a true disciple of Jesus just because you're in the church really question yourself am I a follower of Jesus Christ why am I wanting to follow Jesus Christ secondly I think we can learn from the example of Mary that we should serve the Lord willingly and sacrificially we can contrast as well with Judas and the disciples that we ought to be careful not to judge people too quickly for their service to assume we know why they're serving or to think maybe their service doesn't measure up to how we want to serve

I think what we see is that our service to God no matter the nature if we do it out of love for him is treasured by God that would be a great encouragement to us it doesn't matter if other people know it it doesn't matter if other people praise it it doesn't matter if they ridicule it if we serve God out of love for him God treasures it we see here as I said many great men did many great deeds but it's a simple act of pouring this ointment over Jesus this perfume over Jesus that's remembered in the gospel I even think of the disciples fighting over who's going to be greatest in the kingdom and the one who's received the most praise is this woman who pours ointment over him and in fact even in the coming stories you're going to see Peter who's someone of a spokesman for the disciples betray Jesus and so again I think we need to understand that God treasures our service we are called to serve him in love willingly

Matthew 16 25-26 for whoever would save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it for what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul or what shall a man give in return for his soul is that not really a contrast between Mary here and Judas and then

thirdly and finally perhaps the greatest point from the passage is that Jesus is voluntarily going to the cross Jesus is willingly going to the cross he is purposed to do so for your salvation and for the glory of God the Father it has been purposed we understand from before the foundation of the world God the Father and God the Son had covenanted together that they would redeem a people so in the coming weeks as we look at the passion account as we look at Jesus heading to the cross as we look at his death and his resurrection I want us to keep that in mind people aren't triumphing over

Jesus Jesus' plan hasn't been thwarted this is the plan this is it Jesus has come to be our Passover lamb and to die for our sins that he might redeem a people for himself and my prayer is that that will move your heart to worship that savior in the weeks ahead I think even now that as we contemplate that in a moment no one we're going to go and take of the Lord's table may that thought be in our mind may we contemplate that may we worship him let's pray together dear heavenly father we thank you for Jesus Christ we thank you for his willing sacrifice and for his death and we pray lord that all of us in this room will put our trust and hope in him if there's any in this room who are falsely following Christ who are deceiving themselves or maybe even knowingly deceiving others or that you would work in their heart they would truly and genuinely follow Christ Lord we pray that as followers of Jesus

Christ that we would lovingly and willingly serve our savior and that we would look for reward not in this life but in the life to come knowing that you treasure that service that's done in your name for your glory out of love for you so Lord help us to be those who willingly and sacrificially serve you in your kingdom and Lord again we thank you for this glorious savior and him willingly going to the cross to die for our sins we pray this in his name Amen men