

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8th, 2020

opportunity

Gospel of Mark 14:1-11



It was two days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him; for they said, “*Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people.*” While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. But some were there who said to one another in anger, “*Why was the ointment wasted in this way? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor.*” And they scolded her. But Jesus said, “*Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. She has done what*

she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.” Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. When they heard it, they were greatly pleased, and promised to give him money. So he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

Mark, Matthew and Luke all agree that Judas watched for “an *opportunity* to betray Jesus.” Some people mistakenly believe they can control God’s ways. In actuality, what they do is misconstrue God’s message, misrepresent God’s character and manipulate situations according to their own perspectives and pursuits. They get in the way of and work against God’s will and God’s ways. People like Judas can have good intentions, but in their frustrations or miscalculations they misuse opportunity for opportunistic gain.

QUESTION:

How do you know whether you are taking advantage of an opportunity to practice active faith rather than initiating opportunistic action motivated by self-centered perspectives or pursuit of personal gain?

POEM:

OPPORTUNITY (by Edwin Markham)

In an old city by the storied shores,
Where the bright summit of Olympus soars,
A cryptic statue mounted toward the light,
Heel-winged, tip-toed, and poised for instant flight.
“Statue, tell your name,” a traveler cried;
And solemnly the marble lips replied:
“Men call me Opportunity, I lift
My winged feet from earth to show how swift
My flight, how short my stay
How Fate is ever waiting on the way.”
“But, why that tossing ringlet on your brow?”
“That men may seize me any moment: Now,
Now is my other name; today my date;
O traveler, tomorrow is too late!”

PRAYER:

Borrowed from John Killinger

“Why do I always feel guilty, Lord, when I hear about Judas? Is it because I too am like him, taking every opportunity to betray you? I’m sorry, Lord. I live in a world where betrayal is the norm; where people think of themselves first; where friendship always has a limit; where love is something given on condition; where circumstances always provide a loophole. I wish it were otherwise, and that all people were faithful; that trust were the expected and not the unexpected thing; that my love could be counted on, whatever happens. What a different world it would be – like the kingdom of love you described. Renew my vision, Lord of your faithfulness to us. Help me to recommit myself to the way of the cross. For even with its pain and suffering, your way is better than my way, and your love is stronger than my betrayal. AMEN”