

# JESUS

## #UNFILTERED

THE GOSPEL OF MARK  
MEET JESUS UNFILTERED



### MARK: Jesus Unfiltered

#### Anointed - Mark 14:3-9

#### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders, please use these questions **as a guide for discussion**. Please don't feel like you have to go through every one!)

#### Warm-Up

1. What are some things people today are captivated by? What tends to capture your time, energy, and identity?
2. Have you ever been deeply captivated by something? What did that look like in practice?

#### Read Mark 14:3-5

3. Read verse 3. What stands out to you about the setting and the woman's actions?
4. Why would this act have been socially shocking or inappropriate in that culture?
5. The perfume was worth about a year's wages. What does that tell us about the cost of her action?
6. What do you think motivated her to act in such a radical and public way?
7. How do the disciples respond? What reasons do they give for their objection?
8. On the surface, their concern for the poor sounds valid. In what ways might their response seem reasonable?
9. What might their reaction reveal about their hearts or priorities?
10. Can you think of ways we might use "good" or "responsible" reasons to avoid costly devotion to Jesus?

#### Read Mark 14:6-9

11. How does Jesus respond to the disciples? What does He say about the woman's action?
12. What does Jesus mean when He says, "you will not always have me"?
13. How does the woman's action connect to Jesus' coming death and burial?
14. Why do you think Jesus says her act will be remembered wherever the gospel is preached?
15. What would it look like for your life to be centred on Jesus in a deeper way? Is there anything you are holding back from Him?
16. Where in your life (time, money, comfort, reputation) would costly devotion to Jesus actually be felt right now?
17. What is one concrete step you could take this week to express your love for Jesus in a visible or sacrificial way?
18. What have been some highlights, new insights, or learnings from this series in Mark?

**PRAY:** *Gracious God, you are worthy of everything. Forgive us for being captivated by lesser things. Help us to see the beauty of your death and respond with wholehearted devotion. Shape our hearts to honour you with all we are and have. May our lives be centred on you. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

## Mk 14:3-9 – St John’s Wishart – 29 Mar 26

### Intro

- What are you captivated by in life?
  - What are you captivated by?
    - What drives you...
    - What fascinates you...
    - What obsesses you...
  - What is it that your life revolves around?
- It could be any number of things ....maybe it’s running?
  - I love running. But it’s not just the “getting out there for a run” is it...
  - It’s the gear – the clothes, the shoes, the GPS watch.
  - It’s the latest training fad ...
    - Is it zone 2 heart-rate? Is it cadence? ----
      - It’s easy to be captured by a sporting hobby.
- Maybe it’s... family.
  - The kids or the grandkids ... or the new baby
  - What they love – sport, dance, gymnastics, music lessons
- There are so many things we can be captivated by.
  - Things that take our time, our energy, our devotion – sometimes becoming our identity.

- For a while I was captivated by politics.
  - In fact I was so captivated by politics that I took a job in politics working for a member of Parliament.
  - And up to a third of the year I would spend in Canberra – in the famous Canberra Bubble, working in Parliament House.
  - And there you would spend long days with other people who were captivated by politics.
    - The personalities, the gossip, the wheeling and dealing.
    - Unsurprisingly the politicians themselves were the worst for it – and during a sitting week, where they were basically on school camp for a fortnight - it was next level!
      - Put a bunch of overpaid politicians from around the country and concentrate their time and power in one place in a weird, freezing cold city in the middle of nowhere, thousands of kilometres from their home, and what do you get?
        - A lot of individuals focused on themselves – pushing for that bit of extra power ... forgetting where they've come from and the very people who send them there.
          - They're captivated by the politics game.///
- There are so many things that we can be captivated by, aren't there?...

- ...and our lives orbit around those things.
  - Everyone's life orbits around something.
- But if you think about whatever that thing is for you,
  - when you really consider it closely, you can be left wanting.
    - I mean – I'll be the first to tell you that when the centre of your life is politics – it's shallow, it's problematic.
- **But what if there was something - or someone - that isn't?**
  - What if there's someone who is 100 per cent worthy of centring our lives on?///
- Have you ever found yourself captivated by Jesus?
  - Have you ever been so amazed by Jesus that He shapes your life more than anything else?
    - We're at church – we're always on about Jesus and how he's worthy of our everything –
      - **but why?//**
- Our passage this morning offers us the answer.
- This strange story in Mark's gospel helps us see the beauty in who he is, and the wonder in his death. ///

- How are we going to get there?
  - Well we're going to work through our passage, and we're going to see three things:
    - A radical action
    - The disciples' reaction
    - ..and Jesus' reaction.

## 1. A radical action

- **[SLIDE]** If you've got your Bible there let's pick it up at verse 3:
- Mark gives us the setting for this event:
  - *(v3a) And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table...*
- So – they're in Bethany, which is a few kilometres outside the big city of Jerusalem, and it's just after the big triumphal entry where he's ridden in on the donkey. So we're at the pointy end of Jesus' ministry.
  - And in the couple of verses beforehand we're told the Passover festival is only two days away, which means **Jesus' death is only days away.**
- So they're in Bethany – and they're reclining at the table in the home of this guy called Simon who we're told is a leper but has probably been healed at his leprosy at this point
  - And they're having a formal dinner party.

- Picture it – you’re one of the disciples, you’re lazing around snacking on olives and grapes and some roast goat or something...
  - The wine’s flowing, the conversation is fantastic
    - Jesus is there, he’s cracking jokes, telling stories about their travels...
- And then out of the corner of your eye you see a woman waltz in the door.
  - She’s not invited, and she’s not there to wait on the table...
    - And she makes a B-line for the guest of honour – she walks right up to Jesus.
- The room falls silent – you’re looking around at the others – what on earth is going on?
  - What’s with that jar she’s got in her hand?
- And then – smash – she breaks the jar and pours the contents right on Jesus’ head.
  - And the room fills with this smell – this perfume –
    - actually it’s really nice – it’s expensive perfume!
      - That must’ve cost a bomb – you think!/////

- And you'd be right actually.
  - Did you see in verse 3 – Mark is at pains to point out to us that this was *very costly*.
    - We're told in the next verse that it's worth more than a year's wages –
      - ...when you consider the minimum yearly wage in Australia right now is \$47,000 – we're talking at least that in today's money.
        - Plus, it was probably a family heirloom that was passed through the generations – so it had serious sentimental value too.
  - And did the woman spray some of it on Jesus' neck and wrists?
    - No – *she broke the flask* – it's smashed – it's not going back in!
    - She's dramatically, completely poured it all out...
      - This woman has not held anything back! We can safely assume that she's sacrificed the sum total of her savings – it's like dropping her super on it!

- So what on earth is going on here?
- This is big – do you see?
  - In 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jerusalem there's no way it's OK for a woman to bust in to a mens' dinner party.
  - And it's even more strange that she's done such a random act.
    - What does it mean?
      - What kind of weird world is this woman living in, that she thinks it's ok to do this?///
- Well, that's exactly what the disciples were wondering too.

## 2. The disciples' response.

- **[SLIDE]** What do they say? Have a look at verse 4:
  - *There were some who said to themselves indignantly, "Why was the ointment wasted like that? <sup>5</sup> For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they scolded her. (v4-5)*

- Now – who’s saying this? - it says a bit of a non-descript ‘some’ – but most people agree it was some of Jesus’ disciples.
- So – let’s think – you’re one of the disciples, you’re at this dinner, sitting at the table, the woman’s smashed the jar, poured out the perfume, the smell is wafting around the room....
  - and as the shock starts to wear off it turns to anger!
    - you turn to your neighbour and you say...
      - that perfume – isn’t it worth a year’s wages?
        - What a waste! We could’ve sold that for some good coin!
        - We could have given a bit to Jesus ... I’ve been eyeing off a new cloak and sandals ...
          - oh...and we could’ve given some to the poor of course!
- So before Jesus can even react to this strange event, you and your mates pipe up...
  - “What are you doing woman! You can’t just burst in here and do that –not to mention – what a waste!” ///
- What’s on the disciples’ hearts here?
- What do we think about this reaction?
- What do we think about them wanting to help the poor with the proceeds of this perfume???

- Well ... it's kind of fair enough isn't it?? I mean, Jesus has been going on and on about helping the poor over his ministry.
  - Plus these disciples are good Jewish boys... they try hard to follow the Old Testament Law
    - Deuteronomy talks about tithes for the needy – the sojourner, the fatherless, the widow –
      - leaving bits of the harvest behind so that the poor can glean the leftovers
        - ...there are countless examples of how it's something we should be serious about!
          - Surely Jesus should be saying – “good point guys”, and joining in their rebuke of the woman??
            - I mean – isn't he going to have a shower and wash it all off anyway?
- Can you feel the tension in the room? What's going to happen?
  - The dinner party's been thrown into chaos – the room is tense – the disciples have told this woman off.
    - All eyes are now locked on Jesus – what's he going to say?

### 3. Jesus' response

- **[SLIDE]** Have a look from verse 6:
  - *But Jesus said, “Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. 7 For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me. 8 She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. 9 And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.” (v6-9)*
- Jesus says it's a beautiful thing -- sure but what's beautiful about it?
  - And what does he mean that you will not always have me?
    - And what's this about a burial? Jesus isn't dead yet!
- Let's unpack this together – and to help us organise our thoughts - what we see is two things:
  - A rebuke, and
  - An endorsement.
- A rebuke of the disciples' actions, and an endorsement of the woman's.
- The rebuke first.
- What does Jesus say? *Leave. Her. Alone.*

- Jesus totally disagrees with what the disciples have said.
- In fact, what does he say?
  - *For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me.*
- Sit yourself back at the table again ... can you feel your eyes starting to squint and your face screw up with confusion?
  - *You'll not always have me? What are you getting at Jesus?*
    - We've decided to drop everything to spend our lives following you and you're going to bail out on us?
- And then he says – *She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial.*
  - What?
  - You're thinking – it's normal to put perfume on a dead body – which it was back in those days
    - – but Jesus – you're still alive!
    - What do you mean you're going to be buried ... are you going to die??///
- Well, yes actually, he is ... and he's actually been trying to tell them this for weeks, if not months.
  - But the disciples aren't seeing it.
- **[SLIDE]** On the screen - here's three times in three earlier chapters of Mark where Jesus has been dropping big hints.

- See if you can hear what Jesus is trying to get at here.
  - In Chapter 8:
    - Jesus taught the disciples that the Son of Man must suffer many things .. he must be killed and after three days rise again – he spoke plainly about this!
      - But Peter – one of the disciples rebuked him
        - “Oh no Jesus, you’ve that wrong, that isn’t happening.”
  - In Chapter 9:
    - They will kill him, and after three days he will rise
      - But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him.
  - In Chapter 10:
    - They will condemn Jesus to death, they will kill him, and three Days later he will rise.
- Is it hard to see what Jesus is telling them?
- Time after time he’s saying to them plainly – I WILL DIE. I AM GOING TO DIE.//

- **[SLIDE]** It makes sense to us doesn't it...
  - We're celebrating Easter next week – we know Jesus is going to die – it's the heart of the Christian message.
- But back at the dinner table – the disciples are still missing the point!
  - They still don't get that Jesus is going to die.
  - They still don't get why the perfume shouldn't have been sold to give to the poor.
  - **They don't get the beauty of Jesus and what he's about to do! ///**
- But you know who does?
  - The woman at the centre of it all.
  - The woman who's put herself out there...
    - She's gone into where she isn't welcome,
    - She's interrupted a formal dinner party of a room full of men
    - She's ignored the fact that she knew she would be laughed at
    - And she's headed straight for the son of God...

- She's taken the most expensive thing she's ever owned
  - ....
  - Something her great great grandmother probably gave her
  - Something she was probably saving to pass on to her daughter
  - Something that could have paid for her family's expenses for a year
  - Life savings that were set apart for an emergency...
- And given it all up.
  - She's cracked the jar ... .
  - she's poured out the perfume ....
  - she's honoured the Lord Jesus with what wouldn't be too different from the anointing of a King....
  - she's given her ALL for the Son of God.
    - She's utterly captivated by him.
- **She gets the beauty of Jesus and the wonder of his death.**
- And that's when rebuke turns to endorsement.
  - Who knows ... maybe at this point Jesus puts his arm tenderly on her shoulder.
    - *She has done a beautiful thing to me.*
    - *She did what she could.*
- Jesus accepts what she's done as a radical act of worship.

- Think about what she recognises.
  - She understands the significance of Jesus...
  - And she has a sense of the significance of his death – maybe she was there when he told his disciples he was going to die...
    - But she's so overcome with Jesus and who he is – that she's taken this radical action.
- And Jesus' endorsement doesn't stop there...what does he say in verse 9?
  - *And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.” (v9)*
- With this one sentence, Jesus takes this moment in history, and says that it will and must be relevant for the rest of history.
  - That whenever the gospel is preached – like is happening right here, right now in this building today –
    - what she has done is worth - and will be - recounted and reflected on.

- What is this gospel?
  - It's the good news about the Kingdom of God – and the arrival of the King – this Jesus - God in the flesh –
  - And that he wants all people everywhere to submit to him as king, and accept his free offer of salvation.
- And the woman gets that!
- **And so here, with his endorsement - Jesus is saying – is the right way to honour me. This woman gets it.**
- Because when we grasp the beauty and 'bigness' of the news that Jesus died, it should result in action like this.

### Conclusion – Application

- **[SLIDE]** What the woman does here in our story is radical.
  - It's risky, surprising, it's countercultural.
- But you know what, when you think about it, it actually kind of isn't.
  - Why? Because her life revolves around Jesus.
    - It centres on Jesus.

- You see, when we really understand who he is and what he's done for us, it really shouldn't be too far a stretch to see some drastic changes...
  - Changes in our lives
    - What we focus on
      - What we spend our time doing
        - How we raise our kids
          - How we spend our money
            - How we behave in the workplace...//

[Bible college story next]

- As you might know, my wife and I moved down from Townsville at the start of last year so I could study at Bible College.
- It was initially a bit of an adjustment as you can imagine – going from Canberra to College – there’s a bit of whiplash...
- But it’s amazing to have the opportunity to spend four years digging deeper into what Jesus has done for us.
- And one of the things I’ve been most encouraged by is meeting others who are studying there and finding out how and why they came to be there.
  - But the thing that’s really struck me about the people I’ve met --- is the sacrifices they’ve made to be there.
    - Many of them have given up high-paying jobs to spend time learning about how to teach the Bible.
      - One of them sold his house so he could afford not to work for 4 years.
        - How amazing is that? All because they’re captivated by Jesus – and want others to be as well!
- Now, they’re extreme cases – and that’s not going to be right for everyone – I get that.
- But here’s another story...
  - Sidney and I were having breakfast last week with some friends of ours.

- They're a young family – he's a teacher, she's a stay-at-home mum, they've got 3 boys aged zero to five.
  - And they were about to do something we were so encouraged by.
  - They're so on about Jesus that they're selling their house, to move to a different suburb a long way away, to --- **help plant a church**//
  - They're not in ministry; they're just normal people with normal lives...
  - But they're moving to a more expensive place where they'll have to buy something much smaller and not as nice...
  - And he's going to keep driving to his job but it's going to take about ten times as long in the car.
  - They'll be further away from their family and their friends, their kids will change schools...
  - All these big changes – many of them kind of negative...
  - But they're doing it for one reason and one reason only – because they are captivated by the beauty of Jesus, and the wonder of his death...
    - And they want others in this suburb to come to the same faith.
    - How good is that?//

- Are you feeling inspired at all? Are you getting the beauty of Jesus?
  - Do you feel like you're feeling the weight of his significance?
    - Do you 'get it' like the woman 'gets it'? Who Jesus is and what he's done for you on the cross?
- Or are you like the disciples – have you missed the point, and so missed out?
  - Maybe you try hard to live for Jesus by doing 'the right thing'
  - Maybe your faith is 'going through the motions' a bit.
    - Maybe you haven't really pondered Jesus in your decisions, or had Him at the top of your priorities.
      - Is it time to take stock and consider what could change?

- I want to encourage you as you go home this week...
  - Open up this passage and read it again on your own slowly...
    - But don't stop at verse 9 like we did today.
    - Keep turning the page.
    - And then chapter by chapter... read as Jesus makes his way to the cross...
      - And dies that death that we deserve...
        - ...and as we head in to Easter...
        - Let's soak in the beauty of Jesus, and wonder at what he's done for us.