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St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
February 14, 2018  
Ash Wednesday

Passion History: In the Upper Room, Psalm 32  
Hymns: 140; 145; 163; 653

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Matthew 26:1-13

Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, *that* He said to His disciples, <sup>2</sup>“You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.”

<sup>3</sup>Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, <sup>4</sup>and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill *Him*. <sup>5</sup>But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.”

<sup>6</sup>And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, <sup>7</sup>a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured *it* on His head as He sat *at the table*. <sup>8</sup>But when His disciples saw *it*, they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste? <sup>9</sup>For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to *the poor*.”

<sup>10</sup>But when Jesus was aware of *it*, He said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. <sup>11</sup>For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. <sup>12</sup>For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did *it* for My burial. <sup>13</sup>Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.” (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, our Crucified Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Our Redeemer

In our midweek meditations this Lenten season we will be considering the simple basic truth regarding Jesus that is central to our faith, that

Jesus is our Redeemer. We will consider how that came to be and the circumstances surrounding the payment for sin that had to be made in order for us to be saved. However we will also be shedding light continually on the truth that Jesus didn't come as Savior for a few, or for one nation, but that Jesus is our Redeemer because Jesus is the Redeemer of the world.

This evening we begin by basing our meditation upon events that took place several days before Jesus was taken by His enemies, several days before what we think of as His passion began. May the Holy Spirit enrich our faith as we consider ----

## **THEME: The Redeemer of the World Anointed.**

### **I. The timing of Jesus' Death Determined by the Powers That Be!**

Who are the powers that be? Who is in control of the affairs of this life, the affairs in this world? Our text clarifies that for us:

**Matthew 26:1-3** "Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, *that* He said to His disciples, <sup>2</sup>"You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."

<sup>3</sup>Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, <sup>4</sup>and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill *Him*. <sup>5</sup>But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."

We have Jesus' warning given to the disciples of things which soon must come to pass. He tells them plainly that it was to be during this Passover observance that He would be crucified.

In contrast to this conversation is the plotting of the Sanhedrin as they met at the palace of the High Priest. This was not an ordinary meeting of the high Jewish Council. This was a meeting in which they were discussing the how and when that they would kill Jesus. They no longer saw any alternative. Caiaphas had already declared before the council "*that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.*" (John 11:50) They were determined. They loved the power and the control that they exercised, and the esteem or glory that went with it. Yes, they were convinced that they were in control; they saw themselves as the powers that be.

But who were the powers that be? The Lord God was the One who had anointed Jesus as the Christ. The Lord God had determined that Jesus

would be the Passover Lamb whose blood would be the redeeming sacrifice for the sins of the world. While the High Council had decided that Jesus' capture and death should not be during the feast, the Lord had already determined that this was the exact right time for the sacrifice for the sin of the world to be made, when the people were assembled and each and every family unit of the Jews would bring their pure and spotless lamb to the temple courts to be killed, that they might partake of the Passover Supper. That supper was commemorating the great deliverance God had worked, not only of the plague of death that had struck Egypt, but the plague of death that had afflicted mankind since the fall into sin. It was for this death, this redemptive sacrifice that Jesus was anointed.

Our text actually contains a flashback at this point. It goes back from about Tuesday of Holy Week to the previous Sabbath or Saturday, and a dinner in Bethany in which Jesus and His disciples were not only present but in which Jesus was the honored guest. It was at this dinner that something very peculiar, very daring, and yet very special took place; the anointing of Jesus. What we see is that –

## **II. Jesus' Anointing Gets to the Heart of Our Redemption.**

This dinner in Bethany was at the home of a man known as Simon the leper. He could not have had a public meal at his home unless he had been healed of his leprosy. We are told that Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, was also at this dinner, and that Martha was serving them from the kitchen. Everything here speaks of the love and admiration and appreciation that these friends of Jesus held in their hearts for the Lord. Truly, Jesus had done wondrous things and they were the beneficiaries of His merciful grace. Now Mary, and it was Mary, went further in expressing her devotion for Jesus. She entered the dining hall, not to bring more food, but to render a higher service to the Lord Jesus Himself. She had with her an alabaster flask of expensive ointment of spikenard, about a pound, which would have been about twelve ounces. She approached Jesus and broke off the neck of the bottle so that it would freely pour, and she began anointing Jesus' head, as our text records. Mark and Luke tell us that Mary also went to Jesus' feet and that after pouring the precious ointment on His feet proceeded to let down her hair and wipe the excess oil from His feet with her hair.

Did she know something the others didn't know? She caused quite a scene. Her behavior bordered not only on the extraordinary, but on the indecent, a woman shouldn't let down her hair in the presence of a group of men! Did she know something the others didn't know? Well, they should have known. Jesus had told them often enough. Even earlier as they began the journey to Jerusalem Jesus explained to them that it was

time for Him to be taken by His enemies and handed over to the gentiles, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. Others just didn't understand. They didn't understand because they didn't want to understand. The things Jesus said went against what they envisioned for Jesus and for themselves. But Mary listened. That was something special we should learn from Mary. Mary listened to the words of our Lord. Her act of love in this anointing was in preparation for Jesus' death. That was Jesus' conclusion, and that was not simply said to put a better light on Mary's actions. It was said because the Lord knows the heart. He saw Mary's faith and Mary's devotion to her Redeemer Lord. She went on to assert that wherever this gospel would be proclaimed in the world, and yes Jesus was making it clear that this gospel would go out to all the world, this sacrifice of love and devotion would also be told as a memorial to Mary's faith. The Lord set Mary before us, gentile Christians as an example of faith, and devotion reflected in offerings both precious and of service to the Lord.

Tonight we begin our Lenten meditations in preparation for our annual observance of Jesus' sacrifice for us, the sinners of this world. May we draw the right lesson from what took place at that dinner; may we comprehend the love of our Savior for us fallen sinners a love, that drove Him to the cross, not because his enemies had determined anything, but because of the Father's will for our salvation. May we be drawn to love Jesus as did Mary, to live in devotion and thanksgiving so that we might offer Him gifts from the heart, extravagant gifts as did Mary, not gifts to impress others, but gifts of love to honor our Lord.

Yes, but Mary had received so much from the Lord, even her brother's life! She received no more than we have received, no more than what we will receive once again this evening as we partake of the blessed sacrament of Jesus' body and blood given and shed for us for the forgiveness of our sins. And the hope of everlasting life that is ours in His anointing as the Redeemer of the World.

**AMEN.**

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.