

OBSERVATIONS & INTERPRETATION

Read: Mark 14:3

Discuss: The fragrant oil called nard that the woman breaks over Jesus is valued as roughly 10-month's income. We know also that Bethany was a particularly poor community. These two ideas brought together give great importance to this act of anointing Jesus. What might we conclude about the mindset of the woman in question coming into this event's events?

Read: Mark 14:4-5, 10-11; John 12:6

Discuss: Many in attendance criticized her actions. In the Gospel of John, we know that it was Judas Iscariot who led this critique, but also that he left his event and went straight chief priests to betray Jesus out of bitterness rooted in his greed. What might we conclude about the heart of Judas?

Read: Mark 14:6-9

Discuss: Jesus, in response to all that has occurred, calls the act beautiful, and notes the prophetic nature of her worship inasmuch as it points forward from this moment to his imminent death and burial. Knowing that he is about to pass through the very wrath of God for all human sin and brokenness (an act of obedience that even the disciples called foolish: Mt. 16:22-23, Mk 8:32-33), discuss the importance of Jesus aligning himself with her act of praise.

APPLICATION

- This woman breaks the very precious representation of her entire life upon the Rock that is Jesus. Judas, by contrast wishes to see the Rock of ages broken for the sake of his own gain. How do these passages and details inform our understanding of our own hearts when we are critical of the worship of others?

PRAYER

- We will all either be broken by the world, by sin, or our own flesh—or we will be broken by God and gain Jesus himself. Pray earnestly that God will break you to gain that which is most precious of all—Jesus Christ.



Week 2: BREAK ME, O GOD!

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

There are four crucial components for a group to maintain its health: Word, prayer, relationships, and reaching out. In this guide, you will study the biblical passage in three steps: observation, interpretation, and application. As the group leader, you are free to use any part of this guide that can assist you in achieving this goal.

CONNECT

- What is something very precious to you that you cherish? What would it take for you to *want* to see it taken from you for the sake of Jesus?
- Have you ever found yourself judging someone else's worship of God as impractical or foolish? Can you recall why you felt this way?
- How would you ascribe worth to Jesus? Upon what would you base this immense question?

INTRODUCTION

Today's passage depicts a nameless woman (identified elsewhere as Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus) coming before Jesus and anointing him with fragrant perfume. This act of worship garners criticism from onlookers, but Jesus calls it beautiful. Out of this embodied act, we derive a simple prayer—to be broken ourselves upon the Christ—even at great cost to ourselves, our flesh, or our comfort. As we walk through this text today, consider the dangerous prayer, "Break me, O God!"