

# THE ROAD ONCE TRAVELED

## DIGGING DEEPER

THE ROAD OF LOVE

MARCH 30

**How are we willing to pour out our resources, time, and love in worship of Jesus?** A woman anoints Jesus with expensive perfume, pouring it out in a lavish act of devotion, while others criticize her for her waste. Jesus defends her, recognizing her act as one of true worship and preparation for His burial. This week, we'll reflect on the sacrificial love demonstrated in this act and consider how we, too, are called to offer our best to Jesus, even when it may seem costly.

Work through the following questions and scriptures on your own or get together with your group, spiritual running partners, or family to talk through what you are learning.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Share a story of an extravagant display of love or devotion that may not have been well received, but the person involved did not care. (Examples: A public wedding or prom proposal, a fan meeting a celebrity, etc.)
2. Have you ever witnessed or experienced a moment where devotion to someone or something seemed to outweigh the concern for how others might react? How did it make you feel?

#### Scripture Focus: Mark 14:1-9

We are in a series called *A Road Once Traveled*, where we are looking at how Jesus intentionally made His way to the cross. Last week, we studied Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem and the expectations of the people who believed He was coming to overthrow Roman rule. Instead, Jesus began confronting the religious leaders, clearing the temple, and teaching about the coming Kingdom.

As the tension escalates, Jesus makes a bold prophecy in Mark 13 about the destruction of the temple, which occurred in A.D. 70. He speaks of the overlap between immediate prophecy and future events, demonstrating that God's Kingdom is already here but not yet fully realized.

With that background, we arrive at Mark 14 and a moment of incredible devotion.

#### Mark 14:3-9 (NIV)

While Jesus was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly.

"Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

## 1. Worship Beyond the Norm

- Mary's act of devotion was extravagant and costly. It was so unusual that others were shocked and critical.
- She spent a year's wages on perfume and poured it out on Jesus—an act that seemed foolish to others but was an act of love to her.
- **Discussion Question:** What is an example of a time you or someone you know worshiped or showed devotion to God in a way that seemed extreme to others?

## 2. Sometimes God Wants Us to Go Big

- Mary's act was over-the-top, and that's what made it beautiful. She didn't hold back—she gave Jesus her best.
- **Discussion Question:** If you were to show love for Jesus like Mary did, what would it be? Are you giving Jesus your best or just your leftovers?

## 3. Sacrifice for Growth

- Worship and devotion to Jesus often involve sacrifice. Mary's act cost her financially and socially, but she did not hesitate.
- **Discussion Questions:**
  - What is the most sacrificial thing you could offer Jesus today? It doesn't have to be money—it could be time, talents, or something else.
  - Have you ever given up something for Jesus and later realized how worth it the sacrifice was?

## 4. Jesus is Worth the Sacrifice

- Jesus affirms Mary's devotion, promising that her story will be told for generations.
- Sometimes we hold back things that God is calling us to surrender.
- **Discussion Questions:**
  - In what ways have you taken back from God something you had given up before?
  - How has God asked you to trust Him with something others might never consider giving up?
  - How can you live in a way that reflects the truth that Jesus is already victorious?

# APPLICATION & PRAYER

## Application & Prayer

- **Challenge:** This week, ask God what He wants you to surrender or give generously. Be open to His leading.
- **Prayer Time:** Pray together, asking God to help each person respond to Him with devotion, sacrifice, and a willingness to go big in their faith.

**Closing Thought:** Just like Mary's act of devotion is still being talked about today, our acts of faith and surrender can have an impact far beyond what we can imagine. Let's worship Jesus with our lives in a way that reflects our love for Him!