

February 19

Scriptures: Read Matthew 26

Key Verse: “You have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always”
(Matthew 26:11)

Overview

This chapter is the beginning of what is known as the passion narrative – the story of the arrest, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It begins with Jesus Himself predicting that at the Passover He would be handed over to be crucified. It’s at this point the chief priest and the elders of the people plot to kill Jesus, but they don’t want to do it during the feast of unleavened bread, which begins at the Passover, because they feel that there would be a riot among the people.

Nevertheless, the plot begins and the tension and speed of the narrative starts to pick up. It opens with a very unusual event in Bethany where Jesus is in the home of Simon the leper. Simon was probably someone whom Jesus had healed from leprosy. A woman, unnamed, comes to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume and pours it on His head as He reclines at the table. The disciples, like all good Christians everywhere, were angry because this perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor. Jesus responded by saying this was a special event – “The poor you will always have to minister to, Me you will have only for a short period of time.” He goes on to say, “When she poured this perfume on My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial”.

It could be that the woman thought she was forcing Jesus to claim the kingship because anointing on the head was something that was done to kings. It could be she thought that by doing this she might spur Jesus into some kind of action. What He did was turn the act into something else. He said that she may have thought she was anointing Him to be King, but in fact she was anointing Him for burial. It was a very poignant moment: one that Jesus said would be remembered wherever the Gospel was preached throughout the world. Nevertheless, He would not allow anyone, however loving and loyal he or she might be, to force him to fulfill any agenda other than that of His Father in heaven.

Prayer

We praise You Jesus for the way You followed the will of Your Father, unswayed by the world, even unto death on a cross. We pray for the determination to imitate You, our perfect example.