

## Daily Devotional, July 22, 2021 Judge or Judged?

When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. <sup>13</sup> Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.” Matthew 26:12-13 (NIV)

***“It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.” 1 Corinthians 13:7-8 (NIV),***

Scanning the headlines of a newspaper or any news website is enough to depress nearly anyone. We read of petty crime, terrorist acts, protests and riots, and wars, and rumors of wars. We can find plenty of issues outside of our own lives to preoccupy us and make us stress over the world we live in. This is in addition to the events of our own lives that can press in on us and create their own havoc in our everyday routines. Work, home, kids, school, health – the list goes on and on of issues that command our attention and keep us from exhibiting love to our families and neighbors.

When we allow ourselves to step back and take a deep breath, we realize what our real purpose in life is here—in the here and now. We see how insignificant some of the issues are, and that God has called us to model His love to each another. If we are called to model Christ’s love to each other, how is that going for us individually, as a church, and as a people of this community?

Christ came into our world to save sinners and to model how this was to be done. He went to where sinners were, which essentially was everywhere. In Matthew 26, Jesus was being anointed by Mary in Bethany with very expensive perfume. This takes place in the middle of the passion week in the midst of other issues Jesus has pressing in on Him. He is surrounded by his closest friends who He knows will soon desert Him and scatter. Our Lord knows that He is about to be crucified and suffer greatly, all due to some of the very people He came to save. Despite all of this and so much more weighing on Jesus, He continues to show great love, patience, and grace.

When Mary pours this perfume on Jesus’ head, the disciples were furious. They immediately ridiculed and judged Mary for what she had done. What they were missing is how Mary viewed Jesus. She must have somehow heard what Jesus had prophesied about His life in this trip to Jerusalem and that he foresaw that He was going to die here. She recognized Him as the Messiah and was treating Him as such, but what were the disciples doing? They were angry because they wanted to use that perfume for a different purpose. They had no visions of anointing and preparing for burial the body of their Lord and Messiah. They instead wanted to sell it so they could give the money to the poor. Let’s ponder the sincerity of that thought from the disciples as we remember Judas is the one who took the greatest offense at this.

The reaction of Jesus to Mary’s actions is one of kindness and love. He says in Matthew 26:10, “she has done a beautiful thing to me. Mary’s actions were an overflow of the love she had for her Lord. She wanted to act, and she did, and Jesus responded in love.

How often do we react as the disciples did with mocking and harsh judgment, when really the situation calls for love, patience and kindness? Sometimes we must be patient and look deeper than what seems apparent. Our impatience often makes us judge unfairly and shortsightedly. Let Christ be our only judge.

***Prayer: Lord Jesus I have come to You for help. I am struggling with judging others. Lord, I ask You to teach me how to discern when others are seeing more clearly than I am the needs of others. Help me to have the same kind of heart that shows compassion and mercy to people who are hurting or in need. I acknowledge that You are the righteous judge over all creation. I pray You would bless those whom I have judged wrongly, and that Your grace would be real to them. I pray for their forgiveness as well. In your healing name I pray, Amen.***