



river west church

What God Wants From You

Matthew 26:1-13

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Passion Week

When we come to Passion Week, we come to the extreme center of our Christian Faith. Passion Week begins with Christ's entry to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and extends through His death on the cross on Good Friday and then His resurrection on Easter Sunday. Without a doubt, this is the single most significant week of history.

But for us, this is far more than a bit of religious history. For us, this week is a powerful opportunity. This is a time for us to embrace and affirm the most powerful truths of the Gospel – the power of the cross and the power of the resurrection of Christ. That's our aim this week.

What God Gives

In Matthew 26:1-5, the scene is set in the middle of Passion Week. Jesus Himself tells His disciples what will take place. He tells them point blank: in a matter of days, He will be crucified. This is the darkest of news for the disciples. Jesus told them about the cross several times before. But each time they were stunned into silence. They didn't want to believe it. They refused to think about it or talk about it. Nevertheless, Jesus wants them to know, this is going to happen. It isn't a mistake of history or a failure of the mission of Christ. This is God's plan. This IS the mission of Christ.

It will happen at Passover. This is also by design. God is giving His own son as the Passover Lamb. Jesus is the fulfillment of the perfect plan of God, as previewed in the Old Testament. This is salvation in the making. Every bit of it is the powerful work of God Himself! Here is the justice, power, mercy, and love of God on display and it is awesome!

What God Wants

So, what does God want? God does this amazing work on our behalf! But does He want anything from us?

Look carefully at the passage – Matthew 26:6-13. Here is the story of a woman with a box of very expensive perfume. Suddenly she takes it and pours it on the head of Jesus! She shocks everyone in the room. No one can believe it. Why this waste? Shouldn't it have been sold and the money given to the poor?

Then, the disciples are shocked again, as Jesus commends her. Jesus knows that, unlike the disciples, she has been listening. She has been pondering the truth. She sees what they refuse to see: that Jesus is actually going to the cross. Perhaps she sees the truth: He is doing this for love. This is sacrificial love beyond imagining!

Seeing the sacrificial love of Jesus has moved her to her core. Now, she loves Jesus in return. We cannot see into her heart, but we can see what she does. Her love takes action. She gives to Jesus the most precious thing she has, this cherished box of perfume. But what she's really giving is her heart.

This is what God wants. In fact, this is so significant that Jesus tells His disciples her act of love and devotion should never ever be forgotten. It is to be remembered as a part of the Gospel – forever!

Do you know what God wants from you? He wants your heart. He wants your love. He wants your life. This isn't so you can earn His love, salvation, or favor; but because He has already freely given you all of that through Christ.

The woman with the box of perfume is included in the story of Passion Week for a reason! She shows us what to do. First, pay attention. Dive deep into the meaning of the cross of Christ. Ponder the love and grace of God. Let it move your heart. Second, respond with your whole heart in love. But this love must not be hidden. Let your love be expressed in worship. Give something. Show your love for Christ by taking the time and effort to focus on Him this week. Show your love for Christ by giving, as an act of worship. Love Him. Thank Him. Worship Him. Do this openly, without shame. Give Him your heart, just as He has through Christ given His.