



Grain

“Christ does not say, ‘If you believe, or if you are worthy, you receive my body and blood’ but ‘take, eat and drink, this is my body and blood.’” Martin Luther

Submitted by Pastor Susan Schneider, Madison, WI

Field

3 While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. 4 But some were there who said to one another in anger, "Why was the ointment wasted in this way? 5 For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor." And they scolded her. 6 But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. 7 For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. 8 She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. 9 Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her." 10 Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. 11 When they heard it, they were greatly pleased, and promised to give him money. So he began to look for an opportunity to betray him. Mark 14:3-11

Thoughts

Judas puts me on edge. His story is a reminder of the depth of betrayal we human beings are capable of. The drama about the infamous disciple, contrasted with the woman who offered Jesus costly ointment, follows us through time. Jesus had seen into the hearts of people his entire life. Now, the woman with the expensive ointment of nard sees him and pours out her love and generosity in a profound act of kindness not long before Jesus would witness so many drop away from him. As Elizabeth Struthers Malbon keenly noticed, the unknown woman spent money on Jesus, and Judas, one of the well-known twelve, sold Jesus for money. Selling out Jesus was a serious matter.

As the lesson for Palm Sunday continues, before Judas' actual betrayal, we know Jesus shared his body and blood at the Last Supper. Martin Luther recognized that the love and forgiveness in holy communion is gifted to us not only when we feel worthy enough but as we are. Was that grace present for Judas too? I believe so. Sometimes our self judgement wins out for doing far less than Judas did.

We know what is coming up. We know how Jesus' forgiveness will pour out over those who fled, but that actions are significant. Well-known, powerful leaders today can appear to get away with promoting public policies that deem certain populations and even our planet invisible. We remember that selling out Jesus is a serious matter; that embraces good news. Happy Monday!

Prayer

Highly recommended.

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy