



Mark 14:10–11

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Reflection

It is one of the most moving scenes in all of Scripture. Mourning has been transformed

into merriment and feasting. It had been four days. Four days of grieving, four days to come to terms with the loss of their little brother Lazarus, four days that Lazarus had been in the tomb. Then Jesus came. And he called Lazarus from death to life. And now in Simon ‘the Leper’'s house, he too brought from death to life by Jesus, their mourning has been transformed into feasting in honour of Jesus. Simon's their, utterly clean. Lazarus' is there, full of life, enjoying every moment with newfound appreciation. Martha, one of Lazarus' two sisters, is busy serving the guests out of her love for the guest of honour. Jesus, who'd wept at the death of his friend, is enjoying one of his last truly happy moments on earth, with his disciples and people that he loves. Who knows what Jesus is thinking. Perhaps he's drawing

strength and resolve from the undercurrent of deep joy at this resurrection feast. He's defeated death for two men, Simon and Lazarus, and is surrounded by joy and celebration. Imagine the scene that awaits in heaven when he brings resurrection life to all of humankind who put their trust in his name. Lazarus' second sister Mary enters the room and all conversations slowly quiet. She has everyone's attention as she kneels down at Jesus' feet. Mary's carrying a jar of nard, very expensive perfume. A few people gasp audibly as she slowly pours the whole jar over Jesus' head and his feet. And then, not a dry eye in the room, she unclasps her hair and uses it to wash Jesus' feet. Every single person in that room is deeply moved by her devotion to Jesus. Except one, who's plotting in his black heart the murder of his master.

Reading from today's passage, Mark 14:10–11,

10 Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. 11 They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

Juxtaposed against one of the most touching scenes in all of Scripture is hypocrisy, addiction, jealousy, and murder. The joy and hope of resurrection life suppressed, obscured, discounted and ultimately rejected by sin. What a tragic scene this has become!

Sin has so blackened Judas' heart that he stands utterly unmoved by Mary's devotion to Jesus. She hasn't said a word and yet no volume of words could express so perfectly her gratitude and love of her Lord. Then there are the guests, deeply moved by what they are witnessing. And then there is Lazarus himself – the man was dead; his body rotting, decomposing in a tomb – and here he is whole again. A living miracle, Jesus' final and greatest sign. A living, rejoicing sign pointing to the inescapable truth that Jesus Christ has power over death and thus holds the key to humankind's greatest problem. His claims are true. He is who he says he is. He is the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in him will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in him will never die (John 11:25–26). But

sin has so blackened Judas' heart that he does not believe this, despite the overwhelming evidence in that room. His greed has blinded him. If she'd just donated that perfume to Jesus, he could have cashed it in, and secreted his usual cut. What a waste. Yesterday he said,

‘Why this waste of perfume? 5 It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor.’

Hypocrisy follows his greed. Perhaps self-justification too. Our hearts are slippery like that. ‘Yes, this money should have gone to the poor, not have been poured out on the floor; the poor would have been better off’ ... and deeper down, ‘And so would have I’.

Sin. Judas teaches us a great deal about the nature of sin. You might be struggling to fathom how he could blurt out something so insensitive during this intimate scene. And how can he be thinking about theft when the one before him not only has a track record of reading people's minds and hearts but has also, so astonishingly, just raised a man from the dead? Sin is like that. By nature, it suppresses the truth. It blinds us. It sickens, taints and decays everything it touches; our empathy, our rationality, our judgment, and our humanity.

Think a little more about Judas. He's walked with Jesus for three years. He's heard him preach and teach every day – hundreds of Bibles filled with Jesus' teaching. We've only got one, just a brief sum-

mary really. Next think about what Judas has seen. We only read about the miracles; he was physically present when they happened. He's been a first-hand witness to countless healings, exorcisms, the stilling of storms, walking on water, the raising of the dead. Jesus even gave him power, along with the other disciples to heal and cast out demons in his name. He's felt Jesus' power coursing through his own veins.

But sin has a foothold. And Judas is nurturing it. Indulging it. Fanning its flames. Little by little he opens the door to the mortal enemy. This won't end well for Judas. Perhaps it started with simply pocketing the change after a trip to the markets. A pang of guilt. I won't do it again. But he does; again and again, and it becomes easier

each time. A secret money purse counted late at night. A secret idol. Tragically his friends have no idea, he's put in charge of the money. He becomes an almost daily thief. Again, there are moments of guilt, followed by quick rationalisation. 'I've left everything for Jesus. A worker deserves his wages. And what if something happens to Jesus? What would be left for me? What if, say, he is arrested? What then? Yes, arrested. Come to think of it, I bet those Pharisees would pay a pretty penny to see Jesus arrested ...'

Proverbs 7 personifies sin,

21 With persuasive words she led him astray;

she seduced him with her smooth talk.

22 All at once he followed her
like an ox going to the slaughter,
like a deer stepping into a noose
23 till an arrow pierces his liver,
like a bird darting into a snare,
little knowing it will cost him his
life.

Think & Pray

As you reflect over this passage today think deeply over what it reveals to us about the nature of sin. Does sin have a foothold in your life? Do you have a secret idol like Judas? What is your weakness that Satan is just waiting to exploit? Are you a thief like Judas, stealing money from your boss? Is it your temper? Your good looks and flirtatious nature? Do you regularly view pornography or drink more

than you should or gamble using apps on your phone? What secret sin could be your undoing? What sin are you indulging in that is slowly changing you, eroding away your character, and blinding you?

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Confess this sin to Jesus this morning. Ask for his help to put it to death forever. Don't

let it take over like Judas did. Don't give the devil a foothold. Instead, give yourself over to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in prayer.