



CANYON HILLS

COMMUNITY CHURCH

Series: The Book of Mark

June 3, 2018

Worship Without Shame

Pastor Jeff Potts

Good morning, church! How are we doing this morning? Great! Well, if I haven't met you before, my name is Jeff Potts. I'm one of the pastors here. It's just a privilege to get to be here with you, to worship with you, and to share God's Word with you this morning. Man, it has just been a great morning. It has just been a great morning, so far, of worship.

A little earlier today, I got the opportunity to worship with my family. They all come and join me up in the front row. That's a treat that happens from time to time when I get to teach up here. We were doing Communion and my son, Gabe, just recently came to Christ about a couple of months ago. I got to lead him to the Lord and we prayed together.

He's 6, and so he actually took his first Communion this morning. So, being able to just explain that to him and pray through that with him was just such a joy. So, I am on cloud nine this morning. No coffee needed for me today. Yeah, we can praise God for that. That's awesome. It has just been a very memorable day and I hope it will be a memorable day for a lot of us here today.

I also do want to just speak on behalf of the pastors and elders and just say thank you for praying for us this week, leading up to this weekend. Many of you prayed for us this week. We were away together for our annual pastor and elder retreat. We went away to do some business, to really try to increase our understanding of the growing sin of domestic abuse in the church. We agreed, prayerfully and with tears, that as a group, we cannot and will not be silent or passive on this issue.

Pastor Steve is going to be working on an all-church email that will just outline steps we're going to be taking to be better prepared to respond to those who are suffering from physical, emotional, verbal, spiritual, and sexual abuse in the home. Thank you for praying for us. Please continue to pray for us. This is a sad, relevant, and complicated issue and we need a lot of wisdom, so thanks and please keep praying for us.

Turn in your Bibles with me to Mark, chapter 14. We're continuing to kind of walk through this book of the Bible and we are really getting toward the end. We're nearing the end of Jesus' earthly ministry and we're closing in on the greatest act of love ever. We've been singing about it all day, right?

Jesus is going to be betrayed, accused, tried falsely, beaten, rejected, and ultimately hung on a cross, but we worship and we sing here on Sunday mornings because we know Jesus rose from the grave. He has proved himself to be God, and in that truth, we rejoice, sing, praise, serve, give, and love each other well, because it's in that hope, the good news of Jesus, that we find our value, joy, and best of all, our Savior.

We've been in Mark for a while, and by going the speed we do through the book, we just get little snapshots of Jesus once a week. We get to see his character and his focus. We get glimpses of what he values and what he calls good. We just get to be reminded, even in the little stories, that Jesus is a lot greater than anything we could ever imagine.

Today, we're going to look at a gathering. We're going to look at an event that happens at the gathering, and then a conversation that happens about the event that happens at the gathering. It's a pretty small event in some regard, and yet it is huge in implication. We're going to see a picture of worship that is costly, that seems reckless and ill-conceived.

We're going to see a group of people who disagree and speak against this picture of worship. We will also see what Jesus values and how Jesus views our worship today. So, if you're at Mark 14, would you stand with me for the reading of God's Word? We're going to take a look at it together. We're going to start in verse 1 and go through verse 9.

"It was now two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him, for they said, 'Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people.' And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head.

There were some who said to themselves indignantly, 'Why was the ointment wasted like that? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.' And they scolded her.

But Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.'"

God, we have been worshiping you this morning with singing and just remembering your faithfulness, what you have done for us. God, we worship you because of what you are actively

doing for us now and what you promise to do for us in the future. So, as we take a look at your Word, God, please, please get me out of the way.

Soften hearts. Open up ears. Open up eyes to see your Word, your goodness, your strength, your faithfulness, and your love. I pray you would be honored and glorified this morning and that we would respond to who you are. In your name, amen.

Just as a means of context, this is the week of Passover, a huge religious festival for the Jewish people, just celebrating what God has done for them. It's at this festival that Jesus is going toe-to-toe with the religious leaders. He has overthrown some tables. He has argued with them about his authority. He has answered and solved religious riddles and hard questions they've brought to him. He has really kind of skillfully showed his wisdom above and beyond the teachers of the law, and they hate him.

The religious leaders hate Jesus. They don't like how popular he is. They don't like how smart he is. They want him gone, and so it says they just start seeking a way to figure out how they can arrest him by cunning so they can kill him, but they didn't want a crowd that was currently swooning over Jesus to turn on them so they decide, "We'll pursue him a little later, after the feast." That's verses 1 and 2.

The main story we're going to be looking at this morning is in verses 3-9. That's going to be a familiar story to many of you. You've probably read it before in Matthew. You've read it before in John. It is the story of the woman pouring the oil on top of the head of Jesus. My hope is that we will take a critical look at this story, even though it may be familiar to many, that will peel back the onion a little bit, and that we'll see the implications and then see how we can apply it to our lives today.

Any time we look at Scripture, we want to do that. We want to take a critical look. What does this actually say? What are the implications from what it says? How can I live that out? How can I worship in response to this?

Who are the players here? Who are the characters we're looking at? We have Jesus. We have Simon the leper, who's the host. We have this woman with some perfume. In John 12, we see that it's Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. Lazarus is significant because he was the one, in John 11, whom Jesus raised from the dead and called out from the tomb. He's a pretty significant figure in Scripture.

Then, we have the other group. The other group is primarily comprised of the disciples, Jesus' followers. We have Jesus, Simon, Mary, and the disciples. Jesus is in Bethany at Simon the leper's house. We see that in verse 3. This, apparently, was the place where Jesus stayed for the Passover feast. He traveled back and forth from Bethany to Jerusalem during that week.

He's reclining at the table. He's having a meal, and then in comes Mary. She walks toward him, and she has this very expensive flask of perfume. She goes over and she breaks the flask, and then she proceeds to pour the contents of the oil on Jesus' head, the entire thing.

Now, if I'm in a restaurant with my wife and we're out on a date, and two tables over I see a woman stand up, take a glass of something, and pour it on a man's head, I'm probably thinking the guy is in trouble and he's done something wrong. I'm probably thinking, "I have to keep watching this! This is reality TV kind of stuff right here!"

Yet it wasn't like that. It was a little bit more celebratory than that. It's the guy who hits the walk-off homerun and the teammates are meeting him, and then one guy has the Gatorade bucket and he dowses him while everyone else is punching him and hitting him and cheering for him. It's sports. It's weird. I get it. The guy is wet, sticky, and probably cold, and he has never been more honored by the team. Right? It's weird. It's sports. You'll get it someday.

It would be an honor to get something like that. In the Old Testament, this act of pouring oil on the head, specifically, was highly significant. It was a symbol of something new and grand that was starting. It signified the starting of a special appointment, like a prophet, a high priest, or the coronation of a king. "You will be king someday, so here, we're going to pour this on you." This anointing by Mary was an act of great honor and reverence toward Jesus. It was worship.

That's where that applies to us today. This is a passage about worship, about bold worship, courageous worship, without shame. In this particular case, Mary gave a precious gift to Jesus and it was intentional, costly, direct, and from the heart. In our worship, we celebrate, value, and declare the greatness of Jesus.

People might misunderstand or disagree with us while we do it, but our worship is focused on our Savior and our King, Jesus Christ. If we truly worship Jesus with our best, God will pour out incredible blessing. Mary worshiped without shame and we are also to worship without shame. We're just going to weave in some application this morning as we're walking through the story.

1. *Worship without shame to celebrate Jesus.* Our praise celebrates an incredible Savior. Jesus has done amazing things for us and he is working on our behalf right now. Why did Mary give the gift? Why did she do it? I think, and I'm going to assume here, that she did it out of thankfulness for what Jesus had done.

In John 11, Jesus had raised her brother back from the dead. A miracle of miracles! Jesus had done this unbelievable, amazing thing for Lazarus, and Mary is like, "Why wouldn't I worship you with everything I have? You gave my brother life! You brought him back from the dead!" It's this amazing picture of her just being overwhelmed with thankfulness and love for him.

What has Jesus done for you? What is Jesus currently doing for you? We've thought and considered about what Jesus has done for us already. We did it in Communion. We've been singing about it. I'm just going to add to the list.

First, *Jesus is our champion.* He lived a perfect life and then died a brutal death so we could be free and have new life. Then, he rose in victory, and we get that victory. It's an amazing story of what Jesus has done for us.

Secondly, *Jesus is our Redeemer*. He makes us new. He gives us a fresh start. He sets the foundation for us to change. He took all of our mess, all of our sin, on the cross so we can be new. He has done that for us.

Thirdly, *Jesus is our advocate*. This is what he is currently, actively doing for us. He is our advocate. If you're new to faith or if it has been a while since you've spent some time with Jesus, listen to this one. Hear this one. It's important. The other ones are important too; this one is just less common. Jesus is our advocate.

You might have just surrendered your heart to Jesus recently, and so you're enjoying this relationship with him, and yet you're still kind of struggling with the baggage of your past sin and maybe struggling to kind of get rid of some past sinful habits. Jesus lived, died, rose, and ascended into heaven. We believe that. That's our salvation. That's where we put our trust.

Yet hear me: Jesus is currently, right now, constantly, without fail interceding for you in heaven. He never stops advocating for you. He is constantly working for you, so when you mess up, when you sin, the good news is that you don't have to start over in your relationship with God. When I sin, when I do something that is wrong against him and God sees that sin and wants to punish that sin, Jesus steps in between and just says, "No, I'm his defense. In fact, you've already punished me for it."

Because Jesus is constantly, eternally doing that for us, we can confess sin and we can be honest when we mess up. We don't have to put on a mask before God or before other people. We can know Jesus is constantly working for us. Jesus is constantly working for you.

The psalmist says, "**I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.**" What has Jesus done for you? Jesus has done it all for your salvation, and he's still working for you today. Celebrate that with every aspect of your life. Sing to Jesus with that in mind. Pray, talk, give, and serve with that in mind. We worship without shame to celebrate and thank Jesus for everything he has done and all the stuff he's doing right now.

2. *Worship without shame to prize Jesus as our ultimate joy*. We give glory and honor to Christ because he's the best thing that has ever happened to us! He's the best! We know why Mary gave. What was it, exactly? It was extravagant. It was costly and beautiful. Our worship is meant to be sacrificial and costly. It puts the focus on someone other than ourselves. It's a giving of what we have to Jesus, our great King who is greater than we could imagine.

I love how Pastor John Piper puts it. He says, "Christ is praised by being prized. He is magnified as a glorious treasure, when he becomes our unrivaled pleasure." When Jesus is best, when he is the highest value we have, we can worship him and truly praise him. Mary did this. She gave her best, and it was costly.

Now, did you notice the disciples, the crowd, got upset about the situation? Did you see that in verse 4? "**There were some who said to themselves indignantly...**" That means with a bit of

anger. What did they get upset about? "**Why was the ointment wasted like that?**" To be sure, it was a really expensive bottle of perfume. At that time, 300 denarii was about a year's wages. What do you make in a year? Imagine just pouring that on Jesus. That's no joke, right? I mean, a Gatorade bath is one thing, but that?

They weren't mad at the action. They thought highly of Jesus, but they were mad at the cost. It was expensive. It was lavish. It was over-the-top. They thought it could be used for better things. It was too much for Jesus. Yet Mary gave her best.

Are you willing to give your best to the Lord? With your words your thoughts, your actions, your finances, your time, your service? Maybe the better question this morning is...*Are you giving your best to the Lord?* Even better than, "Are you willing to give your best to the Lord?" is...*Do you count Jesus as best?* Is he King? What rivals Jesus? What competes with him in your heart? Is it your money?

Is it your time? Is it your body? Is it what you do? They can be good things, they can even be church things, but do you find more value in what you do than in your Savior? We have to be very careful and look honestly at ourselves. Our ultimate joy can't come from our bank account, our family, our physical appearance, or even the way we serve Jesus. Our ultimate joy has to be Jesus. That's it.

From that, you can honor him with good things like your finances, the way you love your family, and the way you serve. The oil in the bottle was valuable. It was costly, but it was worth so much more as a gift and an offering to her Savior and her King. She gave her best because she knew Jesus was best. We find the best in Jesus, and we prize him and value him by giving our best in everything.

3. *Worship without shame even when people don't understand or agree.* Our praise of Jesus is often misunderstood and even looked down on, but that should never stop our praise. Today, we worship around people who don't love and trust Jesus. We're surrounded by them at our workplace, in our family, with people we know and care about. There are people who say it's foolish, ignorant, and naïve to worship the Lord, and yet we don't have to fear. We can still worship Christ. Again, let's just look at Mary's example for us.

Her giving was purely to Jesus. She put it all on him. It wasn't like she saved some extra things to appease the rest of the people. It was all for Jesus. Even though the disciples thought it was too much, too radical, and maybe not responsible or acceptable behavior, she didn't care. She was just so thankful for what Jesus had done and she just loved him with all her heart and worshiped him in the face of criticism and opposition.

Isn't that kind of hard to just think about and consider? It's hard for me to wrap my mind around that because I want people to like me. I want people to think well of me. I like high fives and friendship. I don't like cold shoulders and rejection. Yet we can go too far in that. We can get to a point where we back away from an opportunity to worship Jesus because we fear what people might think.

Maybe that's you. Maybe you're here and you want to get baptized. You want to declare that you love Jesus. You want to celebrate what he has done in your life, but your spouse doesn't believe and your loved ones, your family members, and your friends think it's kind of weird, and you don't know what to do. Maybe you and your family want to tell your neighbors about Jesus but you have a good thing going with them. You don't want things to get too awkward, and so you struggle with what they might think or say.

I get that. My son Gabe is a first grader at Cedar Wood Elementary School, right by our house. We love being in the public school system. We love being a light there. I get to serve there on Friday mornings. Every Friday morning, I get to be in Gabe's class. Over time, throughout the year, it has come out that I am a pastor at a Christian church. It's a natural thing, because the second thing anyone ever asks you, after, "What's your name?" is, "What do you do?" So, there it is. Here I am.

I just have to confess that there are days and times when it is hard and difficult for me to be bold, courageous, and unashamed about my faith. I struggle about things people have said, with the questions they've asked, but more often than not, I find myself struggling with the things I think they might say, and I'm a pastor.

I was reading this passage and just kind of thinking about Mary and the conflict she was facing. I just started thinking about a couple of verses. The first one was in 2 Corinthians 2. **"For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life."**

I was just asking myself, "Jeff, are you willing to be the aroma of Christ even though you know people will disagree with you? It will be hard." Am I willing to be obedient to Christ and worship him with my life in the face of disagreement and, admittedly, very low-level opposition? I started thinking about our global partners and the legitimate opposition they face on a weekly or daily basis. I was like, "Why is it so hard for me to be honest and up front about the Savior I love, the faith I have, and the hope I enjoy?"

Then, I thought of another verse, Romans 1:16. **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes..."** Then, I started thinking, "Am I worshiping without shame? Am I courageous in my faith? Am I resolved in my faith? Do I believe in the power of God?"

I love Jesus with all my heart. I put my trust and hope in him, but why do I struggle when I think someone won't like that? Why do I hold back when I know it's going to get met with resistance? I mean, I place my trust and find my hope in the gospel, not in what other people think about me.

We worship without shame even when people don't understand or agree. Those are non-Christians. What about when Christians disagree? The disciples were followers of Jesus. What about the older couple who hears about a financial need and wants to meet that need, but it would be costly and they get nervous about what their Christian adult children would think

because it would cut into the inheritance? What about the person who wants to go and serve the Lord full-time overseas but is nervous and afraid of what their parents or Life Group might say?

People, including Christians, are going to misunderstand. People, including Christians, will disagree, but if you have the opportunity to worship Jesus and to do good for him and it will be costly and even seems over the top, that's okay. Worship him with courage and without shame.

Confirm it. Make sure it lines up with Scripture. Get some counsel. Make sure it's not your emotions or the pepperoni pizza you ate the night before. But man, if it's there in the Word, it's available, and there are some people who disagree with that but you can't shake what the Word says, worship him. Mary did it. The disciples didn't get it, and yet Jesus called it beautiful, and he even made it memorable.

Look at verse 6. Jesus just says some amazing things in response to his friends and their rebuke of Mary. **"But Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me.'"** He calls it beautiful. He gave it importance. He gave it value. In verse 7, he says, **"For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me."** He corrects the disciples' vision and their focus.

This is by no means diminishing the service of the poor. We are to be generous and incredibly gracious to those who are in need, but never to the replacement of Jesus. Jesus has to come first. We serve and we love people who are in need because we love Jesus and for the glory of God, not in replacement of the glory of God. Jesus has to come first. That's what he's saying here.

Then, in verse 8, he just says this wonderful thing. **"She has done what she could."** What a wonderful thing to hear from Jesus. Not like a, "Oh, she did what she could. She gave it the old college try. It was okay." No, he's saying, "She gave her best." Don't you want to hear that from Jesus? "He gave his best. She gave her best for me."

We have two camps here. We have Mary over here with her costly act of worship, and then we have the disciples over here, who didn't approve. Which camp have you identified with so far in the story? Do you have a desire to be more like Mary? Do you see yourself when reading the disciples and their reactions?

Jesus affirms Mary's extravagant, over-the-top, shameless worship. He corrects the disciples, because while they follow Jesus and they think highly of him, it apparently only goes to a point. Then, he uses this opportunity to remind them of his greatness, his mission, and of his purpose.

Usually, an anointing, a pouring over of oil, is a time of celebration. It's a victory. It's expecting great things that are going to come and good times. Jesus turns the whole thing a different way. Look at verse 8. **"She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial."** He just reminds his disciples of his plan. "I've been saying this throughout my ministry. I'm going to die. I'm not going to be around. I'm going to be betrayed. I'm going to be killed, but don't worry. I'm coming back. It's all part of the plan. It's going to be fine."

He says it again here. He says, "Hey, what she did proves I'm going to be killed and buried soon. She's preparing me for this." This is a greater plan than anyone could have imagined because it was about redemption. It was about the forgiveness of your sins and my sins.

4. *Worship without shame and declare the greatness of Jesus to the world.* Our praise tells people how awesome Jesus is and then just invites them to the party. I love this. In verse 9, Jesus says, "**And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.**" This act of worship, her gift, had so much more significance than what she thought.

I mean, she gave her best to Jesus to worship him, and Jesus made it even better. He turned it around and he made it about the salvation of his people, and 2,000 years later, we have a group of people in a room hearing about Jesus' life, death, burial, and resurrection and we're hearing about this woman with a jar giving her best for her King. He made it far greater than anything she could have hoped.

Today, for you, praise and worship Jesus because we know he will bless it incredibly. How will he bless it incredibly? By showing his glory and expanding his kingdom by saving people. Isn't that the best thing we could ever want? How about the people you love? How about the people for whom you've been praying consistently to come to faith in Christ? What if God would do that for them? What if God would change their eternity where they could place their full hope in him?

Well, it says here that your worship opens the door for that! When we praise Jesus without shame, people notice. People get saved. Some people are going to misunderstand. Some people will argue, scoff, and turn their noses up at you, but do you know what? Others get saved. Others get eternity with Christ.

I know there are people here who don't have a saving relationship with Jesus. I am so thankful you are here this morning. I just want to say I hope you have seen very clearly that we love Jesus with all of our heart. I hope you saw it when you walked in, when you got a cup of coffee, and when you sat down, that we loved you, valued you, cared about you, and thought you were important.

You are important, and we love you because Jesus loves you. We have been singing as loud as we can with hands raised, giving our best, because we find all of our hope and joy in him. It's not about saying how great we are. It's about saying Jesus is the best. He is awesome. He is a strong and mighty God. We love him with our whole heart and we would do anything for him. We find all of our hope in him.

The good news for you is that you can have the same hope. You can have the same hope. I don't know your past. I don't know what you have done. I don't know what has been done to you. I don't know what you've been through, but God does, and God still offers a personal saving relationship with you.

He promises to forgive you of your sin. He promises to give you a fresh start. If you would just admit that you have this problem of sin, that you need a Savior, that you can't figure it out yourself, when you believe in Jesus and confess that to him... It says in the Bible that if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. You can look forward to heaven forever, and that offer is for you.

After the service, we're going to have some people who are going to be up here to pray. In fact, they're praying for you right now. They would love the privilege to pray with you face-to-face, talk with you about Jesus and faith, and give you that opportunity to learn more about him. He is the best and I want you to have him. He gave his best for you. He gave his very life for you and you can have him.

Some of you are here and you have had the name or the brand *Christian* on you for a long time, but if you looked at your life honestly, you don't give your time, money, or resources. You really don't give any tangible energy to your relationship with Jesus. I'm just going to humbly ask, are you truly a follower of Christ?

The deal is that Jesus is our Savior, but he's also our King. A King rules over us and we do what our King wants us to do, and Jesus calls us to worship him in every area of our lives. If you're not doing anything for him, I'm just going to humbly ask you to consider whether you truly have faith in him.

I would just say the invitation is also for you to come forward after service. Don't be embarrassed. I don't care if you've been here for 20 years. I don't care if you're a member. If you don't have a true saving relationship with Jesus, you can have it today and we would love to pray with you.

Some of you are here and you just need to take courage and be bold in your obedience to Jesus. It's like you're paralyzed by indecision and you fear what other people will think instead of what Jesus thinks. You need to be obedient, even when it's hard, even when it costs.

Some of you are here and you need to be doing exactly what you are doing now, and just do it more and more for the glory of God so more people can know Jesus. We have a great, amazing, wonderful Savior who is worthy of our best with every single area of our lives, so let's courageously give our best to him. Let's pray.

Father, we come before you just very thankful because we know what you've done for us. God, as we look at your Word, we see that you can take our worship, whatever we have that's best, and turn it around and make incredible things with it for your name and for your glory.

God, I pray for the people who are here who don't know you, that today would be the day of their salvation, they would trust you with their lives, and their eternal relationship with you would start right now. God, be with us. Help us to worship you this week. Help us to honor you. We love you. In your name, amen.

We have a few people up here who would love to pray with you. Again, if you want to know more about faith in Jesus, please come forward and do that. Give us the privilege of praying with you. If you have something hard, give us the privilege of praying with you through that. I love you guys. I'll be praying for you this week. Have a great Sunday.