

Gospel of Mark Chapter 14A

Political polarization: BBC News published a report in which they stated: “Political polarization is the defining feature of early 21st century American politics, both among the public and elected officials.”

- There is an ever deepening chasm between Conservatives and Liberals that keeps the cable news networks and talk shows in business. (CNN - FOX channel surfing)

This morning we are going to consider the “Polarizing effect of Jesus Christ.”

The word “Polarize” means to divide or separate into two groups by sharply contrasting opinions, it means to repel in opposite directions.

- Remember as a child playing with magnets (scotty dogs)
- You might speak of some people as being polar opposites in their viewpoints.

We could rightly use the word polarize to describe the affect that Jesus Christ had on the world when he walked among us. Even today the Gospel of Jesus Christ has a definite polarizing effect.

- The more a person comes to know Christ, the more they hear the Gospel one of two reactions will generally occur.
- It is very difficult to remain neutral when it comes to the Good News of Jesus Christ.
 - Some will behold his glory, experience his grace, they drawn to him by the Sovereign work of God. They hunger for his Word and Worship Him in Spirit and Truth.
 - At the same time this polarizing Christ has the opposite affect on other people. They listen to him and to his Gospel they observe his life but instead of being drawn to him they are offended by him. These individuals are repulsed by his message and driven away in anger.
- Every one of us is either being drawn closer and closer or being repelled away from Christ. He is the most polarizing figure in the history of the world.
- No one can come close to Christ and remain unchanged. Men will either crown him or crucify him, they will hail him or nail him, There is no middle ground!
- Jesus said, **He who is not with me is against me, he who does not gather, scatters.**

Matthew 10:34 “**Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. 36 And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household.**

That is precisely what we see taking place here in Mark chapter 14. The more the Chief Priests and Scribes were exposed to Christ, the more they heard his words and observed his lifestyle the more they were offended by him and the more hateful and violent they became.

- At the same time there were others who heard his words and believed his teaching and those who believed expressed great love, gratitude and devotion to him.

They all saw the same Christ, heard the same words but reacted in vastly different ways. EVEN TODAY, as the Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed in truth, as the grace of God for the salvation of man is declared *Sunday after Sunday* the message will have a regenerating,

sanctifying affect on some; OTHERS will walk away. They heard the same words but they remained in their unbelief.

Paul put it this way:

1Co 1:18 **For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.**

- IN the text that we have before us today we see the polar opposite reactions that I have just described.
- Mark draws our attention to these polar opposites by sandwiching 3 stories together. They draw a stark contrast between “Affection and Defection.”

Affection (Webster 1828) affection is a permanent bent of the mind, formed by the presence of an object, or by some act of another person, and existing without the presence of its object.

- I have a deep affection for my wife whether she is with me or not.

Defection (Webster 1828) is a falling away; apostasy; the act of abandoning a person or cause to which one is bound by allegiance or duty, or to which one has attached himself. Our defection from God is proof of our depravity.

- Over the years we have read of a number of individuals, athletes, scientists and artists who defected from Russia,

An outline of the opening verses of Chapter 14 might look like this: (Defection/Affect/Defect)

- The affections of the Chief Priests and Scribes for the things of this world brought about their defection from the Law of God
 - The Sanhedrin chose to hold on to their worldly position and political peace by rejecting and Killing the Lord Jesus.
- The affections of Mary for the Lord Jesus, the Living Word of God brought about her defection from the things of this world.
 - Mary gave up her most costly worldly possession in an act of sincere affection for Christ.
- Finally an affection for the riches of this world brought about the defection of Judas from following the Lord Jesus.
 - Judas conspired with the Sanhedrin to betray the Lord Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.

1 The defection of the Sanhedrin

Mark 14:1 **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, 2. for they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people.”**

- Notice how the plot of the Sanhedrin OZZES with intrigue: They wanted to be stealthy in their actions as they quietly and carefully planned to overtake the Lord.
 - The murderous envy that has been under the surface for years finally metastasizes in a unanimous agreement to put Jesus to death.
- There is however one caveat, one point upon which they all concur; the arrest of Jesus cannot take place during the Passover Feast because they cannot risk a public uproar.

The Apostle John gets us into their heads to help us understand their motives.

John 11:47 **So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the Council and said, “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. 48 If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”**

- They cannot allow any uprising, by any supposed Messiah to take away their position and their place.
- They are willing to kill the Incarnate Son of God in order to HOLD on to the things of this world. They placed more value in their fleshly identity and patriotic zeal than the revealed Word of God.
 - The Law plainly stated “Thou shall not kill.” But they have spent the last year contemplating how they might destroy the Lord Jesus.
 - THEIR affection for the things of this world caused them to DEFECT from the very Law of God in which they boasted.
- WHAT is the OBJECT of your AFFECTIONS? (what consumes your thoughts?)

The Apostle Paul calls us to SET our AFFECTIONS on things above.

(USE - KJV) Colossians 3: 1 **If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.**

- The darkness of the leader’s Defection only serves to magnify the beauty of the Affection of Mark’s unnamed woman. (Next section)

2 The Affection of Mary

Mark 14: 3 **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.**

- The Apostle John’s record of this same event informs us that the unnamed woman is in fact Mary the sister of Lazarus and Martha.
- AT first no one would have been surprised as Marry approached the Lord Jesus with her perfume.
- In those days, when people gathered socially it was normal to bring out some perfume.
 - The homes did not have air conditioning there were no showers, and only royalty had bath tubs.
 - Mennen had not yet invented the “Speed Stick.” Deodorant was still a “secret.”
 - Those who gathered after a long day’s work in the fields need a dab of ointment on their foreheads to mask the pungent aroma that filled the atmosphere.
- What Mary does with her ointment is unexpected and actually quite startling:
 - She breaks the alabaster flask over Jesus head and pours the costly perfume out in its entirety on the Lord in an act of earnest affection.
 - JOHN tells us:

John 12: 3 **Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair.**

- If you combine the narrative of Mark with John, Jesus was covered from head to toe.

What would motivate such a great display of affection?

- We know from our study of the Gospel of John that, only a few weeks earlier Jesus had miraculously raised Mary's Brother Lazarus from the dead.
- She was there at the tomb when he did it. But that wasn't the only miracle he did for this family.

If we read between the lines, Mark tells us that Mary's anointing takes place in the home of Simon the Leper, John tells us that it took place at the home of Lazarus. (Mary's Bro)

- Is that a contradiction in the Bible??? NO
- It would seem that Simon the Leper was the Father of Mary, Martha and Lazarus.
 - Lepers were separated from their families, forced to live outside of town. Whenever they approached a healthy person they cried out "Unclean!"
 - We don't know when but it appears that Jesus healed Mary's father!
- With that in mind consider all that the Lord Jesus has done for this family. Raising Lazarus from the dead, healing Simon from a disease that was considered a walking death, teaching them about the Kingdom. It's no wonder Mary lavishes her affection on Jesus.

When God graciously gives a person new life, resurrection life, wholeness, when He reveals his abundant mercy and power like he did in the family of Simon the response that arises from those he has redeemed is a very heartfelt and sincere GRATITUDE!

THINK About this: After Mary's anointing of Jesus there were TWO individuals who shared a common fragrance: Jesus and Mary. (She wiped his feet with her hair)

- When Jesus carried the cross he also carried the aroma of Mary's affection. Amidst the pain and heartache of Calvary a deep breath could remind him of the precious ones he was redeeming, the beloved bride that he was receiving.
 - Mary's sacrifice was a sweet aroma to Christ at the same time when His sacrifice was a sweet aroma to the Father.
- Paul reminds us that ALL who are born of God bear the aroma of Christ in this present world.

2 Corinthians 2: 15 **We are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing,**

- Stop here for a moment and consider the aroma of your own life.
- Have the Words of Christ in your own life given birth to affection for Christ resulting in the aroma of Christ in your life?

As we move on we see that NOT everyone in the room appreciated Mary's elaborate display of affection.

Mark 14:4 **There were some who said to themselves indignantly, "Why was the ointment wasted like that? 5 For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they scolded her.**

- The objection of some in the crowd pointed to the fact that this perfume was worth 300 denarii.
- Again JOHN tells us that Judas was the one who initiated this outcry and the rest of the disciples followed suit.

- In Bible times 1 denarii was equal to 1 day's wages, 300 denarii was considered 1 year's wages.
- The Median annual household income in the United States in 2014 was \$51,939.
- I think it would be safe to say in modern times this is a \$50,000 bottle of perfume.
- Most likely, this Spikenard was the MOST valuable commodity the family owned and Mary breaks the flask and pours the entire contents out on the Lord Jesus.

Think about the disciples response: **“Why was the ointment wasted like that?”**

- This response not only demeans the woman for her lavish gift, in asserting that there could have been a BETTER use for the money; but with these same words the disciples are actually devaluing the Lord Jesus as well.
 - Saying that HE is NOT worthy of such extravagance?

In my experience the people of this world will applaud you when you spend exorbitant amounts of money on your hobbies, a hundred thousand on an RV, 50,000 on a sports car. They will tell you, “brother you are going places.” BUT tell someone you are giving 10% or 15% of your income to the local church and they look at you like you are from outer space.

- It is OK to be extravagant on the things of this world BUT **“storing up treasures in heaven”** that doesn't make any sense. * Jesus Responds:

Mark 14:6 **But Jesus said, “Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. 7 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.**

8 **She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial.**

9 **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.”**

- Jesus doesn't enter into a debate with the disciples over charitable giving He quickly comes to the woman's defense.
- Jesus says, **she has anointed my body beforehand for burial**

What DID Mary KNOW? Was she in fact doing this in light of Jesus' impending death?

- Jesus told his disciples that he was going to be handed over and killed.
- BUT none of the disciples understood.
- Peter rebuked Jesus when he spoke of his impending death.

Peter always seemed to be talking, BUT Mary was always listening.

It would seem from the Lord's own words that Mary knew what was coming and didn't want to wait until he was gone to express her affection.

EVERY DAY is a good day to LAVISH your love on Jesus!

Now we return to find the defection of Judas:

Mark 14:10 **And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them. 11 And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.**

- Mark tells us that Judas went seeking the Chief Priests; they did not come looking for him.

- His defection brings joy to the hearts of the other defectors. Vs 11 **And when they** (Chief Priests) **heard it, they were glad,**

Matthew records Judas' mercenary question which he flung at the High Priest:

Mt 26:15 and said, **“What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?”**

- Like the Chief Priests Judas was more interested in the things of this world than the Kingdom of God.
- Why would a man like this be among the Disciples?
- The prophets proclaimed and God ordained that one from among

Knowing his character, (his love for the world) Judas' ears must have perked up when Jesus promised a 100 fold return for those who left their homes and families for the sake of the Gospel.

- Jesus told his disciples of the great rewards and thrones that awaited those who believed.

BUT How difficult it must have been when Jesus spoke of his impending death.

- NOW this great wealth that Mary offered is being squandered, poured out on Jesus.
- He must have thought, “This movement is going nowhere. Jesus isn't the man I thought he was!”
- So he DEFECTED. Betrayed the Lord for 30 pieces of silver.
- For all of history Judas bears the dubious identity of the Betrayer, the defector.

ARE YOU being drawn INTO a deeper and deeper affection for the Lord Jesus?

- Are His mercies NEW every morning?
- Do you find yourself sitting at his feet, listening intently to all of his Words?

Could it be that (LIKE the Ephesian Believers) You have done everything right for a number of years but the feelings, the passion, the zeal seems to be gone?

HAVE you have LEFT your first love? (Rev 2)

- Remember, Repent and Redo your first works.

Have you been offended by something that was SAID. Changes that were out of your control.

Jesus and his people are not living up to your expectations....

You are ready to abandon ship!

John 6 - When the crowd that was miraculously fed the loaves and fishes came seeking breakfast the next morning, Jesus told them they must eat his flesh and drink his blood.