

# Jesus Anointed at Bethany

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[ 0 : 00 ] Take your Bibles, and as you're able, would you stand with me for the reading of God's Word, Mark chapter 14.

Jesus has just finished a lengthy teaching on both the destruction of Jerusalem and then on his future return. And now we come to Mark 14, beginning in verse 1. This is the Word of the Lord. Now the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill him. But not during the feast, they said, or the people may riot. While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume made of pure nard.

She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor.

[ 1 : 09 ] And they rebuked her harshly. Leave her alone, said Jesus. Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them anytime you want.

But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.

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

Well, we're still on Tuesday of Passion Week, but Crucifixion Friday is coming. But what a day this Tuesday has been.

It began with Jesus going into the temple, and there his authority was challenged. Why? Who's given you the authority to come in here and cleanse the temple and to teach?

[ 2 : 19 ] It was there that he then taught parables to the people, exposing their leaders as false. He withstood their many attacks at him, trying to get him to say something that would trip him into losing the approval of the crowd or get him in trouble with the Romans.

He then exposed their hypocrisy, the hypocrisy of these spiritual leaders, and pronounced seven woes of judgment upon them. And then as they were leaving the temple, you remember his disciples said, Lord, look at these massive stones.

And they were impressed with the architecture of the temple there in Jerusalem. And Jesus told them that not one stone would be standing upon another, that it would be destroyed completely. They walk over to the Mount of Olives, and there Jesus gives his long Olivet discourse to his disciples, saying that Jerusalem and the temple's destruction would happen within that very generation of those living at that time.

And yet his return at the end of the age, for that he would give no time markers, but rather calls upon all the disciples of Jesus to be always watchful and prepared for whenever he returns.

[ 3 : 40 ] Now it's at this point that Mark informs us that it's still Tuesday, with Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread just two days away. Thursday would begin Passover with the killing and the eating of the Passover lambs.

And that would be followed with a week of no leaven in their bread or anywhere in their house. Sometimes this entire week is called Passover.

Other times it's called the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And all of this is leading up then to crucifixion of Christ on Friday morning.

And what we have in our text today is something of a sandwich. There's a two-part statement. The main point that Mark is making to us has to do with the timing of Christ's death.

When will Jesus die? That's the issue that he's dealing with. Part one and part two. Part one is verses one and two. And part two is verses 10 and 11.

[ 4 : 45 ] But sandwiched in between this discussion of the timing of Christ's death is this anointing of Jesus. So we're going to look at it in that order.

There's a reason why Mark did it this way. And so we'll look at the timing of Christ's death. Part one. As we find it in verses one and two. Now the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread were only two days away.

And the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill him. But not during the feast, they said, where the people may riot.

We'll ask four questions of this text. Who, what, how, and when. First of all, who are the actors? Well, they're the chief priests and teachers of the law.

This is not a terrorist organization in the land. These are the religious leaders of the Jews. This is the cream of the crop. The ones who are entrusted with the very words of God.

[ 5 : 49 ] Those who are in charge of the worship of God in Israel. And charged with the spiritual well-being of the people. That's the who. What were they doing?

They're plotting to arrest Jesus and to kill him. Now this is nothing new. They've been trying to do this for nearly three years already. But as over and over we read, they were not able because his time had not yet come.

But now as never before, they set about this plotting with renewed zeal. Because there was a renewed interest in Jesus as the Messiah in the Passover crowd. Just a few days earlier, Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead.

On account of that, many Jews went over to Jesus and believed on him. And that was seen at his triumphal entry into Jerusalem just two days before this.

Remember how the crowd hailed him as the Messiah King of Israel. That left the religious leaders wringing their hands and saying, Look how the whole world has gone after him.

[ 7 : 03 ] So they were envious of his popularity with the people and hated him for it. Even Pilate knew that. Furthermore, they were enraged at Jesus for cleansing the temple, barging into their area of oversight and rebuking them for turning it into a den of robbers.

Many times when they tried to trick him, he spoke with such wisdom that they themselves were embarrassed before the crowd that they were trying to influence. And then he publicly exposed them as hypocrites under God's judgment with those seven woes that Matthew especially delineates.

And he ends his word to the people in the temple, warning them against their spiritual leaders. The gloves are off. They're coming to Calvary.

And so Matthew tells us in his account, it was on this Tuesday that the chief priests and teachers of the law met specifically to plot Jesus' arrest and murder.

And how? How would they pull this off? Well, Mark says they were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus.

[ 8 : 22 ] And kill him. Kids, if you're looking to do something in a sly way, it's probably something that's evil, right? You're trying to do it in some underhanded way, sneaky, crafty way.

It means what you're trying to do is probably not good. And that's surely the case here for these religious leaders were looking for a sly way to arrest and kill the sinless son of God.

And so the injustice of their underhanded dealings cannot be overstated. This is the dirty deed that they were plotting to snuff out the light of the world for exposing their darkness.

You see, these spiritual leaders have a problem.

It's a problem that's frustrating them. They so want to get their hands on Jesus and kill him. But the problem is the popularity of Jesus. It's at an all-time high here at Passover time.

[ 9 : 29 ] During the festival, these pilgrims would come from all over the nations around. The faithful Jews would come to Jerusalem. It's one of the three major festivals.

And every faithful Jew would make their way back to Jerusalem. And the population of Jerusalem would swell five to ten times its normal population. Many of these pilgrims were from the north, up in Galilee, where Jesus spent most of his time teaching and doing miracles.

And he had many followers from Galilee. And remember, Passover was a time of remembering their bondage in Egypt and how the Lord had brought them out of bondage and freed them from their bondage.

And now they're looking to Jesus as their Messiah to free them from bondage to the Roman government. And so, these men who fear man and seek to please men are afraid that if they arrested and killed Jesus during the Passover, the whole city could be thrown into a riot. And their fears were not unfounded. Just earlier on this very day, they were, when Jesus was asked, by what authority do you do these things? He said, well, I'll ask you a question and then I'll answer you.

[10:50] By what authority did John the Baptist come? And they said, well, if we say from heaven, well, then he'll say, why didn't you obey him and believe him? But if we say from earth, the people may stone us for they believe that he was from heaven.

There's a real fear of people here. And that's why they feel handcuffed from their desire for Jesus' blood. And it's forcing them to wait due to their fear of the people.

So, for these religious leaders, any time is good for arresting and killing Jesus except during the feast. Not during the feast, lest they riot. Wait till they go home and then we'll get him.

That's their timing for the death of Jesus Christ. May I tell you when God's plan was for Jesus to die? Spoiler alert.

Exactly during Passover. During the Passover feast. The week of Passover. And it will be just in three days that he will be crucified and killed during Passover.

[12:02] Now, according to Matthew's account, Jesus announced God's timing to his disciples, even as the religious leaders were planning their time for his death. Matthew 26, 2 says of this very meeting, Jesus said to his disciples, As you know, the Passover is two days away and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.

So, do you see the picture? This sets up something of a tension about the timing of Christ's death. The desire and plan of the sovereign God is for Jesus to die during Passover.

The desire and plan of the religious leaders is for Jesus to die, but not during the Passover feast.

And part two of this matter will show how this tension is resolved and just whose plan will stand.

But before Mark tells us that in verses 10 and 11, he first inserts into his gospel an event that happened four days earlier, according to John chapter 12, namely the pre-anointing of Christ's body for burial.

Verses 3 to 9, that's our second point. This is the meat of the sandwich. We've been introduced to the timing tension of when he'll die. And now he talks about this anointing of Christ's body for burial.

[13:25] Verse 3, While he, that's Jesus, was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume made of pure nard.

She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. Again, this happened four days earlier, and yet it's being plugged in here. Now, Simon was a very common name in Israel.

We think of Simon Peter and there's other Simons. But this Simon must have had leprosy for a long time because he was nicknamed Simon the leper.

How would you know him from other Simons? Well, he's the Simon with leprosy. But he clearly doesn't have leprosy now because he would not be allowed to be in the presence of people as he is having this party in his home.

So he's probably a leper that had been cleansed and probably by Jesus himself. And so John tells us that he throws this party or this dinner in honor of Jesus in his home.

[14:37] And thanks to John as well, we do know who this woman was that came and anointed the body of Jesus. John tells us it was Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, who lived in Bethany where Simon is holding this feast.

And just as before, at this meal, Martha's serving. Remember how we saw her before, serving. And Mary was where? Sitting at Jesus' feet.

So Martha's serving again and Mary's pouring out her lavish devotion of love upon the Savior. It was a rare and expensive perfume imported from the Himalayan mountains.

Used at times for anointing the dead, but also just used for anointings at feasts. And she pours the whole bottle out upon Jesus' head and filled the whole house with its aroma.

Her lavish gift showed how precious the Lord Jesus was to her. And she spared no expense. She poured it out entirely upon Him. But He's worth it, her heart said.

[15:51] Nothing is too much for Him. So how precious is Jesus Christ to you? What is He worth to you? What do you gladly spend for Him?

Of your money? Your time? What do you spend for His gospel? For His honor? His kingdom? She spent it all.

Well, that was Mary's deed of honor. Now we hear of the disciples' view of her deed. Verses 4 and 5. Some standing there were saying indignantly to one another, Why this waste of perfume?

It could have been sold for more than a year's wages. And the money given to the poor. And they rebuked her harshly. Again, we're blessed to have three accounts.

Actually, four accounts. I'm sorry, three accounts of this matter. John tells us it was Judas Iscariot who said these words. Matthew tells us it was the disciples, plural.

[16:57] Mark says it was some standing there. These are not contradictions. They're just different ways of seeing the matter.

So perhaps Judas took the lead, starting the criticism to the other disciples. Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold, given to the poor.

And then the other disciples joined in agreement with Judas, repeating the criticisms to one another. Yes, it is wasteful. How many poor people could have been helped?

And then together they join in attacking her with a tongue lashing. And angry looks as if she had done something wrong. Now we expect the world to misjudge a believer's acts of devotion as waste.

They have no real devotion to Christ. No real love. No sense of his worth and of his value. And so they see what you do for Jesus as being a waste.

[18:02] Well, you're just wasting your money. You're wasting your time. Here you are in church. Well, you could be anywhere else. What are you doing here? You're wasting your time. You're wasting your life. But this reminds us that even real disciples can misjudge true deeds of devotion in another and call waste what Jesus calls precious and beautiful.

We can undervalue the worth of someone else's service to Christ. Here are the disciples of Jesus harshly rebuking one that they should have praised.

And they did the same, remember, with the parents who were bringing their children to Jesus, rebuking them for their good deed. How wrong and out of touch we can be in our judgments of one another, especially when we're judging each other's motives.

Harsh on others. Ever so lenient on ourselves. Accusing them. Excusing us. Excusing us. And poor, poor Mary. We can only imagine the hurt and the doubt in her tender heart.

What have I done now? Are they right? These men, these disciples of Jesus. Is what I did wrong? Was it foolish, wasteful, improper?

[19:28] Well, she didn't need to wait long to find out for how quickly Jesus jumps to her defense and rebukes her rebukers for harassing her. Verse 6. Leave her alone, Jesus said.

Why are you bothering her? She's done a beautiful thing to me. Brothers and sister, here's our vindicator and advocate. The one who pleads in our defense against all the faulty accusations of our critics.

Be they devils, the ungodly, or even misguided brothers and sisters. Brothers. Who just don't understand. Although you might have to live the long, live long day until Christ returns.

He will arise for your vindication in the end. Therefore, judge nothing before the appointed time.

Wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness.

And he will expose the motives of men's heart. And at that time, each will receive his praise from God. 1 Corinthians 4-5. So we've heard the disciples' view of Mary's deed.

[20:37] Now we're given Christ's view of her deed. She's done a beautiful thing to me. And isn't that all that matters in the end?

What does the Lord Jesus think of you and your deeds? Let the whole world frown if Jesus smiles. Let others accuse if Jesus only approves.

You see, no one understands like Jesus. And he sees her heart in her deed. Her grateful, loving devotion.

And so he accepts that sacrifice as pleasing to him. Hendrickson says he knows that lavishness is the natural language of love. Didn't we see that in that widow who put her two pennies in?

And Jesus says she's put in more than all the others. Lavishness is the natural language of love. And so he appreciates what she's done if no one else does.

[ 21 : 39 ] Because it was done to him. It was done to him. She's done a beautiful thing to me. We live unto him.

We live for him. What we do, we do to please him. And therefore, his opinion is what counts to you. He alone knows your heart. And therefore, he alone knows how to judge the deeds that you do for him.

And Jesus not only receives her loving deed, he publicly praises her in front of her critics. She did a beautiful thing to me, he tells them. So leave her alone.

You call it waste. Because she could have sold it and given the money to the poor. Notice how Jesus defends her against this charge. Verse 7. Well, the poor you will always have with you. And you can help them anytime you want. But you will not always have me. Here's another prophecy of Jesus coming death.

[ 22 : 41 ] You'll not always have me. Poverty was widespread in Israel. And Jesus is not here downplaying the need to give to the poor. You've read your Bible, you know that the poor have a special place in the heart of our Savior and in his ministry.

But Jesus is praising Mary for taking hold of her unique opportunity at this time. You'll always have the poor and you can help them and should help them.

But you will not always have me. And so this deed was beautiful for its lavishness, but also for its timeliness.

As Jesus goes on to say in verse 8, She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. Because you will not always have me here to do this.

Now, this is a debated point. Whether Mary knew that that's what she was doing or not. Or whether she did more than she understood.

[ 23 : 51 ] Some say without realizing herself. That Jesus is saying, you know, what she's done here symbolizes this truth. That she is actually preparing my body for burial.

And these would say, Jesus is putting this symbolic meaning to her action, which was not her intention at all. That she did more than she realized. And that surely is possible.

But it's also possible that Mary indeed understood that Jesus was soon to die. And that she would not always have Jesus there to pour out her loving devotion.

And to anoint his body for burial. Hendrickson points out some of the reasons why this could be true. That she really knew.

And was preparing him for his burial. She was a close friend of the Lord Jesus. He spent much time in this home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. And you remember she was found where?

[ 24 : 50 ] Sitting at the feet of Jesus. She was perhaps one of Jesus' best listeners. And if even Jesus' enemies knew of his prediction to rise from the dead on the third day.

And hence they said, let's set a guard. Well then, why could not have Mary have learned of his death as well? As he had spoken about it so often to his disciples.

Maybe Mary believed what his own disciples could not bring themselves to believe. That their Lord and Messiah would actually die. And if he would be crucified as a criminal, the Romans might withhold the opportunity of a proper burial and anointing.

So she anoints it now in preparation of his burial. This too is a possibility. She knew what she was doing. She did what she could, Jesus said.

She prepared my body for burial. I wonder if we're as aware of the limited time that we have to serve the Lord Jesus in this world that so desperately needs to know him.

[ 26 : 05 ] If you're ever going to serve the Lord in a dark world, now's the time to do it. He's coming back as he's just told us in the previous chapter.

And so now is the time to lay hold of the opportunity to pour out your love to him in service to him. You may not be able to do for Jesus what others can do.

But are you doing what you can do? That's what she did. She has done what she could. And is not the impulse of love to want to do what we can to serve the one who gave everything for us.

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. So let's serve him now because we love him. And our opportunity to do so in this world is coming to an end.

Frances Havergill's hymn seems to capture the heart of Mary for her Lord. Lord, thou needest not, I know, service such as I can bring. Yet I long to prove and show full allegiance to my King.

[ 27 : 17 ] Thou an honor art to me. Let me be a praise to thee. And she does what she can in pouring out her love to the Savior. And the Lord was so pleased with it that he places a staggering honor upon you.

He uses that introduction, I tell you the truth. That you might have a hard time believing this. But it's true. And I'm telling you so. That wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.

Verse 9. Is our Lord not the rewarder of those who earnestly seek him? Does he not reward that which by his grace you do in service to him?

He says in 1 Samuel 2.30, Those who honor me, I will honor. And the honor he bestows on us infinitely exceeds any honor that we do upon Jesus.

The good reputation that Mary receives was worth far more than the perfume that she gave.

Ecclesiastes 7.1 says a good name is better than fine perfume.

[ 28 : 28 ] And what a good name Jesus heaped upon Mary that night. What Mary did one evening in a house in Bethany is now being told all over the world.

Wherever the gospel is preached. You know, man's memorials, whatever they be, a building, a name somewhere on a plaque, they usually only last for a few centuries.

But here we are, 2,000 years later, far from Jerusalem, far from Bethany. And what are we doing? We're fulfilling these very words of Jesus.

We're telling about what this woman did in love to her Savior. And though few, if any, may even know about your service to Christ, brothers and sisters, Christ knows it and will honor it one day. Not one cup of water given in his name will lose its reward. And God's justice guarantees it, for God is not unjust. He will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them, Hebrews 6.10.

[ 29 : 41 ] So there, if not now and here, there in that final day of judgment, all will be brought to light, even deeds done for Christ that no one else knew, but were beautiful to him, precious to him.

What an honor to have the Son of God in that day, to own us as his beloved, before his Father in heaven, before the angels and before the watching world.

Isaac Watts puts it this way, then will he own my worthless name before the Father's face. And in the new Jerusalem, appoint my soul a place, the infinite, eternal honor rewarded by grace.

Who would not serve this master, even as Mary did? So this is not only recorded as a memorial to her, but it's also meant to be an incentive to us to imitate her in doing what we can to honor our Lord with the opportunities that we have.

We know a whole lot more on this side of Calvary, of what Jesus has done for us, than what Mary and the Old Testament saints knew on this side of the cross.

[ 31 : 00 ] And yet, if what Jesus had done for her, and given her back her brother from the dead, was so moved her heart as to pour out this expensive perfume at his feet, what should we do out of gratitude for what we know he did for us on that Friday that was yet future for Mary?

What lavish sacrifice of our time and money and efforts to advance the honor of the Savior who died to save us from eternal hell. So there's the meat of the sandwich.

We've seen part one of the timing of Christ's death, and now this anointing of Jesus, and now the other bun on the sandwich, part two of the timing of Christ's death.

But before we look at it, why is this anointing of Jesus' body, something that happened four days earlier, why is it inserted here between these two statements about the timing?

Well, perhaps to contrast Mary's beautiful deed with Judas' ugly deed, to contrast her loving act of true devotion with his traitorous act of betrayal, to show Judas' betrayal in its true colors for the horrid thing that it was.

[ 32 : 27 ] And so we've seen the bloodthirsty desire of Israel's leaders wanting to arrest and kill Jesus, but now frustrated with the present popularity of Jesus. So not during the feast, lest the people riot.

Their plan is to wait till the people go home and do it after the Passover, but we also saw that God's plan is to have Jesus suffer and die precisely during Passover. Now Mark will show us how this tension is resolved and how God's plan is fulfilled and their initial plan is frustrated.

Well, it came about by an unexpected visit from Judas. You talk about a surprise. There you are, the religious leaders. How can we kill him? How can we bring this about? And who should walk in to the meeting but one of his inner band? That's how he's announced. One of the 12. Oh, that ought to sting us.

One of the 12. Verse 10 and 11. Then Judas Iscariot, one of the 12, went to the chief priest to betray Jesus to them. They were delighted to hear of this and promised to give him money so he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

[ 33 : 40 ] He's one of Jesus' intimate disciples and friends, privileged to spend three years with Jesus. He ate and drank with him. He was personally taught and trained by Jesus.

He heard his gospel of grace preached. He had seen the supernatural miracles of love and mercy. He had observed his sinless life close up.

Think of that. Living with someone for three years and never once seeing him sin. This was Judas. The kind that you would expect kindness and loyalty from.

Yet he is the one. One of the 12 who lifts up his heel against the Lord Jesus. Let no one presume that you're saved just because of being close to Jesus.

Close to his church. Close to Christian family. Close to the Bible. Judas was close to Jesus. And he went to hell.

[ 34 : 40 ] As a deceiving traitor. We're not told what prompted him to turn on Jesus. Why does he turn on the one who had loved him perfectly? Well, it's surmising, but look at the fickle crowd.

They were all for Jesus too. Not all, but the whole movement right now is excited forever for this Messiah figure to set us free. And in a few days they'll cry, crucify him.

Many of the same people. What caused them to turn? Well, he wasn't the kind of Messiah that they were looking for. Could not have the same thing been true of Judas.

Maybe initially he was impressed by the potential of being on the inner band of Messiah and all the glorious things that had been promised about Messiah's kingdom. And there was much advancement and good things to come to me by being on this inner.

But now he's talking about death. He's talking about suffering. I didn't sign up for that. You can see many pressures why Judas might have turned on the Savior.

[ 35 : 48 ] But it seems that by inserting the account of Mary's anointing of Jesus, Mark is pointing to this event as being a catalyst to Judas' betrayal of the Son of God and probably putting his finger on the love of money as Judas' mother sin.

Jesus' rebuke was aimed specifically at Judas who said, what a waste. Why wasn't this sold and given to the poor?

And John adds, he did not say this because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief. As keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put inside.

And so even Mary's lavish gift exposed his own greedy heart. He had no such value for Jesus.

And rather than repent of his mother's sin, of the love of money, he hardened his heart. He goes to the religious leaders and he says, what will you give me if I hand him over to you?

[ 37 : 02 ] We don't remain neutral under conviction of sin. We're either softened to repentance or we harden our hearts and give ourselves further to the service of the devil who takes us captive to do his will.

This unexpected visit and offer of Judas solved the problem of these religious leaders. The problem was the crowd. Oh, but here's a spy in the inner band of Jesus who knows the whereabouts of Jesus.

Where he'll be, he can tip us off when he'll not be around a crowd. And they were delighted. This is devilish delight. This is delighting in murder.

And so they offered him money, even as he had asked. 30 pieces of silver, the price of a slave, the handsome price with which you price me, says the shepherd of Israel.

You know how people undervalue Jesus today. 30 pieces of silver, a billion pieces of silver.

[ 38 : 07 ] It's all undervaluing Jesus. Judas takes the money and leaves and looks for an opportunity to hand Jesus over when no crowd was present.

A couple lessons and we're done. The first lesson is Psalm 33, 10 and 11. The Lord foils the plans of the nations and thwarts the purposes of the people, but the plans of the Lord stand firm forever.

The purposes of his heart through all generations. God's plan and purpose was for Jesus to die during Passover. The plan and purpose of the religious leaders was not during Passover.

But God's purpose stood. And Judas unwittingly becomes the instrument that changes the plan of the religious leaders and so fulfills God's plan.

God can draw a straight line with crooked sticks. He can take what evil men mean for evil and work it for good. He works out everything according to the counsel of his own purpose.

[ 39 : 13 ] This is your sovereign God, brothers and sisters. This is the one who's working in your life. Everything according to his plan. Everything's going as planned. When you hear the news, whether it's about yourself or something about yourself or your country, your church, your nation, your family, whatever it is, know this.

The purpose of the Lord will stand. It will just be bringing about what God has ordained by his decree He's in control.

And that's the first lesson. Second lesson is consider God's reasons for Christ's death during Passover. Why did God want Jesus to die during Passover?

Well, the death of Jesus, He wanted the fact of Jesus' death to be known. This is at the very heart of the gospel, Christ and Him crucified.

There's no gospel without that historic fact happening. And so Jesus wants many witnesses to that historic fact. And so when does He have Him die?

[ 40 : 23 ] When Jerusalem is swelling with people from all the nations around. And they can go back to their nations and talk about this Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified.

Later, Paul can tell Governor Festus when he's on trial, he can tell him about the resurrection of Christ from the dead and say to him, these things were not done in a corner. It was done right out in public and many people saw it.

So that's the first reason. God wanted the fact of Jesus' death to be known. And secondly, God wants the meaning of Jesus' death to be known. And what preaches the meaning of the cross like the Passover?

You see, just being there that day and seeing it and seeing this man hanging and suffering and dying on a cross, that did not explain the cross. If you were there, it would just look like another man, maybe an innocent man, but just another man being killed by the Romans at the instigation of the Jews.

But Passover explains so clearly the central meaning of Jesus' death that even a child can understand it. You children remember when the Israelites were down in Egypt and they were slaves.

[ 41 : 47 ] They were in bondage. They weren't free to do what they wanted. And what happened? God says in the 10th plague that he was bringing upon Egypt to set his people free, he says, at midnight I'm going to come and I'm going to kill the firstborn, the oldest boy in every Egyptian home, but I'm going to make a provision, a special provision for the Israelite homes.

And this is what you Israelites must do. You must go out and find a one-year-old lamb without defect. You must slit his throat.

You must kill that lamb and take his blood and paint it on the sides and tops of your doorposts. And then you must go into that house and stay there. Eat the Passover lamb and stay there.

Don't go outside. The angel of death is coming. Stay inside. And that's just what happened. At midnight, cries heard throughout the land, not a home in Egypt where the firstborn was not killed, but not one in Israel.

Why were they spared? Kids, it wasn't because the Israelites had no sin and the Egyptians had sin. Which of the 10 commandments did Israel not break?

[ 43 : 04 ] You see them in the wilderness, the lives that they lived, the idolatry. No, they were sinners. We've all sinned. And what God was teaching Israelites and what He's teaching us and what He's teaching the world through Passover is that the only way to escape the wrath of God against sin is if an innocent substitute can die in the place of the sinner.

If God's wrath can crush that substitute like that lamb and take its life, then the guilty go free.

The only way for sin to be atoned is by a substitute absorbing God's wrath for sin so that it need not fall on the one trusting in Jesus.

This is the meaning of Passover. This is what Israel was gathering to celebrate year after year. And that's why God wanted His son killed during Passover.

Because He wants that connection made. And though they did not realize it even as they were killing Jesus, that would become a preaching point for them. The Apostle Paul in writing to the

Corinthians can say, Christ, our Passover lamb, has been slain.

[ 44 : 30 ] Well, if my trust is in Jesus, then the wrath of God will pass over me. When I see the blood, God said, I will pass over you. And so by faith, we apply the blood of Jesus to our hearts.

We come and we trust in what Jesus has done on the cross. And when God sees that faith in His blood, what His blood has accomplished, He passes over us in judgment and wrath.

And all because He loved us. If your son, by dying under the wrath of God, could set free a multitude of people from the wrath of God, would you give your son I couldn't.

But God did. So amazing is His love. Let's pray. Father in heaven, we confess ourselves sinners, we confess ourselves deserving of everlasting wrath.

Oh, how thankful we are for the gospel. How thankful we are for the Son you sent, the Savior, to bear that wrath in our place, to be condemned for our transgressions, so that we might not be condemned, but accepted, forgiven, restored, reconciled to God, forever and ever to be with you.

[ 46 : 12 ] Make the story that is old, old story, make it ever new to our hearts, move our hearts that we might live like Mary did and pour out our hearts and, yes, costly sacrifices of devotion to you, our Savior, we ask in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.