

Sermon: “*Kairos* 2: Mary of Bethany, Judas, and the Other Disciples” (Matthew 26:6-16)

1. Scripture Passage: Matthew 26:6-16:

⁶ While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of Simon the Leper,⁷ a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.

⁸ When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. “Why this waste?” they asked. ⁹ “This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor.”

¹⁰ Aware of this, Jesus said to them, “Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ¹¹ The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. ¹² When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. ¹³ Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

¹⁴ Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and asked, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?” So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶ From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

May God add His blessing to the reading of His Word!

2. Prayer

3. In 1903, attorney Horace Rackham’s law firm was asked to draw up incorporation papers for Henry Ford’s automobile factory. Rackham was asked to be an investor, but his health was poor and he feared risking his precious savings. So, he visited an unnamed leading banker who after Rackham had shared the opportunity responded, “My advice is not to buy stock (in Ford’s company). You might make money for a year or two, but in the end, you will lose everything you put in. **The horse is here to stay, but the automobile is only a novelty – a fad.**” The argument seemed solid to Rackham and he decided to reject the investment opportunity.

However, the next day he spoke with the man who was organizing the new company and changed his mind. Rackham sold some property he owned and took the money to the man. Rackham’s \$5,000 (USD) purchase of stock was extremely lucrative. He held on to his stock until he finally sold it for twelve and one-half million dollars (USD) [NA, “Quote Origin: The Horse is Here to Stay but the Automobile is Only a Novelty – a Fad” *Quote Research* (17 July 2021), accessed at www.quoteinvestigator.com].

4. In the English language we have a single word for “time”. In the Greek that was spoken at the time of Jesus and the apostles there were 2 words for “time” - *Kairos* and *Chronos*.

A. “*Chronos*” is used 53 times in the Newer Testament and refers to chronological time. There are 60-seconds in a minute, 60-minutes in an hour, 24-hours in a day, 365-days in a year, 10-years in a decade, 10-decades in a century, and so on. This usage of time is found in:

- John 7:33, “³³ Jesus said, “I am with you for only a short *time*, and then I am going to the one who sent me.”

B. “*Kairos*” is used 87 times in the Newer Testament, and it refers to an “*opportunity*” or a *significant* moment. This usage of the word “time” is found in:

- Romans 5:6, “⁶ You see, at just the right *time*, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.” Christ’s crucifixion coincided with the sacrifice of lambs for the nation. The significance of that moment was this: Jesus the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, was performing the ultimate sacrificial act at the moment Passover lambs were being made obsolete by His sacrifice [see, Harold Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan/Academic), 1977]. It was for this reason that Jesus was crucified on God’s timetable, at the very time the authorities wanted to avoid, according to Matthew 26:4.

C. According to Richard Greene, teacher at the Keystone Project, the Greeks had two different symbols for “*Chronos*” and “*Kairos*”. *Chronos* was pictured as “Father time.” He was an old man with a scythe (a harvesting tool) who takes everything away from you. On the other hand, the Greek picture for *Kairos* was that of a young beautiful man or woman with wings on their feet.

In Greek thinking *Kairos* comes quickly or unexpectedly at the right moment, bringing luck, opportunity, and favor, and (it) must not be missed by any circumstances or distractions.

Chronos consumes your life, while *Kairos* gives life [Carly Berma, “What time is it? A Difference in Definition” *Pepperdine Graziadio Business School* (16 December 2020) and Richard Greene’s Power Point slides from the *Keystone Project’s* Native American Training conducted at the end of February 2025].

5. The biblical passage I read earlier described a *Kairos* moment. On that occasion, there were 3-different responses, those of Mary, Judas, and the other apostles. Let’s look at each of these in greater detail.

A. **Mary, seized the opportunity and expressed her love for Jesus tangibly through anointing His feet with perfume.** This was a significant moment. Jesus and His disciples were attending a banquet in Jesus’ honor that took place in the home of Simon, who had been previously healed of leprosy. Those in attendance were shocked when Mary came behind Jesus as He was reclining at the banquet and emptied the contents of a bottle of perfume,

worth a years-wages, on Jesus' head and on his feet and then wiped his feet with her hair.

- 1) Jesus commented that what she had done was, "a *beautiful (Kalos)* thing". It was rare for Jesus to describe something as "*beautiful*." There were 2 aspects of what Mary did that impressed Jesus:
 - a. **First, the significance of the act** – Jesus said she had anointed Him for His burial with that act. Some commentators believe Mary was oblivious to the significance of her act. She was merely expressing her love to Jesus. **Permit me to make an observation:** If she was oblivious to the full significance of her act, and we do something out of love for God and because it is the proper thing to do, we may not fathom the broader significance of our actions. Jesus alluded to this in Matthew 10:42 when He said, "And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward." With this being the case, I suspect there will be many surprises in heaven.
 - b. **Second, the timeliness of the act.** The act was beautiful because it occurred at the proper time, mere days before Jesus' death and burial.
- 2) As a result, Jesus gave her this commendation recorded in Matthew 26:13, "Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world (Matthew 24:14), what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."
- 3) Mary had seized a *Kairos* moment. We are called to follow in her footsteps.
 - Ephesians 5:15-16 reads, "¹⁵ Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil."

This was what Peter and John did when they went up to the temple in an event described in Acts chapter three. As they were going to pray, they encountered a beggar who had never walked and was asking for money. They could have walked past the man and simply said they did not have any money, but Peter did not. Instead, he seized the moment and said, "Even though I don't have any money, I'm going to give you what I have." Peter then commanded the man, "to stand up and walk in the name of Jesus!" Peter helped the beggar to his feet, the beggar began to walk, then run, and jump. He was healed immediately, and had never walked before.

Then as a crowd gathered, Peter seized the opportunity, and used it to share about Jesus and that it was His power that had healed the man. Scripture records that in that *Kairos* moment 5,000 men were saved and became part of their group.

- Colossians 4:5 adds this: “⁵ Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.” This verse calls us to respond properly to unbelievers, particularly to seize evangelistic opportunities.
 - This was what Philip did regarding the Ethiopian eunuch. You recall God told Philip to leave a successful evangelistic campaign in Samaria and go to the desert. When he arrived, there was only one man around, a eunuch from Ethiopia riding along in his chariot, who was reading Scripture. Philip asked him if he understood what he was reading. The man invited him into his chariot to explain. Philip took the opportunity to share Jesus with him from that passage and other Scriptures. The man responded positively to the gospel, was baptized, and then the Spirit tele-transported Philip away (Acts 8:26-39). The result of that encounter was the introduction and spread of the gospel to the lower Nile region through the eunuch, and the birth of what is now known as the Orthodox Coptic Church.

- 4) God uses *Kairos* moments as does Satan. Evidence of this is seen in the Lukan account of Satan’s temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. After Satan had been stymied Luke records these words in Luke 4:13, “When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an *opportune time*,” or *Kairos*. It is my belief that *Kairos* moments are significant for the advancement of both God’s Kingdom and Satan’s, depending on which realm’s citizens seize them.

Returning to our text, not everyone was pleased with Mary’s actions. Our text informs, “⁸ When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. “Why this waste?” they asked. ⁹ “This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor.”

We learn from John’s gospel that Judas was the ringleader of this uprising against Mary (John 12:4-5).

B. Judas is the second character we will focus on.

- 1) We don’t have much information about him. It has been suggested that he was from the Judean city of Kerioth. If so, he was the only original apostles from Judea; the rest were from the region of Galilee. Apparently, Judas was well respected, because he was the group’s treasurer.

The sole direct comments that Judas made that are recorded in Scripture occurred during John’s account of Mary of Bethany’s anointing of Jesus’ feet, recorded in John chapter twelve, and during the last supper, as described in John chapter thirteen.

- 2) Judas started the uprising over Mary's anointing of Jesus' feet by expressing indignation over this massive expenditure going for Jesus and not for the poor. This was a ruse. The real reason for Judas's outrage is that he was not able to pilfer some of the funds that would have been generated from selling the perfume. John 12:6 reads, "6 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 into it."

Judas' indignation was too much for Jesus to leave unaddressed, so He responded by pointing out that the priority on that occasion was not to be the poor, but Him, because of His imminent death. Matthew 26:10-11 read, "10 Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. 11 The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. " Jesus then commended Mary.

Our text tells us in verse 14 that Judas' next act was, "14... to (go) the chief priests 15 and ask, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?"

Why did Judas pick this time to become part of the plot to arrest Jesus? None of the Scripture passages describing this event directly answer this question. Therefore, anything is speculation. However, we are told in verse 16 that after Judas was paid the 30 pieces of silver, he "... watched for an opportunity (and the word translated as "opportunity" is *kairos*) to hand him over." The kind of opportunity he was looking for, based on the parameters set by the religious leaders based on verse 4, was one that was "secret" and would enable them to "kill him". We know that the time Judas chose to act was when Jesus was alone with His apostles in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The big idea in this sermon is this: **Those who have a significant impact see opportunities others do not and seize them.** If Mary's act positively memorialized her forever, Judas's act in those *Kairos* moments sealed his reputation in infamy. We've seen the actions of Mary and Judas, who seized this *Kairos* moment.

C. There is a third group of people in this account, that of the other apostles.

They were oblivious to the significance of the moment. They went along with what Judas said about Mary. Matthew 26:8a says, "When the disciples (plural) saw this (i.e., Mary's actions) they were indignant..."

They were oblivious to "what time it was" despite Jesus previously telling them on at least 5-prior occasions, that Scripture records, he was going to die. For example:

- Mark 10:32-34, “³² They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. ³³ “We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles,³⁴ who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.”

It is not uncommon for people to be unaware of significant *kairos* moments, particularly negative ones. Jesus described this phenomenon as accompanying His return in Luke 17:26-30 He said:

²⁶ “Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. ²⁷ People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

²⁸ “It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. ²⁹ But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.

30 “It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed.

6. I believe we are in the midst of a significant *Kairos* moment. In fact, it is the most significant spiritual movement in America has seen in more than 50 years. God is on the move in America. I sensed it began with the Asbury Revival in February 2023 and the release of *The Jesus Revolution* movie. The move of God was significantly accelerated by the martyrdom of Charlie Kirk and its aftermath. Prior to Charlie Kirk’s martyrdom, after years of work, there were 900 Turning Point USA (TPUSA) chapters on colleges and 1200 on High School campuses. According to an email I received from TPUSA on Wednesday – October 8 – in the past 6 days they have received more than 54,000 requests from high school and college students to either start a chapter or get involved in an existing chapter.” And this is a report from only one organization! Kairos moments come, but they don’t last. They must be seized, before the door of opportunity closes.
7. **How do we keep from being like the 11-disciples who were oblivious to the pregnant moments they were in and become like Mary of Bethany who responded positively in her *kairos* moment?** Answer: I believe Mary of Bethany’s example is instructive. Scripture contains three vignettes about her.

In this teaching I covered the final vignette of Mary’s seizing the *kairos* moment and anointing Jesus’ feet in great detail.

The first vignette, where we’re introduced to her, is recorded in Luke 10:38-42, when Jesus came to their house and Mary sat at His feet while Martha prepared a lavish meal, but fumed doing it. On that occasion, Mary received something eternal that her sister missed, because she sat at Jesus’ feet and listened to Him.

Sandwiched between these two incidents was Mary's disappointment over her brother Lazarus' death and Jesus not being present to heal him (John 11). However, when she heard that Jesus was in the vicinity and was calling for her, she dropped what she was doing and came to Him at once. **In each of these incidents Mary's deep love for Jesus stands out; Jesus was her priority, and when He was in her vicinity, she was glued to Him.**

When you and I have that kind of love for God we will respond to His nudges and won't miss out on *kairos* moments. We can't love Jesus tangibly as Mary and the original disciples could because He was physically present with them, but God has sent the Spirit of Jesus into our hearts and He is there to assist us so we don't miss *kairos* moments.

- Luke 2:25-31 contains the account of Simeon who loved God and seized his *kairos* moment. The Scriptures record:

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God..."

- More recently, let me share an incident from Tomi Arayomi's life. Arayomi's was born in Nigeria, but has spent the bulk of his life in the United Kingdom (UK). Arayomi came to Jesus at the age of 15 and planted a church in the U.K. that has in turn planted ten others. Currently, he is planting a thriving fellowship in Houston Texas. Arayomi has found favor with political leaders, such that he has prophesied to them and has been a spiritual consultant to a number of them.

In an episode of *Elijah Fire* that aired last year, Arayomi related that on one occasion God called him to travel from Windsor in the UK to Warri Nigeria, located in the Delta State. He chose to obey God.

Doing so, required the expense of purchasing a plane ticket, a day of air travel, and after he had arrived in Nigeria it included an arduous trip to the destination where he was scheduled to speak. On his arrival the meeting was sparsely attended, with only 20-people present.

When Arayomi silently asked God during the meeting why He had called him to travel that distance for such a poorly attended meeting, God told him he was there for one individual, a 30-years old man named Prince, who was sitting in the back of the venue.

Arayomi called Prince forward and told him that God wanted him to know that what had been stolen would be restored. Arayomi was then informed by Prince that he was the rightful heir to the throne of his tribe, but his uncle had stolen the kingdom from him.

Arayomi's prophecy was fulfilled three-years later after Prince's uncle had died. At Prince's coronation, Arayomi was invited to give the public address and the newly crowned king handed the kingdom over to God and then cited Revelation 11:15, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ and He will reign forever more." Arayomi had heard God, and obeyed Him even though it was difficult, and reaped fruit from seizing the *kairos* moment [Julie Ann Smith's interview of Tomi Arayomi on the podcast "*Elijah Fire*" (from 41:25 - 48:10)].

Intimacy with God must both be cultivated and guarded, particularly during this era. Three of the most sobering verses to me are:

- Matthew 13:22, "And the one sown with seed among the thorns, this is the one who hears the word, and the anxiety of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful."
- Matthew 24:12, "Because of the increase of wickedness the love of most will grow cold."
- Luke 18:8, "... However, when the Son of comes will He find faith on the earth?"

These verses terrify me because of the many attractive counterfeits that are regularly at war with my intimacy with God and seeking to seduce me. For me, these counterfeits include such things entertainment and social media. These things will pass away and only God and the things of His Kingdom will remain (1 John 2:17).

In order for me to keep my priorities right, requires a daily commitment to make God first and to place Him above all of these things. Then throughout the day to focus on Jesus (Hebrews 3:1) and communicate with God through my thoughts. When I get drawn away, which happens often, then to acknowledge it to God, receive His forgiveness and invite the Holy Spirit's infilling and then continue on. Even good things like ministry can pull people away from God because people's needs and the demands of it can become overwhelming and consuming. Jesus experienced this, according to Luke 5:15, but the next verse tells us, "But Jesus Himself would often slip away in the wilderness and pray" (Luke 5:16). We are called to strip away from our lives anything that competes with Him, and when the necessities of life begin to crowd in to find a way to refocus on Him.

Susanna Wesley was married to an Anglican pastor, and was the mother of 11-living children and sought to raise them according to God and His ways. She did so by spending time with each of them individually every day. However, when

she needed to recenter herself in God she would take the apron that covered her full-length dress and pull it over her head. Her children knew that when she did so, she was spending time with God and was not to be disturbed. What was the result of her labors? Her son Charles became the most prolific hymn writer of the 18th century and her son John became head of the movement known as Methodism and in the 53 years of ministry following John Wesley's genuine conversion the Methodist movement grew from 4-people to more than 120,000 in England. Today, that movement is world-wide, and continues more than 225 years after Wesley's death through the Nazarene Church, the Free Methodists, and Wesleyan Methodists and other groups.

May we guard our intimacy with God! As we do, we will have what is needed to identify the Kairos moments God brings our way and to step into them.

God's call is for us to cultivate and guard intimacy with Him and to act in line with His words recorded in Galatians 6:10 and Ephesians 5:15-16:

- Galatians 6:10, "So then, as we have opportunity (the Greek word translated "opportunity" is "Kairos") let us do good to all people, especially to those of the household of faith."
- Ephesians 5:15-16, "¹⁵ Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil."

By God's grace may we make the most of the opportunities God brings our way this week!