



Discussion Guide

Date: 11/9/2025

Sermon Title: Do the small things make a difference?

Scripture: Mark 14:3-9

This discussion guide is a layout to be used with a group or class. We have included opening and closing prayers to start and end your group. The guide may be used for personal or family reflection as well.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious and loving God, You take what seems small and make it sacred. You take what is offered in love and multiply its impact beyond what we can see or imagine. Open our hearts and minds as we read your Word today. Teach us through this story to trust that no act of love, however small, is ever wasted in your kingdom. May our lives pour out love as an offering to Christ, who gave himself for us. - Amen.

Opening Question:

1. Share a "priceless" moment from your life (something that money couldn't buy), what was it?
2. When have you experienced a moment where love or devotion led you to do something that seemed wasteful or impractical to others, yet felt deeply right to you?

Digging into the Word:

The story of the woman anointing Jesus in Bethany reminds us that what the world calls waste, Jesus calls worship. Her act of love—simple, costly, and misunderstood—became a testimony that would outlive her name. In a culture that values productivity, scale, and measurable results, Jesus points us toward the sacredness of small acts done in great love. The kingdom of God is often hidden in such moments.

Read aloud: Mark 14:3-9 (NRSV) in a few different versions prior to digging into these questions.

1. What strikes you most about the woman's act of anointing Jesus? Why do you think the woman chose to anoint Jesus with such expensive perfume? What might have been going through her mind?
2. Why do you think others reacted so strongly against the woman? Have you ever witnessed or experienced someone criticizing an act of generosity or love? How did that feel?
3. Jesus says, "She has done what she could." What does that mean to you? How do you see this act as both extravagant and humble at the same time?
4. Jesus said "the poor you will have with you always." How do we balance caring for ongoing needs (like poverty) with special acts of extravagant love?
5. What does this story teach us about the difference between wastefulness and worship? Why do you think Jesus said this unnamed woman's act would be remembered wherever the gospel is preached, and what does that say about what God values?

Other scriptures to consider:

first united methodist church
Richardson

Luke 16:10; 1 Corinthians 13:1–3; Galatians 6:9–10

Sermon Questions:

1. Extravagant love is shown in this text by the woman with the anointing of perfume. Why do you think the woman chose to do this? The text doesn't give us a reason.
2. Pastor Clayton reminds us of that anointing was used in the time for Kings to recognize their position as well to prepare others for burial. How does the concept of anointing Jesus for burial before his death reflect the woman's understanding of who Jesus was and what was coming?
3. The sermon mentioned that "maturing in life is beginning to understand the true price tags of life." What are some things you valued when you were younger that you don't value as much now? What do you value more now?
4. The sermon shared the story of the young man helping the elderly gentleman in the shoe store. Can you share a time when you witnessed or participated in a small act of kindness that made a big impact?
5. The hymn quoted says: "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my life, my soul, my all." What does it mean to give Christ "your all" in practical, everyday terms?

Applying it:

1. Where in your life might Jesus be inviting you to "do what you can"—even if it seems small or unnoticed?
2. Think about your current season of life. What are you passionate about? How does that passion influence how you spend your time, money, and energy?
3. The woman in the story poured out what she had. How might this story reshape your understanding of generosity, time, or love? What gifts, talents, or resources has God given you that you could "pour out" for others?
4. What are the true price tags in your life right now, and are you measuring your choices by economic value or by purpose and passion?
5. How can we cultivate hearts that are willing to make sacrificial choices for our faith community and future generations, even when it means giving up something we value?

Wesleyan-Theological Reflection:

John Wesley's theology emphasizes holiness of heart and life—faith expressed through love in everyday action. Wesley wrote,

"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."

For Wesley, small acts of mercy in visiting the sick, feeding the hungry, comforting the lonely were not optional extras but the daily rhythm of a sanctified life. He believed that the grace of God transforms even the most ordinary moments into means of grace. Like the woman with the alabaster jar, Christians are called to "do what we can" in response to the love we have received in Christ. What encouragement or challenge do you find in this quote and challenge from John Wesley?



CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, You saw the love in a simple act of devotion and declared it beautiful. Help us to see that our offerings of time, kindness, and care—though small—matter deeply in your kingdom. Teach us to act with great love, to give without fear, and to serve without seeking recognition. May our lives be a fragrant offering to you and a blessing to others. In your holy name we pray, Amen.

WAYS TO RESPOND (or challenges for you this week)

1. Each day this week, do one intentional act of kindness or service without worrying about the "cost" (time, convenience, money). Journal about the experience.
2. Spend time this week examining your calendar and budget. Ask yourself: "Do my time and money reflect my stated values and purpose?" Make one adjustment to better align your resources with your purpose.