

Jesus the Sacrifice

Appetizer: In Matthew 26 the hostility that began early in Jesus' ministry approaches a violent end. Although he awaits his arrest and crucifixion, he is magnificently in control. He plans the last meal. He knows who will betray him. He offers himself as a sacrifice. When we----like Jesus----are doing the Father's will, even the inevitabilities of sin, suffering and death lose their power to imprison us. Here the victim is the one who is most free!

Discussion: How do you typically respond in a crisis, and why?

Main Course: Read Matthew 26:1-30.

1. How do you see Jesus responding to the crisis he is coming to in the four episodes you read in this passage?
2. What do these final days reveal about the character of the chief priests and elders (vv. 1-5)?
3. Look at verses 6-13. What factors justified the woman's extravagance?
4. What do we learn about Judas (vv.14-16)?
5. What was the significance of "the Passover" (v. 17; see Exodus 12:1-29)?
6. What irony do you see in the disciples making preparation for Jesus to eat the Passover meal (v. 17)?
7. Jesus is portrayed by some as a wonderful but helpless martyr. What words and actions show him to be very much in control (vv. 18-25)? And how did he show extraordinary knowledge and insight?
8. What does verse 24 tell us about God's will and human responsibility?
9. What does the Lord's Supper teach us about the meaning of Jesus' death (vv. 26-29)?
10. What can we infer from the Lord's Supper about the kind of response we need to make in order to benefit from Jesus' death?

Dessert: To some, the woman's pouring of the costly perfume was a waste (vv. 6-13). To Jesus, it was beautiful. When can extravagance be beautiful?

In what ways should we be extravagant in our worship of Jesus?