



OPENING PRAYER: Open with prayer for any personal needs of your group.

NOTE: Our insights are important so remember to respect each other's thoughts/reflections.

DISCUSSION: Just as Jesus was being prepared for burial, the disciples were prepared for their own spiritual burial. This occurred Jesus washed their feet at the Passover meal. Their life and ministry would now be defined by service to bringing the gospel to the world.

- Share with each other what you have had to die to in your own life so you can live for Jesus and live the way the scriptures tell us to for God. What do you still need to put to death?

READ: Luke 19:28-40 (Discuss as many - or as few - of the following questions as you like)

This next scene in Jesus life, begins the final moments of Jesus earthly ministry. Jesus is hailed as a king, which they later find out he is just not the kind they prepared for. It also shows how fickle they (and we) were as worshippers. One minute they (and we) hail Jesus as King, the next, when expectations are not met, turn their backs and deny Jesus authority.

- The first line begins – *having said this...* What was Jesus just talking about and why?
- Do you feel the previous message has any connection to the next event? Why or why not?
- What was the significance of the colt (read Zechariah 9:9-10), the cloaks (read 2 Kings 9:13) or the words they shouted (read Psalm 118:19-29)?
- What did the religious leaders fear from the people's praise?
- What do you make of Jesus response in verse 40? (Genesis 4:10; Joshua 24:27; Psalm 96:11; Isaiah 55:12; Habakkuk 2:11)
- What lessons can we learn from this Palm Sunday celebration as disciples of Jesus today?

CLOSING PRAYERS:

- **CHURCH:** Pray for our Easter services that we might be prepared to engage every part of the Easter experience to draw closer to God and for those who will visit our church during Easter.
- **VISION 2021:** If you haven't kept your Vision 2021 booklet in a place close by, consider placing it somewhere you can pick it up and regularly pray the prayer on the back. ([refer FB page](#))
- **OTHER:** Pause to think of specific family members and friends that don't know Jesus as King. Pray they would come to know the love of Jesus and give their hearts to him as their Saviour

Happy death day – John 12.1-8

We're going to do something different today - [Sing happy death day – hip, hip, you're dead](#)

Out of context that might sound very strange, yet baptism is death to self – life for Christ

It's exciting to celebrate Amy's baptism - I love how various things have come together

Our readings for Lent, the symbolism in them and how these specifically relate to Amy

To die to yourself requires a person humbles themselves – submits themselves - to Christ

On their retreat, the ladies engaged in an act of submission - which we do every year on Holy Thursday - the foot washing ceremony

This always gets mixed reactions – I'm worried about my feet or touching someone's feet

Jesus taught his disciples this on the night of the Passover feast - *even they struggled*

More importantly, it is the life Jesus required them to replicate - humility and submission - it defined their faith and ministry - and is the core teaching that has passed on to others

When a person is prepared for burial, the body is washed, covered with spices and oils, finally wrapped in a cloth – ready to be placed in a tomb.

The washing of Jesus disciples feet modelled humble service – yet it did something more – we see this in Amy's baptism today and our gospel reading of Jesus

It prepared them to die to themselves – Jesus was preparing his disciples for burial – just as Jesus body was being prepared for his own death and burial by the woman today

For those who love to read their bibles and know this story, you'll know it's in all gospels

However, it reads a little different – there's a few inconsistencies we have to wrestle with

As you can see, there's a few things which are a little varied

- location
- residence
- the woman
- a negative response to Jesus
- the purpose of this anointing

Three gospels say:

- This happened in Bethany
- in the home of Simon the Pharisee (community religious leader)
- a nameless woman
- Jesus points out - you'll always have the poor; I'm being anointed burial

All four gospels have different people giving a negative response

However, these are the things in common:

- a woman poured perfume on Jesus as an act of personal worship
- there was objection to such an emotional and culturally sensitive act
- the statement the perfume could have been sold for the benefit of the poor

Three things I see highlighted in all four readings:

1. Jesus embraces those who respond to him with reckless worship - if their focus is on showing love for Jesus *more than* what seems socially, culturally right to others
2. Some will actively desire to hinder such an expression of worship without recognising they hinder the need for this personal expression or God's grace to be revealed
3. That, while we must be focused on the poor, our first focus must always be on Jesus

So, let's dig into these a little more

EXTRAVAGANT WORSHIP

A particularly well-known extravagant act of worship came from King David who brought the Ark of the Covenant, representing God's presence and glory, back into Jerusalem.

It says: "[with all their might before the Lord, with songs and with harps, tambourines, sistrums and cymbals.](#)" He himself led the assembly as he "[danced before the Lord with all his might](#)" to the shouts of the people and the sound of trumpets. (2 Sam 6, 1 Chron. 15)

He gave several million loaves of breads and cakes to each man and woman

He appointed 288 Levitical priests to play lyres, harps, cymbals and trumpets for the Lord to continually "make petition, to give thanks, and to praise the Lord." (1 Chron. 16).

He didn't hold back when it came to expressing worship in song

David was even criticized by one of his wives Michal - it says she *despised him in his heart*.

David's worship was grounded in acknowledging all God had done for him and their people. He humbled himself - he didn't let his position as King hinder him from glorifying God

The woman today also wasn't going to let other people's views or cultural etiquette get in her way of humbling herself to show how much Jesus meant to her

Both people were focused more on God and this was not a time to hold back on expense.

A point to note – David and the woman gave one act of humble yet extravagant worship – this was not a regular Friday night or Sunday morning event though

The point isn't how crazy and extravagant can we be – there's time and places for that

However, worship is life – not just here on Sundays – it's about asking ourselves - am I willing to show love for Jesus beyond what seems socially, culturally, comfortable for me?

Jesus embraces humbled worship that dies to ourselves

THE OBJECTORS

Some people hinder worship for various reasons

Some deem our act of worship a waste of resources – extravagant giving away of resources (finances, items, time) is worship also and can be looked down upon – like Judas

Some are uncomfortable with emotional expression like the disciples

Some are jealous of the freedom so focused more on God than how people see them like Michal to King David

Some don't want to let people off the hook – you're a bad person - you just can't repent and be free from your sins – *Jesus seems to believe otherwise if repentance is genuine*

Now if you like to run in church/wave banners – you'll struggle here unless you're a toddler

So why is this – why can't I do extravagant banner waving Fr Dan? What if I bring in little flags and just turn in my chair Fr Dan?

Paul had a lot to say to the church in Corinth about orderly worship. Mainly in the context of worship that was accessible to the people who came.

Many spoke in the spiritual gift of other languages they hadn't learnt – Paul said, what good is this if it can't be engaged by others?

Anglican church worship is diverse, yet it tries to be accessible without being uncomfortable for the majority who attend.

Sunday Worship is about expressing something beyond an individual preference or style – it's worship that joins together as the whole and takes people on a journey each week

This allows us to have a form to this journey and allows time to be guided by the Spirit

While Sunday worship might not be the time to wave flags and have a time for more expressive and extravagant worship, we can certainly create other times where we do.

DO YOU SEE THE POOR?

There's a song by Keith Green called the Sheep and the goats based on Matthew 25:31–46

In this reading, people are separated into two groups – the sheep and the goats

The sheep are those who Jesus says to – when I was hungry - you gave me something to eat, - thirsty - you gave me something to drink - a stranger - you invited me in - I needed clothes - you clothed me - sick - you looked after me - in prison - you came to visit me.

The sheep are astonished because, though they did all these things, they didn't know it was Jesus they served – these people – hungry – thirsty – stranger – needing clothes – prison

Let me point out - Jesus didn't say these were *nice people* who didn't take advantage of you – there naked and homeless for a reason – the sheep chose to show God's love in spite of any bad behaviours or treatment they received – or what it cost them to help these people.

The goats also didn't recognise this would've been serving Jesus – yet they chose not to see

Jesus wasn't worried about the poor - he knew disciples transformed by God's love had – and would continue to – choose to serve the poor no matter what – as it served Jesus

Those more concerned about how they're perceived will only worship for wrong reasons – their worship isn't grounded in love for Jesus - they haven't died to themselves

Dying to ourselves as we try to walk as followers of Jesus – is the only way we'll both see – and be willing to - serve Jesus in each person – this is the life of a Christian

Love Jesus – serve others – glorify God ... where have you heard that before

So, let's celebrate Amy's choice to die to herself – to prepare for burial – to live a life defined by humility and submission – as a follower of Jesus Christ her Lord

Let's pray...