

Sacred Moments at the Last Supper

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A few days prior to the Last Supper, when Jesus was visiting the home of Simon the leper in Bethany, a woman came to visit him. The woman poured a flask of fragrant oil on Jesus' head. But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor."

Jesus said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial (Matt 26:6-12)."

In the last few days of his earthly life, what remained for Jesus was his disciples. Yet even they questioned when a woman poured expensive oil upon his face and hair, in spite of him having just told them two days prior to this that he would be delivered up to the authorities and executed (Matt 26:1-2).

When the disciples gathered for the Last Supper with him it would be Jesus who would get down on his knees and wash their feet, even the feet of Judas who was soon to betray him:

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them (John 13:13-15).

The crowds of thousands who had once pursued Jesus for words of comfort, for food, and for physical healing were nowhere to be found as he sat with his closest disciples for the final time, drying their feet (John 13:5).

In their last days together, Jesus' disciples had begun to understand that his ministry with them was at its close.

Jesus broke and shared bread with them on that final Thursday together. He asked them to share the wine from his cup:

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom (Matt 26:26-29).

Jesus and his disciples closed this chapter of their shared ministry by singing a hymn together (Matt 26:30). Imagine if you will, the moment of sacred silence just before they all broke into song. It would be the final time that they would do so together.