



DISCUSSION GUIDE / SESSION 4 - ONE SACRIFICE

SERIES BIG IDEA

As ONE church with ONE vision, we will accomplish the ONE mission together.

THIS WEEK'S BIG IDEA

When each **ONE** of us makes the sacrifice that God is asking of us, we will accomplish the **ONE** mission together.

ICEBREAKER

Does your family have any heirlooms or treasured possessions that have been handed down through one or more generations?

INTRODUCTION

At COMMUNITY we believe there is hope for everyone and that hope is in Jesus. We also believe Jesus is calling all of us into his mission of helping people find their way back to God as we are all finding our way back to God. So **ONE** is all about what God wants to do IN us and THROUGH us. Our goal is that every person at COMMUNITY would be a part of **ONE**. As we hope and pray for that outcome let's take a look at sacrifice through one of the stories Mark tells in his Gospel.

VIDEO

Commitment Sunday is next week. Watch the week four small group video at communitychristian.org/one.

READ MARK 14:3-9 (NIV)

³ While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. ⁴ Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? ⁵ It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly. ⁶ "Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ⁷ The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any

time you want. But you will not always have me. ⁸ She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. ⁹ Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

The woman in this story breaks the alabaster jar containing perfume made of pure nard. The very best ointment would have been stored in an alabaster jar and its identification as nard suggests the ointment was a family heirloom passed down by her family. It is also noted by commentators that the jar could have been emptied in the same manner it was filled, but her dramatic act of breaking the jar was a sign of her devotion to Jesus. ¹

QUESTION 1

As we think about the woman in the story, what do you think she was trying to say by breaking the jar and anointing Jesus?

QUESTION 2

Some of those who witnessed the event didn't agree with the extravagant use of the perfume. What do you think of their objection?

QUESTION 3

By breaking the jar the woman was showing the totality of her devotion. "Totality" is not about a specific amount; it's about being "all in" in our commitment to God. What do you think of that statement?

Pastor Rick Warren said, "Nothing shapes your life more than the commitments you choose to make." Choosing to become a Christ follower is the biggest, most impactful commitment you can make.



QUESTION 4

Other than a commitment to follow Jesus, what other commitments have made a lasting impact on your life? In what ways have they changed you?

QUESTION 5

Sometimes love drives us to give in ways that go against cultural norms. Have you ever witnessed someone give in such a way and what was your response?

QUESTION 6

Sometimes we lose focus when it comes to our money habits and we spend more than what we earn or we waste money on things we don't need. How might you create some margin in your budget in order to be more financially generous?

QUESTION 7

Based on what you have read and heard in the **ONE** initiative, what do you think God might be asking you to do as you continue to trust and follow him?

QUESTION 8

This woman left a lasting legacy by giving in this remarkable way. What kind of lasting legacy would you like to leave? What kind of lasting legacy would you like our church to leave?

EXERCISE AND REFLECTION

(to be done at home)

In preparation for commitment weekend list out the financial commitments that you currently have—those that go beyond a one-time payment. Examples would be a home mortgage, a lease agreement, a car loan, utilities, a cell phone contract, your child's tuition for school, your own tuition for school, etc.

Write down the commitment you are planning to make for **ONE**. Where does it fall in the priority of these other commitments? Do you need to change or modify one or more of these other commitments in order to be able to fulfill your **ONE** commitment? What if you wanted to raise your **ONE** commitment? What would that require? Is there a financial commitment you currently have that appears to be prioritized above your ability to make a sacrificial giving commitment to help people find their way back to God?

CONCLUSION

The woman in this story is motivated by personal love for Jesus, which has the power to break normal patterns, defy common sense, and simply bless others extravagantly. The totality of her expression of love calls all of us to love Jesus and to sacrifice for him and for his mission. Of course her story anticipates the sacrifice Jesus was about to make as he gave himself on the cross for all of us. What is our response to his sacrifice? In what ways might we need to break the jar in our response to him?

¹William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes in The New International Commentary on The New Testament*, F.F. Bruce, Ed., (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1974), 492.