

WEEK 1: I CAN PREPARE FOR EASTER

"Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me." – Matthew 21:9

Matthew 26:1-16, John 12:1-7

We all know people who might be referred to as "preppers." You know, the ones with a 6-month supply of bottled water and freeze-dried food rations? They always seemed a little crazy to me, to be honest, but with the recent declaration of a pandemic, as I find myself staring at store shelves completely barren of toilet paper and hand sanitizer, I wonder if the preppers might be on to something. We all have different ways of preparing for future events, whether or not we can even predict what those events might look like. This week you might be preparing homeschool lessons for your kids whose schools have closed, or putting previous travel plans and preparations on hold.

The Bible story this week involves two very different people preparing for an event. Their preparations may have been mostly subconscious, as they didn't have full awareness of who Jesus is or what He had come to accomplish. But we can learn a lot as we reflect on their responses!

Mary longed to show her love and devotion to Jesus. She had no social status (far from it!), no position of influence, no importance in the eyes of anyone who mattered. But she offered an extravagant gift, worth a year's salary in that day. A year's salary! Think about how many things you would be willing to give up a year's salary for. You can probably count them on one hand. Mary spent that on her Savior for an amazingly sacrificial gift in a moment of incredible devotion.

Judas, from one perspective, appears to have felt betrayed. We can't be sure what motivated Judas, but we do know that his preparations involved getting ready to turn Jesus in to the religious leaders who would ultimately crucify Him. He betrayed the Savior with a kiss.

Judas responded to Jesus out of self-protection. Mary responded with sacrificial love. We are faced with the same choice every day. The more we get to know Jesus, the more we can respond as Mary did. We find that we can trust His heart and that there is no safer choice than placing ourselves at His feet, offering all that we have and all that we are. Mary knew that.

"No devotion to Jesus can be excessive." (Evangelical Commentary of the Bible)

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:

1. Have recent events surrounding the pandemic caused any unexpected emotions for you related to how prepared or unprepared you are? How can you involve Jesus in your preparations?
2. How can preparing our hearts for an event in advance help us to be more ready or more open to what God wants to accomplish in our hearts?
3. What do you have to offer Jesus today? Its monetary value does not matter; it doesn't even need to cost anything. He is ready to receive any offering from His children. He sees, knows, and loves your heart.