

Jesus Wow! Series Part 4

The Women who Honoured God

Pastor Andrew Neville 10/5/20

Assorted Passages from Mark

Sermon Summary

Whenever Pastor Andrew tells stories about his mother, you can guarantee they are quirky and funny as was his mother. Once, back in England, she had gone for a long walk down a country lane wearing a Hi-Viz jacket for safety. Eventually she reached a main busy road, and feeling a little tired from the extended distance, she decided to hitch a ride home. She stuck her hand out horizontally to catch a driver's attention. It took quite awhile before she realised that every vehicle that passed her turned right at the next road because they thought she was a traffic officer redirecting traffic!

It is Mothers' Day today. Andrew decided to focus on the women featured by Mark in his gospel. Women are mentioned 22 times as being valued by Jesus in the culture of those times where women were often devalued.

Mark 15:40-41 mentions 3 women by name (there were other women present) who had kept vigil throughout the crucifixion until the end. There are 3 points about these women: They followed Him.

They cared for His needs.

They were with Him from the moment He began His ministry in Galilee till the end. Faithful.

Four other women featured in Mark's gospel are:

1. **Mark 5:24-34.** A woman with a life-long 'bleeding' issue (menorrhagia) was healed by merely touching Jesus. She had heard about Him, then believed, and went and found him, but being 'unclean' she only touched his robe. She was instantly made well. Jesus said to this woman:

- Your faith has healed (literally saved) you.
- Go in peace. (Literally, 'Go, you have peace with God').
- Be freed from your suffering – it's never coming back.

The woman had put her faith in the power of Jesus to heal. And did he what!

2. **Mark 7: 24-30.** The woman here is described as Syrophenician [the Hellenistic coastal portion of the Mediterranean in today's Israel and Lebanon)]; therefore, she is a Gentile. To the Jew, this part of the world was regarded as unclean, and therefore the woman would likewise be regarded as unclean, as would her daughter. The mother begged Jesus to remove a demon from her daughter. Jesus' reply to the woman's request, at first reading, may sound a bit nasty – but He is not saying no! Jesus is testing the degree of her faith. She replies that even dogs get to eat the

crumbs that fall from the table. Her reply indicates that she understands the power Jesus has over evil.

Both the above women had the faith to ask.

The next two are women devoted to Jesus.

3. **Mark 12:42-44.** The nameless widow with selfless generosity gave 2 small copper coins to the collection. She gave all she had out of her poverty, which was the condition of many widows in ancient times. To anyone watching, it would appear her giving was trivial – but not in God’s sight! Hers was an act of loving the Lord with all her soul, mind and strength. No gift to God is insignificant when given with love for God.
4. **Mark 14:3-9.** This woman is given the highest praise, yet once again no name is given even though the memory of her act will live on whenever the gospel is preached, said Jesus. This story is about a woman who brought an expensive perfume and anointed Jesus’ hair with it. (This act occurred 2 days prior to Jesus’ death.) Many observers thought this a waste, self-righteously proclaiming it should have been sold and the money given to the poor. But Jesus reprimanded them saying, “Leave her alone. She has done a beautiful thing to me.”

This story is placed between two ugly events: the chief priests hatching the plot to have Jesus killed, and Judas’ action to betray Jesus. It can be likened to a rose between two thorns. The woman’s action outshines the behaviour of all the men in the room. Unknowingly, she is preparing Jesus’ body for death. The people in the room saw the event in terms of wealth wasted and did not know what was behind it. We may not know the woman’s name, but God does.

Discussion Question

Read Mark 5:24-34, Mark 7:24-30, Mark 12:41-44, Mark 14:3-9.

Which story inspires you most today – and why?