

Session 4 Study Guide - Risking Rejection

The setting for this session is the 'first dinner'. The story is one of the least familiar parts of the passion narrative. It focuses on a woman anointing Jesus in the presence of his disciples. Each gospel presents the details differently. Read Mark 14:3-9 (Or Matthew 26:6-13) and John 12:1-8.

- What are the significant differences between the two gospel versions?

- On page 95, A.J. Levine explains the two different Greek words that mean of anointment. What does it mean that Jesus uses the word that portends his burial?

In Mark, the woman anoints Jesus' head. In John, Mary anoints his feet and wipes them with her hair.

- What are the implications about Mary's relationship with Jesus?

- What are the concerns of the disciples (Judas) about this act? What seems to be their primary motivations?

- Do you understand the disciple's point of view in regard to poor? Is Jesus fair in rebuking them?

Middle Eastern culture generally restricts women and men from eating in the same room.

- What kind of rejection risk was the woman (Mary) taking? How does Jesus mitigate that risk?

- Read 1 Samuel 10:1; 16:13 and 1 Kings 1:39. Why does the anointing in Mark 14:8 confuse the disciples?

- How does Jesus reinterpret this act of anointing? Does it confuse us as today's disciples?

- Reflect on the fact that Jesus chose to face death rather than overthrow the political/social order of the time.