





**DISCUSS**

In the session, Francis pointed out that Jesus was looking forward to celebrating Passover with his disciples—his friends. **As you listened to Francis tell the story of the Last Supper and the events in Gethsemane, what emotions surfaced in you toward Jesus?**

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Jesus knows full well what he’s going to face the next day. And he knows that the friends that have stuck by him through everything on this journey to Jerusalem are going to abandon him. And yet he still shows them love—promising that his death is for their sake.

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Think about the people in your life that you love more than anything. **How would you respond to them if you knew, in just a few hours, that they would betray and abandon you? What would you be feeling?**

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Hold that response and those feelings in your mind for a moment. **What does it say about Jesus’s love for us that he *wants* to spend time with us despite what he knows about us?**

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Before we immerse ourselves in the Passion narratives, let’s read Mark 14:3–9.

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**How would you describe the woman’s gift to Jesus?**

**What were the guests at the dinner concerned with in regard to the woman?**

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**How did Jesus respond?**

Mark describes Simon as a leper, but he would have had to be healed since no leper would have dined with healthy people. Whether Jesus was the one who healed him or not, we can only speculate, but it’s possible that this was Simon’s way of thanking Jesus.

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To pour perfumed oil over a guest’s head at a dinner was a sign of high respect and adoration, which is exactly what she does. But rather than recognize the display of deep love and affection for Jesus, the gathered guests criticize her.

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*[Note: For further study on anointing with oil, and the deeper significance of the woman’s act, see Go Deeper*



Read Mark 14:53–72.

Recall how Jesus’s identity as the Son of God was affirmed by the Father twice: at his baptism and at the Transfiguration. Jesus gradually revealed his identity only to his disciples, keeping that information close.

The Jewish high priest asked Jesus if he was the Messiah (14:61–65). **How did he answer, and how did the high priest respond?**

Peter subsequently was questioned about his relationship to Jesus. **How did he respond?**

It is ironic that two Jews heard the Son of God affirm his true identity, yet the one who should have recognized the Messiah (the high priest) rejected him as a blasphemer and the other (Peter), who knew beyond a doubt who Jesus was, denied knowing him for fear of human authorities. It may be tempting to mock them, but let’s turn the question to ourselves. **Would you recognize God’s Holy One? Or do you have a certain image in mind of what he’ll look like? Have you ever turned your back on him in fear of others’ opinions?**

Read Mark 15:1–15.

Pilate, a Roman governor, asked Jesus an equivalent question (15:2). **How does Pilate’s response compare to the high priest’s?**

**How does Mark describe Barabbas?**

**Based on 15:7, what does Barabbas offer the people that Jesus doesn’t or chose not to?**

The crowds that followed Jesus, much like the disciples, didn’t want a suffering savior—they wanted a conquering Christ. Barabbas the murderer had earned his executioner’s sentence in an anti-Rome uprising. *He*, not Jesus, was the warlike champion the people wanted.

Read Mark 15:16–32. Throughout the book of Mark, we’ve seen Jesus validate his claim to be the Christ. The Father himself twice confirmed Jesus as his beloved son. **Yet, how did the Jews, the Romans, and the passersby treat the divine king?**





Remember that all through the book of Mark, Jesus has been revealing his identity as the Son of God gradually. By now, on the cusp of his crucifixion, he’s not hiding it anymore. He is the Messiah, a name derived directly from the Hebrew word for “anointed.” As the Anointed One, he is the savior Israel has been waiting for. Different scholars, leaders, and citizens envisioned this Messiah in a variety of ways, but under Roman occupation, few were expecting a Prince of Peace.

Read more from the Old Testament about the Messiah, also known as the Anointed One, the Servant: Psalm 2:2; Isaiah 52:13–53:12; Daniel 9:25–26.

**In each passage, what do you learn about the Messiah?**

The Greek word for Messiah is Christ. Reflect on these mentions of the Messiah in the New Testament:

**Matthew 1:17–18—In what context is he mentioned? Why is it significant here?**

**Luke 2:11— Why is this good news to the shepherds?**

**Acts 4:25–26—Which Old Testament passage is quoted here? How are Peter and John applying it in their speech?**

The coming of the Messiah was the answer to centuries of prayer—Israelites longing for God to return and rescue them. We also benefit from his coming, since he came to redeem all humanity—not from the Romans, but from the rule of sin and death.

**What does Jesus’s title of Messiah mean to you? In what ways do you profit from his coming, all these years later?**

**2. Peek at the “Greek”: “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?”**

Actually, those words were not spoken or written in Greek, but in Aramaic, the everyday language that Jesus spoke. The phrase means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Jesus was quoting the opening line of Psalm 22.

Other gospel writers record more of what Jesus says and does in his last moments on the cross, but Mark chose only this one phrase. He wants to lean into the true depth

Horizontal lines for writing answers.

