

The Hour is at Hand
Matthew 26:1-56

This story could be about any number of men in this congregation. I won't give you a name, but see if you can figure it out.

It was right before Valentine's Day and he was out shopping for a gift for his wife. He went to the perfume counter at Von Maur and asked for some help. He explained he wanted some perfume for his wife, but had a limited budget. Was she willing to work with him on this?

The clerk assured him that she would, and came back with a bottle of perfume that smelled really nice. He liked it and asked how much it was.

"Only \$80.00," she told him.

"I don't think you understood me. I have a limited budget. Do you have anything less expensive?"

She said "Yes" and was soon back with a small tray of choices which ranged from \$50 down to \$18.

"I appreciate your effort, but even the \$18 one is a little too much. Can you show me something cheap?"

"Yes" she said, and handed him a mirror.

Jesus does not go cheap on you. He is determined to give all He has, and the hour is at hand. He is about to face His death. It is only days away.

This is no surprise to Him. And it shouldn't be a surprise to the disciples either. He had told them about it several times.

The first is in Matthew 16: *From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised* (v. 21). You may remember Peter's response: *Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you* (v. 22).

In the next chapter Jesus says very plainly: *The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day.*" Matthew records the disciples' response: *[T]hey were greatly distressed* (17:22-23).

Jesus tells them a third time in chapter 20: *[T]he Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day* (18-19)." What immediately follows is James and John having their mother ask Jesus if they can sit at His right and left in His kingdom – an interesting response.

Is no one listening to what Jesus is telling them? ... It turns out that one person has been listening. And she gets yelled at for it ... again.

The first time it was her sister Martha who was mad because she was doing all the work while Mary sat at Jesus' feet listening to Him. This time Mary pours some expensive ointment on Jesus' head. *And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste? For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor"* (26:8-9).

We get what the disciples were thinking about. \$50,000.00! We could do a lot of things with 50k. We could get the bell back in working order. We could fix some more of the parking lot. We could put some of it into our savings account which has dwindled down to nearly nothing. We get that. What we may fail to grasp is the full extent of who Jesus is and what He is doing for us.

Mary seemed to get it. "Jesus, you are the resurrection and the life. You are my Lord and Savior. And that means you are going to die for a poor miserable sinner like me. And you are going to do it very soon. What can I do for you? What can I do to show you that I love you? Your time is at hand. Let me give you this gift. Let me anoint your head. Yes, it is worth a lot of money, but what is that in comparison to what you have done and are about to face for me?"

I've been listening. I know that even though you are guilty of no wrongdoing, you will be condemned to

death. Men with evil intent will mock you. They will beat you. They will nail you to a cross.

They will do all of these things to you, but it's not really about what they are doing, it is about what You are doing: offering Yourself as a sacrifice acceptable to Your heavenly Father as payment for the sins of the world – as payment for my sin.

Dear Lord Jesus, please accept this paltry gift as a thank you for who You are and what you are about to do for me."

The glory of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem with palm branches and hosannas did quickly shift to Jesus' true glory – offering His life that you may have life.

For you, Jesus gives His all. He holds nothing back. When His hour came, He endured the mocking, the beating and the nails driven into His hands and feet. Jesus shed His blood and died for you. This He did so that you may have the forgiveness of all your sin and life eternal with Him. Your salvation was not cheap, but Jesus willingly paid the price for you. That's how much He loves you.

With everything going on in your life, you may lose sight of who Jesus is and what He has done and continues to do for you. But even then, you can count on Him to love you and lavish you with His gifts. Amen.