

No Turning Back: Living the surrendered life

Lesson 18

Do you remember?

2 words (see/look & remember)

Mark 14:1-10

Remembering is such a big part of our relationship with God. Israel was to remember the greatest event that we can read about in the OT. Israel was to remember that the great I Am led them out of Egypt--out of bondage. God instituted the Passover celebration so that His people would remember what the LORD had done. Likewise we've been given the Lord's Supper and Baptism so that we'll remember what the LORD has done. God wants us to remember.

Remember When: from an email message...

Close your eyes.....And go back.....Before the Internet or the MAC, Before semi automatics and crack ...Before SEGA or Super Nintendo ... Way back..... I'm talkin' bout hide and go seek at dusk... Sittin' on the porch, Hot bread and butter....Eatin' a 'super dooper sandwich', Red light, Green light... Chocolate milk, Lunch tickets, Penny candy in a brown paper bag.Hopscotch, butterscotch, double-dutch, Jacks, kickball, dodge-ball!... Mother, May I? Hula Hoops and Sunflower Seeds, Jaw breakers, blowpops, Mary Janes, Running through the sprinkler. The smell of the sun and lickin' salty lips.... Wait..... Catchin' lightening bugs in a jar, playin' sling shot and Red Rover... When around the corner seemed far away, and going downtown seemed like going somewhere...Bedtime, Climbing trees, A million mosquito bites and sticky fingers, Cops and Robbers, Cowboys and Indians, Sittin' on the curb, Jumpin' down the steps, Jumpin' on the bed. Pillow fights, Being tickled to death. Runnin' till you were out of breath. Laughing so hard that your stomach hurt. Being tired from playin'!....Remember that? I ain't finished just yet... What about the girl that had the big bubbly hand writing?? Licking the beaters when your mother made a cake. Didn't that feel good? Just to go back and say, Yeah, I remember that! There's nothing like the good old days! They were good then, and they're good now when we think about them.

Remember when... a quarter was a decent allowance and another quarter a huge bonus. When you'd reach into a muddy gutter for a penny. When your mom wore nylons that came in two pieces. When you got your windshield cleaned, oil checked, and gas pumped, without asking, for free, every time. And, you didn't pay for air. And, you got trading stamps to boot! When laundry detergent had free glasses, dishes or towels hidden inside the box. When any parent could discipline any kid, or feed him or use him to carry groceries, and nobody, not even the kid, thought a thing of it.

Do you remember when Jesus went to the house of a leper? Jesus cares for the lost, the lonely, and the least of society and the outsider.

Do you remember the unnamed woman who poured perfume on Jesus' head? We really have no idea who this woman is. Perhaps this is the reason why Mark tells us about her...though never named. Perhaps she's just a nobody...Just a woman who takes matters into her own hands and crashes Simon's little get-together. But one thing we do know is that she didn't really belong there.

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you didn't belong. Where you were the obvious outsider? In 1991, I had the opportunity to go to Bergamo, Italy for three weeks of campaign work.

Each week we had one day off... to go just about anywhere we wanted to in a 24-hour period. We went to Rome one week, Florence another and on the last week, I decided in my youthful, naive way that I would have a day off alone--in Milan! That's right! The biggest city in Italy! You want to talk about being the outsider... I was the quintessential outsider in Milan that week. You could have picked me out of the crowd. I found myself in the train station looking for the right train to board to get back to Bergamo. The more I asked for help the more confused I got. Finally a man approached me looking for some money and speaking a very broken Italian. Come to find out this man was a gypsy. Although I could not understand his language I clearly understood what he wanted. He wanted my money. I learned another valuable lesson that day as an outsider. I said to him "Non parlo Italiano, mia Americano." What a mistake! All of a sudden I had more gypsies around me than I could count. I was definitely the outsider and we all knew it.

Let me ask you: How do you feel when you are on the outside looking in? How do you feel when you find yourself in a place you don't belong? The pit in your stomach, and the dryness in your mouth, the anxiety you feel makes you want to bolt for the door doesn't it?

Do you remember the self righteous ones, who complained about what the woman did? There will always be those who think they have a better idea. There will always be those who talk and complain about someone who serves the Lord. There will always be those who will criticize your worship and service to the Lord. But, what will you do? Will you allow those to keep you from being who the Lord wants you to be? Your attitude, actions, and responses are all that you control. What will you do?

Do you remember though what Jesus said about that woman?

- Leave her alone. She has made a great sacrifice.
- She did what she could.
- She is anointing me for burial.
- This shall be spoken of as a memorial of her.

Because of Mark 14, no one will wonder what this woman's relationship was to the Lord.

- It'll be clear--She loved Jesus.

Look at this woman. She's in a place where nobody knows her name. At least that's what Mark leaves us to believe. Nobody at the party will dare call her by name...they won't even call her by another name, but I bet they could come up with some less than stellar descriptions without much thought.

Look at this woman. She's an outsider. If there were any other women around they certainly would not be doing what she was doing. Rather they ought to be shuffling around doing the kinds of things women were expected to do...working the kitchen, herding the servants, rounding up the kids.

At best, women were second class, not citizens, just second-class. It was common among some pious Jews to pray a prayer: "I thank you, Yahweh, who has not made me a sinner, a Gentile, or a woman."

Look at her. So, how do you guess this woman felt walking in on Jesus and his holy boys? She cannot be more out of place...at least it seems that way.

But Look at Jesus. It doesn't matter that her name is not called. He knows it. In fact, he knows more than her name, he knows her. Behind the name he sees a face, and behind her face, he sees her life, her spirit, and her soul. Jesus cares for this woman by allowing her to touch him. He allows her to

come close.

Look at Jesus. He allows this outsider to become an insider. He does this by receiving her. All along, Jesus has been receiving outsiders. Most everyday, you'd see Jesus hanging out with lepers, sinners, tax collectors, children, and women. And he brings along his followers...although some times they drag their heels. So why does Jesus drag them? Because he wants his followers to learn to live life from the perspective of an outsider. Jesus allows this woman on the inside of the party so that those who profess to know Christ will somehow be willing to get to know this outsider.

But Look again at Jesus. No one felt out of place in Jesus' presence. Just look at the person hosting this little dinner party. It's Simon. But here is his full name: Simon THE LEPER. He knows what it means to be out of place. Lepers, even former lepers, never really were to be in-place. Once so named you always remained that way. But for some reason, Simon can host a dinner party for the One who never saw people the way his so-called neighbors saw him. And, at dinner parties like this, usually the host and main guest sit next to each other.

But now we see this--unnamed outsider--this out of place woman who shows up uninvited at Simon's dinner party to offer something extravagant.

I have to admit. I like this woman. She's someone whose story needs to be told for generations to come. This woman is taking a chance. She is walking into a place to do something courageous. She's fallen short. She's a no-named nobody. But she is willing to do something outrageous.

I see this woman not sitting somewhere pouting that she is not good enough. I see a woman who is not stuck in her situation. I see a woman who did the very best she could with what she had. This unnamed, outsider, out of place woman is living like she was just the opposite.

When someone realizes they have no name, when you feel like an outsider looking in, when you know you don't belong...you can either accept this or live in spite of it. She took what she had and she gave it away. She gave an extravagant gift to her Lord out of extravagant love.

This woman doesn't come to Jesus and ask to have her life improved. She didn't come to complain about life's circumstances. She comes to give even in times that are most likely not good. She gives what she has to Jesus in a way that seems wasteful to everyone else. But Jesus sees things differently than most. He sees that she has noticed his impending death and his present need and takes care of both by offering the most precious thing she has.

Unlike Jesus' own followers and those sitting at this dinner party, this woman has seen Jesus' need for consolation and warmth. And she is willing to identify with her Lord. She touches him. She consoles him. She readies him with her love for the crucifying moment coming before him.

Just like our neediness, this woman who needs so much herself--sees Jesus' need and puts that first. So she gives him the only material resource she has. And she gives it all. Not to make him richer. But to make him feel loved...and soothed...and prepared for his journey to the Cross.

Perhaps there's a lesson in this for us.

In the past two chapters Mark's been making it pretty clear that Jesus is calling us to watch! Look out! Keep your eyes open! Be on guard!

12:38-40 As he taught, Jesus said, "**Watch out** for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted in the marketplaces, **39**and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. **40**They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely."

13:5-8 Jesus said to them: "**Watch out** that no one deceives you. **6**Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive many. **7**When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. **8**Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.

13:9-11 **9**"You must be on your **guard**. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. **10**And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. **11**Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

13:32-33 "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. **33****Be on guard! Be alert** You do not know when that time will come.

13:35 "Therefore **keep watch** because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back – whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn.

13:36-37 If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. **37**What I say to you, I say to everyone: '**Watch!**' "

14:34 "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and **keep watch.**"

14:37 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Could you not **keep watch** for one hour?"

14:38 **Watch** and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

Then comes this outsider. This woman who is interacting with men, in public! Yet she can see something that the insiders miss. She can see the moment--she can see Jesus' moment--coming.

- It could be that she sees what's going to happen to Jesus.
- It could be that she reads the signs and sees the predicament Jesus' behavior has put Him in.
-And so she anoints his body for his burial. (Jesus implies this in v. 8)
- It could be that this woman sees that this will not end well for Jesus.

But it could be based on what Jesus says about her that she sees who **He** is and **what** His life means. So even if she doesn't really know about His impending death, she knows that what and whom Jesus represents is far more special than anything else in life. You see, seeing properly helps her to act appropriately. And perhaps this helps us to understand Jesus' difficult statement about always having the poor but not always having this moment with Him. Yes it's good to keep our eyes open to

those that are around us. It's good to reach out and help the poor, but don't miss Jesus in the **here** and **now**. Don't miss the moment of Jesus' life in your life. We can get so wrapped up in doing church that we miss the moments of Jesus' life in our life. And if we miss that moment all we do is play church. When we let Jesus' life take over our life, we will be transformed! We will be empowered to do much more than 300 Denarii ever could hope to accomplish among the poor.

Can you see why Jesus would want the story of this woman's ability to see and act to be memorialized in the spreading of the good news of the coming kingdom? Amazingly this nobody, this outsider, this woman becomes the model of what it means to watch.

Here's an example of watching. I received a call from a heavily accented Spanish woman on Friday who told me that she was calling all Christian churches in the yellow pages asking if people will pray for her sister Mira Perez. Mira is having surgery tomorrow to have one or two of her toes amputated. Mira suffers from diabetes. Mira has a sister who loves her. Mira's sister, Paullina lives in Nashua and Paullina believes in prayer. She believes in Jesus. I was trying to be watchful... and look at what I saw... I assured Paullina that I would pray for Mira and that I would let you know about her request. Paullina was thankful, but interrupted my closing remarks as I was ready to hang up and she asked so gently...with such insight..."what can I pray for you, pastor?" I saw something! I said, please pray for my sister... and I told her about Kim. Paullina assured me that she would share with her congregation that Scot Poirier and Kim Merrill were in need of prayer. The tables turned on me. I ended the conversation saying thank you to this stranger who is watchful and believes in prayer.

I'm not poor... far from it. I have no physical needs that are not being met. But I am in as much need of Jesus love and care as anyone else on the planet. This Spanish woman is someone who sees what many of us are not always able to see. It's confidence in Jesus presence in our lives. It's a knowing that Jesus is in the here and now in our life.

When we see Jesus in the here and now in our life:

- Does this change things?
- Does this help you to see, differently?
- Does this energize you to want to be like Jesus who reached out to you...a nobody! An outsider! Who made you an insider? Read **Eph. 2:1-10**

Oh, you remember don't you? We celebrated a little while ago how Jesus took you, an outsider... a sinner... a nobody...and put you on the inside by giving you His very best.

Luke 22:14-20

14(J)When the hour had come, He reclined at the table, and (K)the apostles with Him.

15And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer;

16for I say to you, I shall never again eat it (L)until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

17(M)And when He had taken a cup and (N)given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves;

18for (Q)I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes."

19And when He had taken some bread and (P)given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

20And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is (Q)poured out for you is the (R)new covenant in My blood.

Remember that it was Jesus' love and sacrifice that made you a somebody in the Kingdom of God.

Remember your baptism.

Romans 6:3-7 NIV **3**Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **4**We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

5If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. **6**For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin — **7**because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

NLT **3** Or have you forgotten that when we became Christians and were baptized to become one with Christ Jesus, we died with him? **4**For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

5Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised as he was. **6**Our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin.

There was a time when you were a slave to sin, but remember that Jesus has freed us from slavery.

Remember when you leave here today that you are a child of God... once an outsider, now an insider who like Jesus desires to reach out into this world to the unnamed, nobodies who need to see Jesus in the here and now through us.

Remember: The woman gave her very best to Jesus

Remember: Jesus gave his very best for all mankind

Remember: As you leave this place to offer not your leftovers, but share your very best.

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