

Growing Deeper
Sway

Week Three: *Choose to Honor*
Mark 14:1-11

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. When you think of religious leaders, do you see them as honorable? Why or why not?
2. Read in Mark 14:1-2. From this passage, how would you describe the religious leaders of Jesus' time?
3. Up to this point Jesus had been criticizing the Jewish religious leaders as "vipers" who were leading the Jews away from God. After reading what the leaders wanted to do, were they honorable religious leaders? Was Jesus' assessment wrong?
4. Have you ever plotted against someone you didn't like? Was plotting against them honorable for you and your reputation?
5. When you profess to be a Follower of Christ, people look to you as an example of what is to be Christian. When you plot against others, are you bringing honor to Christ? Is this something that you would typically consider when making decisions?
6. As you finish your FIFTEEN, think how you have represented Christ in your circle. Thank him for his honoring you and ask for forgiveness when you have dishonored him.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

7. Have you ever done something you were ashamed of? How do you feel when you think about it now?
8. Read Mark 14:3-9. How did this woman ask for forgiveness?
9. Mark doesn't say much about the type of woman she was, but Luke does in Luke 7:37-38. How did Luke describe her? What kind of insight does this give into her mindset?
10. Think back to question number 7. Did you believe you deserved forgiveness in this situation? How does the knowledge that Jesus forgives your sins affect how you view that time?
11. Put yourself in the disciples' shoes. How would you have reacted to such an outpouring of gratitude?

12. Are you as grateful to Jesus for all he has done for you to honor him with such an expensive gift?
13. As you conclude your FIFTEEN, think about how the woman honored Jesus. Then think about how you honor God in your life. Finish in prayer by asking God to help you honor him by sharing him with someone you know.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

14. Reread Mark 14:6-9. What is Jesus' response to the disciples' criticism of the woman's use of the perfume?
15. Jesus honors the woman by promising her actions would be remembered everywhere and for all time. Do you think the woman was hoping to be honored so generously for her actions? What do you think was her true expectation of Jesus?
16. When you do honorable things for others, do you do them to get recognition or because it is just the right thing to do? How do you feel about your answer to this question?
17. How do you honor the Lord for all he has done for you?
18. How do you choose to honor others?
19. Do you believe that the way you honor others also honors God? Why or why not?
20. End your FIFTEEN by ask the Lord for the ability to see opportunities to honor him by honoring others.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

21. Look again at Mark 14:1-11. When the disciples criticized the woman for using expensive perfume to honor Jesus, are they honoring Jesus? Why or why not?
22. At this point in the Easter story, Jesus has prophesied his own horrible death numerous times, but the disciples still haven't understood what Jesus was teaching them. Why do you really think the disciples were so bothered by the woman's actions?
23. Read Mark 14:9-11. How is Judas showing his real interests?
24. Judas goes from criticizing the woman for her immoral life and the way she chooses to spend her money to deciding

to betray Jesus. It's an interesting contrast. How does Judas' mindset about Jesus indicate how he might rationalize betraying Jesus?

25. How does your mindset about Jesus affect the way you honor him?
26. Finish your FIFTEEN by thinking about some of your decisions you have made this past week. Did they honor Jesus? If not, ask Jesus for forgiveness, being fully confident that he will forgive you.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

27. Do you look to be recognized or are you happy to honor others?
28. Read Luke 14:7-11. What seat at the table do you typically try to take?
29. Humility is difficult, but when you are honored for your humility the feeling is very rewarding. Is it still humility if you take satisfaction in being humble? Why or why not?
30. Think of a time when you tried to take an honored position in a meeting, banquet, dinner, family gathering. Were you ever embarrassed by being asked to move because someone more important needs to sit in your seat? How did/might that feel?
31. How would the table or occasion in your story above be different if Jesus was at the table? In what seat do you put Jesus?
32. As you end your final FIFTEEN this week, ask the Lord to give you a humble heart so you can best honor him in your world.

Week Four: Choose to Give
Matthew 14:13-21

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. What do you think of when you hear the words “scarcity mentality”?
2. In its simplest terms, scarcity mentality is the belief that there will never be enough money, food, emotions or something else. As a result, your actions and thoughts stem from a place of lack. Read Matthew 14:13-17. Read also Mark 6:30-38. How are the disciples exhibiting scarcity mentality? What words of scarcity do they use?
3. How is Jesus exhibiting the opposite of scarcity mentality? What do you think is the basis for his confidence?
4. What are the disciples forgetting?
5. How does having God’s Living Presence impact scarcity mentality?
6. Jesus guarantees his Living Presence to his people. (Matthew 28:20, John 4:15-18) Look up the lyrics for the song “Forever Reign” by Hillsong Worship. Do you believe the statement, “The riches of Your love will always be enough”?
7. Finish your FIFTEEN by making a list of the ways Jesus says or shows he can and will supply your need.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

8. When have you been totally depleted? What did you do?
9. Read Matthew 14:13-17. In our broken world, human need is real. People are without food, drinkable water, medicine, protection, security, love, etc. The disciples were looking at 15,000-20,000 needy people. They were right. We don’t have enough on our own. How does this reality affect our influence?
10. One writer put it, “Every new ‘ask’ causes serious scrutiny of our resources and priorities.” Is this the best response?
11. Read John 15:5. Now read Matthew 14:16-21. How did Jesus visibly demonstrate his statement, “Apart from me you can do nothing”?
12. How does this event impact your response to “every new ask”?

13. Think about the latest or most urgent “ask” in your life. End your FIFTEEN presenting it to Jesus. Will you ask him to give you everything you need to address the need?

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

14. Scarcity produces tunnel vision. We obsess about what we think we desperately need. We tend to hoard and lose sight of long-term priorities. Scarcity mentality has been shown to lower IQ test performance. Scarcity captures the mind. How have you seen this happen? What triggers this reaction in you?

15. Reread Matthew 14:13-14. What was Jesus’ reaction to the pursuit of thousands of needy people?

16. How do you think Jesus managed to react with compassion?

17. How well do you change your priorities from your own needs and desire to another’s?

18. One suggestion to move beyond scarcity mentality is to purposely feed generosity. One author writes, “Don’t just skim off the top with time, money or relationship.” How would this grow your trust in Jesus?

19. How would feeding generosity impact your influence on others?

20. Finish your FIFTEEN by asking God to give you the courage to feed your generosity, even when your scarcity mindset threatens your resolve.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

21. Reread Matthew 14:13-21. Jesus shows how to have enough to give. What does Jesus have the disciples do? What does he do?

22. Let’s break it down into four steps to having enough to give. 1. Come to Jesus. 2. Bring what you have. 3. Offer thanks. 4. Give it away. Why do you think coming into Jesus’ presence is the first step? Who makes the disciples aware of the opportunity to give?

23. Bring what you have. Read 1 Chronicles 29:10-14. Ultimately, everything we have comes from God. What has God given you that you see as insufficient or insignificant?

24. Offer thanks. Reread 1 Chronicles 29:10-14. What is the impact of giving on the people? David praises God for the ability to give. Have you ever considered the ability to give as a gift?

25. Give it away. Notice the process. Jesus says YOU give them something to eat. Then he gives them the food so they can turn around and give it to the people. This happens over and over until all are fed. Jesus could have called down manna or turned stones into bread. Why do you think he did it this way?
26. Finish your FIFTEEN by working through the four steps. Come into Jesus' presence. Think about what he has given you. Give thanks. Then ask him for the ability and opportunity to give. Do what he puts on your heart.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

27. Reread Matthew 14:13-21. Look at verse 20. What were the results of the giving?
28. What does this tell you about God?
29. God gives in unexpected and unpredictable ways, but his gifts are lavish and abundant. How have you experienced this?
30. How is Jesus the ultimate proof of this attribute of God?
31. When God's giving is not on your timetable or in the way you expected, what is your response? Why?
32. Abundance mentality is an adventure! It can be scary and challenging but it leads to joy and growth. It increases your power to influence the world around you for good. Read Proverbs 11:24-25, Matthew 10:8, 2 Corinthians 9:6-8. How would your life change if you wholeheartedly trusted God's provision? How would our church change if we wholeheartedly trusted God's provision?
33. End your FIFTEEN praising God for the ways he lavishes you with his love.

Week Five: *Choose to Serve*
John 13:1-17

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. When was a time that someone affirmed you by saying nice things about you? How did that make you feel?
2. Read John 13:1-17. What is the setting for this story?
3. Jesus is making some final points to his disciples before his death and resurrection. What are some of the things he asks them to do in this passage?
4. What good thing does Jesus say about his disciples (most of them, anyway!) in verse 10?
5. How do you think it felt to them to hear their master describe them in such a way?
6. Today, as you “choose to serve,” write down five people whom you are going to speak positive and true things about in order to encourage them.
7. Finish your FIFTEEN by praying for these five people, and ask God to reveal to you the true things he knows about them and to use you to affirm them today.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

8. When was a time that someone spent quality time with you—a memory that you especially treasure? What made that moment so memorable?
9. Read John 13:1-17. How much time do you think Jesus spent with his disciples at this dinner?
10. This was a long, ritualistic event in Jewish culture. What value did Jesus’ spending it with his disciples communicate to them?
11. Now read again John 13:1. How much time had Jesus spent with his followers during this ministry?
12. In what way was Jesus’ quality time an act of service to his disciples?

13. Today, as you “choose to serve,” think of one person who is important to you. Take a moment with your calendar to carve out some intentional time with them today—even if it means rearranging some things. This could be a spouse, or a child, or a friend you haven’t spoken with in a while.

14. End your FIFTEEN praying over your schedule, ask God to help you accomplish all those urgent things that feel pressing, even as you carve out space to serve someone with your time.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

15. What is the best gift anyone ever gave you? What made it so meaningful to you?

16. Read John 13:1-17. How well does it seem that the disciples understood what Jesus was doing at this dinner?

17. Peter especially seemed perplexed. Look again at verses 12 and 13. In a Lord/Servant relationship (or a Teacher/Student relationship), which direction does the gift-giving tend to go?

18. Why do you think Jesus’ actions were so confusing to his disciples?

19. Now look at verse 17. What gift does God promise to his followers?

20. Today, as you “choose to serve,” think about a relationship that is important to you. Ponder what you know about that person. What gift could you give them that would make them feel blessed and known?

21. As you finish your FIFTEEN, ask God to give you his wisdom and insight as you seek to bless someone in your life.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

22. This is often a hard thing to admit in our culture, but when was a time that you really just needed a hug?

23. Read John 13:1-17. What kind of physical touch happens in this scene?

24. Be honest with yourself: how comfortable would you be with letting the Lord of the Universe touch your feet?

25. Why would you struggle (or not struggle) with this concept? What makes physical touch such a complex concept in our culture?

26. Studies show again and again how crucial physical touch is to our well-being. Evaluate how much healthy physical touch you receive—is it more or less than what you might need? About right?
27. Today, as you “choose to serve,” make a point of offering (appropriate!) physical touch to the people you interact with today. Whether it’s a handshake or a side hug or making a point to kiss your spouse or child, find ways to encourage people with a comforting, connecting touch.
28. Conclude your FIFTEEN in prayer by thanking God for the intimacy he offered to us through Jesus Christ, a God who was willing to come down and touch people’s mortal, dirty feet!

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

29. When was a time someone did something for you that you couldn’t have done for yourself?
30. Read John 13:1-17. What service did Jesus offer to his apostles in this moment?
31. Why do you think Peter was so bothered by Jesus’ act of service?
32. How have you felt when people have served you? Blessed? Uncomfortable? Grateful or awkward?
33. Have the motivations or agenda of the person/group that served you changed how it made you feel about the act of service?
34. Today, as you “choose to serve,” think of someone you are not particularly close to but interact with regularly. What is something about their life that you’ve noticed they could use help with? Find a way to perform an act of service for that person, with no agenda or expectation other than wanting to bless them.
35. Close your FIFTEEN in prayer, asking God to use the choices you’ve made this week to truly bless those whom you are “choosing to serve”!