

Mark 14:1-11, The Lord's Friends and Adversaries
April 12, 1997
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Overview

1. 14:18-21 calls attention to Judas' betrayal as something written before-time; cf. John 13:18.
2. Reference is to Ps 41:9
3. Ps 41 has far broader applicability to this section. So consider it first.

A. Ps 41

1. Structure

- a) v.13 is conclusion to first book of the psalter.
- b) Repetition of prayer for mercy in vv.4,10-12
- c) Draws attention to descriptions of two groups of people in 1-3, 5-9
 - 1) 5-9, the enemies of the Psalmist (9, quoted of Judas (Mark 14:18,21; John 13:18) who abuse him in his illness
 - 2) 1-3, someone who has had mercy on him

2. The Psalmist's state

- a) Ill, 8; prayer for healing in 4; visits of enemies in 6; their desire for his death in 5.
- b) 4 suggests that this illness results from his sin. "For" does not give the motive for God's forgiveness, but the occasion of it: I need your healing, because I have sinned against you.
- c) Yet note the contrast with v.12, "mine integrity." Seems entirely opposite to the confession of sin in v.4.
 - 1) *** Ps 26:1,11, contrasts David with the wicked
 - 2) Pr 19:1, opp. "perverse in lips"
 - 3) Pr 20:7, characteristic of the "just man"
 - 4) Pr 28:6 opp. "perverse in ways"
 - 5) Ps 7:8, // "righteousness"
- d) How to resolve this paradox of "the integrity of the sinner"? How can someone who recognizes that he is suffering for sin, plead for God's mercy on the grounds of his integrity?
 - 1) Isa 53:4-6
 - 2) 2 Cor 5:21
 - 3) John 1:29

3. Thus we recognize, as the Lord says concerning v.9, that the Psalm is Messianic. On this basis we can draw out the interpretation of its four sections. Three of these find expression in Mark 14, the other in Mark 16.

- a) 4, the suffering of the Psalmist: the Lord's agony in bearing our sin. Agony in the garden, 33-36.

- b) 5-9, the opposition:
 - 1) 5-8, his enemies: the chief priests, 1-2
 - 2) 9, his friend: Judas, 10-11
- c) 1-3, by contrast with them, the comfort offered him by the righteous: the anointing in Bethany, 3-9
- d) 10-12, the triumph of his resurrection and his vindication as righteous. Ch. 16.

The Psalm sets us up to consider the two different attitudes toward the Lord, one of love and compassion in his suffering, the other of malice. The implied challenge to us is to see which side each of us is on.

B. 1-2, Malice of the Religious Leaders

1. The time: passover, celebrating the Lord's deliverance of Israel from bondage under Pharaoh.
2. Contrast two groups
 - a) Chief priests and scribes, who should have known and honored the Scriptures most closely of all, here plot the death of their own Messiah "by craft," deceit. Cf. Ps 24:4; 32:2; 34:13. They are the ones pictured in Ps 41:5-8.
 - b) The multitudes, the common people, who support the Lord. These are the ones blessed in Ps. 41:1-3.
 - c) *Application:* Beware organized religion and official clergy! True piety flourishes among the common people.

C. 10-11, Betrayal by Judas

For the moment, skip down to v.10 to pick up the other main adversary, Judas.

1. Because they fear the crowd, they need someone who can lead them to the Lord while he is away from the city.
2. Judas' motive may have been to force the Lord's hand into declaring himself as Messiah; but Luke (22:3) and John (13:2) both trace the defection to the work of Satan in Judas.
3. Thus is fulfilled Ps 41:9.

D. 3-9, Anointing at Simon's House

Surrounded by references to the unjust adversaries of Ps 41:5-9, we have a beautiful picture drawn from 41:1-3.

1. 3, the offering. A costly, fragrant offering of love to the Lord. Mary, the one who sat attentively at the Lord's feet, appears to be the only one who has taken seriously his predictions of his coming death (8:31; 9:31; 10:34).
2. 4-5, the protest. The value of the ointment should have been used for "the poor" (plural)

- a) Recalls Ps 41:1, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor."
(singular)
- b) But who is "the poor" (singular; LXX) in the Psalms?
 - 1) Ps 22:24, "the afflicted," in the most detailed prophecy of Christ's death we have in the Psalter
 - 2) Ps 69:29, the one who was given gall to drink (v.21).
 - 3) 2 Cor. 8:9 describes our Lord explicitly as the one who became poor for us.
- c) Summary: The Lord Jesus in his earthly humiliation is the archetype of the righteous poor, the godly man persecuted without cause by the wicked. The world seeks to repair the plight of the poor in general (plural); the Scriptures enjoin care of the individual righteous poor person.

3. 6-9, the Lord's defense of her.

- a) v.7, twofold contrast.
 - 1) "the poor" (plural) vs. "me" (singular). The issue is not economic state per se, but the righteousness that is often (but not always) associated with it.
 - 2) "always" vs. "not always." The time of his humiliation, of his poverty, is almost at an end; this touching gesture, fulfilling Ps. 41, will soon be impossible.
- b) 8, interprets her deed in the light of his coming death.
- c) 9, promise of worldwide praise for her: cf. Ps 41:2, "he shall be blessed upon the earth."