

# Scene 1 Healing presence

We are sometimes guilty of focusing so much on the immediate needs around us (particularly in the crisis of pandemic), that we forget to be still and be present with Jesus. We consider the importance of finding a healthy balance of 'being' and 'doing'. Might we be in need of a healing touch from Jesus ourselves?

## Simon's house – Mark 14.3-9

While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. But some were there who said to one another in anger, 'Why was the ointment wasted in this way? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor.' And they scolded her. But Jesus said, 'Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.'



## Voices

### Here Minister experiencing burnout

It's been a long year. I never imagined when all of this started last March that I'd still be organising distanced worship and Zoom meetings. It's incredible how far we've come to be honest, but Lord, I'm so tired. My working week has become all about the admin – finding worship songs without copyright restrictions, recording video messages for those who are shielding, sending out Zoom links left, right and centre for meetings I can normally just rock up to and see other human beings face to face. The spirituality has gone out of the window. I'm drained. I thrive on company, on contact. My sermons build in enthusiasm when I feel the body language lift in the people around me, the Holy Spirit makes me buoyant as the words trip out – that doesn't happen so much on a screen. I'm proud of the congregations for rolling with the changes (mostly), for turning up online when they'd rather be in church, for phoning one another and showing love despite the circumstances. But Lord, I'm tired. I miss having the energy to pray, to read and study for my own fulfilment. I miss spending time with Jesus, there's nothing else like it.

### There The woman who anointed Jesus

I've never experienced anything like this. A rowdy room full of chatter and activity, that went quiet when I came in and moved towards Jesus. I was holding the jar close to my chest – I was afraid of dropping it or that someone might grab it. It was so quiet when I knelt at his feet. He looked at me – he's got bright, warm eyes. I felt he could see right inside me, it was like he knew everything about me. I broke the jar and bathed his forehead with ointment. The sweet smell went all round the room. I'd never felt so close to someone, even my family – this closeness, I felt I was touching the face of God. He closed his eyes but it still felt as if he was looking at me. I forgot there was anyone else there, everything I'd thought or worried about during the day vanished, there was just me and him. I felt so good, like a weight had been lifted. I hadn't felt so peaceful for years. I was whole, connected, loved. It was like nothing else.

## Conversation and reflection

- 1 What has your experience of 'being' and 'doing' been like throughout the months of pandemic? Have you found time to spend with Jesus during the past weeks and months?
- 2 Consider the atmosphere in the room when Jesus was anointed by the woman at Bethany. What kind of emotions and conversations can you imagine going on, and where would you be in the scene?
- 3 How might we be more mindful about self-care in the coming weeks and months, allowing Jesus to restore and heal us through his presence?

## Listen

[Alabasta](#), Rend Collective

[Lord, we come to ask your healing](#) recorded by at St Laurence's Church, Chorley

## Prayer action

Beforehand, ask people to find a fragrant hand cream, perfume or essential oil, or something else pleasant (e.g. fresh herbs) to rub into their hands and smell.

Invite each person to rub fragrant ointment into their hands and smell it, as you pray together:

Loving God, this time is a struggle in so many ways, but help us to spare the time and energy to consider those going through more immediate peril and desperation. We pray for those who have to flee from places of insecurity and fear, and the places that receive them. Help us to be open-hearted, and proactive in our response to need on our doorsteps. Amen.

## Follow-up activity

Make space each day this week to sit with Jesus and talk or listen. You could light a candle to mark your time together, and use a photo or statue which reminds you of peace and stillness.