

In the days preceding Jesus betrayal, arrest and crucifixion, we are given a wonderful picture of absolute, extravagant love demonstrated by someone who had no right in the disciples' minds to do so.

Firstly, she was a woman flouting the cultural barriers of the day, secondly, she was uninvited, not considered worthy to be there. And thirdly, she took what could only be used once and squandered it.

Her most prized possession, in our terms - her nest egg, her "rainy day" fund, gone in one beautiful act of extravagant love.

Nothing was worth holding on to in comparison with expressing her love, her pure, unfettered gratitude to the One who was Himself pure Love.

And beside her is Judas, being inflamed with rage and disappointment as he heard Jesus tenderly lifting this act up as a memorial for all time .

Both of them gave away all they had. The woman gave up her most prized earthly possession out of extravagant love for her Saviour.

Judas gave away his eternal soul out of extreme disappointment in the actions of the One he believed had let them all down.

How does this impact us today?

Will we use our eyesight in praying, to place our expectations of how Jesus should be acting in how we pray and end up angry and disappointed?

Or will we pour out all we have in extravagant love to our Saviour, worshipping, adoring and trusting Him despite the death and chaos that continues around us?

I was led to this yesterday morning and I have always loved the sacrifice of the alabaster box and the immensely expensive ointment but what struck me yesterday was the reason Judas did what he did. I'd never seen it so deeply before.

The disappointment that welled up in him and overflowed in such ice cold anger that caused him to storm off to the Jewish leaders was so overwhelming. He had placed his expectation of what Jesus was going to do above all else, this was his all, his everything, that Jesus was the all conquering King who was going to set up his kingdom right there, right then and he, Judas, would be one of the top notch rulers. It was this stultifying disappointment that was the driving force for the betrayal and I saw how it parallels us today.

How easy it is for us to put our expectations of how Jesus needs to act now, what we believe He needs to do, when He needs to do it and all because WE are doing the praying. When we see all the death, all the chaos and hear all the dire predictions about economic disaster because of this worldwide plague, our desire, our expectation is that Jesus can and should rid the world of the infection, the death and the chaos, after all we are told to pray. But right from the start of this year, God has been reminding us that He, God, is the only One with 2020 vision so our prayers have to come from that source, not the myopic eyesight that we have.

I am so aware that I just do not want in any way, shape or form to place my expectation as the basis for my prayers, to pray for what my desire is, so that I end up disappointed and angry.

And this morning, I realised, when Jesus reproved Peter for cutting off the servant's ear and said "this isn't the way," Judas was there hearing it, and I wonder if Jesus looked at him with so much love and sorrow in His eyes. And

later, did Judas hear Jesus say "if My Kingdom were of this world then my servants would fight", I don't know but I think maybe he did. And whether he again saw the love and sorrow in Jesus' eyes?

My heart is crying out that I don't want, through pride or fear or anything else, to know that disappointment and that sorrow, just because I place my expectations upon my Saviour.

It's really walloped me, that this Easter time of being physically apart from our church families, of hiding under God's wings, is so precious and so beautiful, and so necessary. This is God's gift to us, the time, the opportunity to draw closer to Him, to feel His Heartbeat and know His Love more deeply.

As Jesus said, this is our Father's Cup for us to be drinking now, don't fight it.