

## **“In a World Restarting: Getting our Bearing Coming out of Chaos”**

### **Welcome to your Small Group – Week 4**

Thanks for taking the time once again to come together this week! You just have one more session after this one. We are in the 2<sup>nd</sup> of three weeks thinking about how we “Transform, Revive & Heal”, ourselves, our community, and our world, through our giving!

Today’s text and questions invite us to consider how we use our financial resources and what discipleship means. Dr. Matt Skinner of Luther Seminary is making these 8-10 min. videos for us each week to introduce us to Sunday’s Gospel story, but the last one is next week as our small groups end. He will be with us again in the new year to guide us through some text from Luke.

*+ **NOTE:** Each week we’ll suggest a question to open with, then turn to the Bible text for the week (with the video and a question from Dr. Skinner), and then suggest a few other questions to discuss as you ponder what it means for you to get your “bearings coming out of chaos”. Feel free to choose the questions that resonate most with your group, in any order you like. If you have time for all, great, but no worries if you don’t.*

**Check-in:** If you’d like, do these opening minutes in 2’s and share a ‘high’ or a ‘low’ from this past week with your partner.

### **Bible reading this week: Mark 14:3-9**

Jesus was at Bethany, a guest of Simon the Leper. While he was eating dinner, a woman came up carrying a bottle of very expensive perfume. Opening the bottle, she poured it on his head. Some of the guests became furious among themselves. “That’s criminal! A sheer waste! This perfume could have been sold for well over a year’s wages and handed out to the poor.” They swelled up in anger, nearly bursting with indignation over her.

But Jesus said, “Let her alone. Why are you giving her a hard time? She has just done something wonderfully significant for me. You will have the poor with you every day for the rest of your lives. Whenever you feel like it, you can do something for them. Not so with me. She did what she could when she could—she pre-anointed my body for burial. And you can be sure that wherever in the whole world the Message is preached, what she just did is going to be talked about admiringly.”

### **From Dr. Skinner’s video...**

Dr. Skinner points out that right after this story, we move into Holy Week and the story of Judas betraying Jesus for a few pieces of silver. These 2 stories have therefore been contrasted and it has been said that “Judas gives up Jesus for money, whereas this woman gives up money for Jesus.” Dr. Skinner said, “Anything we do needs to flow from the reality of the cross of Jesus. This is where we discover who Jesus really is.” If this is true (and I believe it is!), who is Jesus?

Dr. Skinner talks about us being a “cross-shaped people”. What does that mean to you?

What does that look like? His question to us this week is: How does your thinking about the church’s mission, and your own vocation---and how you spend your money, how you serve your neighbor---how does that lift up the death of Jesus?

## Coming out of chaos, ponder together:

1. At Westwood, we talk to our kids about how we use our money for 3 things: Sharing, Saving and Spending. All 3 are good; none are “wrong” ...but we need to find a healthy and faithful balance. We all have our own ‘money stories’... When you think of how you were raised, the dominant message about money in your home as you were growing up, was it more about: SHARING (there’s enough to go around, so we can give some away and pay it forward), or SAVING (put it away for a rainy day, be practical), or SPENDING (don’t worry about it, we can buy what we want)? What is the dominant message/s around money that you live by today? If it’s different than how you were raised, what changed that? Which one of these 3 is hardest for you to do? ...and easiest?
2. If our church really got a million more dollars in our budget, as I’d mused about in my sermon, what would you suggest we do with it? Why?
3. In “The Message” translation that I read on Sunday, in response to the people around the table who were giving the woman a bad time for spending a whole year’s worth of wages on this oil she dumped over Jesus’ head, his response was, “She did what she could, when she could.” How do you hear that statement, i.e. what does that mean to you?

### Close with prayer:

If someone is comfortable closing with prayer, please do that....and/or pray together the Prayer of Good Courage.

*O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*