

Mark 14:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

Analysis

For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence (τριακοσίων δηναρίων, triakosion denariōn)—approximately one year's wages for a laborer, emphasizing the extravagance of the anointing. The critics' calculation reveals their focus on economic utility over worship's intrinsic worth.

And have been given to the poor—John's Gospel identifies Judas Iscariot as the primary objector (John 12:4-6), noting his role as treasurer and thief. The concern for the poor, while appearing righteous, masked greed and a failure to recognize Christ's impending death. Jesus would later rebuke this misdirected piety: **"The poor you have with you always"** (v.7), affirming that this unique moment of preparing His body for burial transcended even charitable duty. **They murmured against her** (ἐνεβριμῶντο, enebrimōnto)—literally "snorted with anger," expressing harsh, indignant criticism of the woman's devotion.

Historical Context

This anointing occurred in Bethany at Simon the leper's house, just days before Passover (AD 30). A denarius was a day's wage (Matthew 20:2), making 300 denarii nearly a year's earnings—a sum highlighting both the woman's sacrificial love and the disciples' shock. Mark's account emphasizes their collective disapproval, while John reveals Judas as the instigator, whose betrayal for 30 pieces of silver would soon follow.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. When has concern for 'practical ministry' caused you to miss opportunities for extravagant worship of Christ?
2. How does this passage challenge the false dichotomy between worship and service to the poor?

Interlinear Text

ἡδύνατο	γὰρ	τοῦτο	πραθῆναι	ἐπάνω	τριακοσίων
might	For	it	have been sold	for more than	three hundred
G1410	G1063	G5124	G4097	G1883	G5145
δηναρίων	καὶ	δοθῆναι	τοῖς	πτωχοῖς·	καὶ
pence	And	have been given	to the poor	And	
G1220	G2532	G1325	G3588	G4434	G2532
ἐνεβριμῶντο	αὐτῇ				
they murmured against	her				
G1690	G846				

Additional Cross-References

John 13:29 (Parallel theme): For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.