

Mark 14:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For ye have the poor with you always, and whosoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.

Analysis

For ye have the poor with you always—Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 15:11, not to justify indifference toward poverty, but to establish the unique significance of this moment. The phrase πάντοτε (pantote, "always") underscores the ongoing nature of poverty in a fallen world and the perpetual call to compassion.

But me ye have not always—Christ identifies this woman's anointing as a prophetic preparation for His burial (v. 8). The temporal limitation of His physical presence demands recognition of this kairos moment. Against Judas's feigned concern for the poor (John 12:6), Jesus vindicates costly worship. The contrast isn't poor versus Christ, but the permanence of social obligation versus the once-for-all opportunity to honor Him before the cross. True love for the poor flows from devotion to Christ, not in competition with it.

Historical Context

This exchange occurs at Simon the leper's house in Bethany, two days before Passover (v. 1). The woman's extravagant act—breaking an alabaster flask of pure nard worth 300 denarii (a year's wages)—provoked indignation from disciples who saw it as wasteful. Jesus's response reorients their understanding of worship's priority while affirming Deuteronomy's mandate to care for the poor.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's defense of this woman challenge modern utilitarian calculations that dismiss 'wasteful' worship?
2. In what ways might legitimate concern for the poor become a shield for avoiding costly personal devotion to Christ?

Interlinear Text

πάντοτε	γὰρ	τοὺς	πτωχοὺς	ἔχετε	μεθ'	έαυτῶν	καὶ
always	For	G3588	the poor	ye have	with	you	and
G3842	G1063		G4434	G2192	G3326	G1438	G2532
ὅταν	θέλητε	δύνασθε	αὐτούς	εὖ	ποιῆσαι	έμε	δὲ
whenever	ye will	ye may	them	good	do	me	but
G3752	G2309	G1410	G846	G2095	G4160	G1691	G1161
οὐ	πάντοτε	ἔχετε					
not	always	ye have					
G3756	G3842	G2192					

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 15:11 (Parallel theme): For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.

Matthew 26:11 (Parallel theme): For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.

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