Devotional Reflection, Thursday, July 16, 2026
Proper 10, The week of the seventh Sunday after Pentecost
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Having Spiritual Timing

Key phrases for reflection from today's reading:
6 Now while Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, 7a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, and she poured it on his head as he sat at the table. 8But when the disciples saw it, they were angry. . . . 10But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, 'Why do you trouble the woman? She has performed a good service for me. 11For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. 12By pouring this ointment on my body she has prepared me for burial.

You will find the full text of today's Gospel at the end of this reflection.

Daily Office Lectionary Readings (*BCP,* 975)
AM Psalm 37:1-18; PM Psalm 37:19-42
Joshua 3:14-4:7; Rom. 12:1-8; Matt. 26:1-16

Today we celebrate the Feast of "The Righteous Gentiles.". (See below.)

David's Reflections

Ted Loder in his creative book of prayers, *Guerrillas of Grace*, begins one prayer in this way.
GRANT ME YOUR SENSE OF TIMING
O God of all season and senses,
Grant me your sense of timing*

The unnamed woman at Bethany was an ordinary person, not of the religious elite. Nonetheless, she had a sense of timing; she sensed that Jesus' rejection was near, that it actually would be during Passover. To purchase the ointment, she had spent perhaps the equivalent of a full year's wages for a laborer. Her intense devotion prompted her to lavish that ointment on Jesus in anticipation of his death.

Contrast her extravagant, timely devotion with the response of the disciples. They reacted negatively, perhaps to the presence and the unorthodox conduct of a woman in that social setting. Can you imagine them murmuring off to the side among themselves while the anointing is taking place, wondering in whispers about the woman's daring boundary violation and questioning such a wasteful action? Surely such should be sold and given the poor, under most circumstances a noble sentiment, but not in this moment.

Jesus brought their whispered complaints into the light by challenging their criticisms. At the heart of his affirmation, Jesus mentioned her sense of timing. None of them had a fix on the moment, on what was about to happen, in spite of his warnings about his impending betrayal and crucifixion—three predictions recorded in Mark. They could perform charitable acts to benefit the poor on any day of the week, but this chance to acknowledge Jesus' imminent death and to encourage him was unique. The woman had seized that moment. Jesus said that in retrospect her action would be applauded wherever the Gospel was preached, as in this devotional thought. The woman was grieving Jesus' coming death, seeking to encourage and comfort.

With which of these characters around Jesus do you and I most identify? Which most resembles our prominent response pattern to the person and mission of Jesus? We would like to think the woman's, of course. But, there's something of the disciples' response in us, that blindness arising out of pragmatism, that practicality that measures devotion's responses, that tendency to be negative about the discipleship of others.

Just how free are we to be impractical, to see through the obscuring cloud of pragmatic concerns? How much of the love of God will we allow to flow through us in unorthodox actions? How impervious are we to the murmurings and disapproval of the pragmatic and reasonable, those one clergy friend of mine called “the green eye-shade bean counters.”

How might we express our love for Christ today in an act both extravagant and irrational but urged by an inward sense of timing and connected to our context?

*Ted Loder, *Guerrillas of Grace: Prayers for the Battle* (Minneapolis:Augsburg/Fortress, 2005), p. 136.

Collect of the Day, Proper 10, the week of the seventh Sunday after Pentecost
O Lord, mercifully receive the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant that they may know and understand what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to accomplish them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. ***Amen.*** (BCP, 231)

Today we celebrate the Feast of "The Righteous Gentiles."
http://satucket.com/lectionary/righteous_gentiles.htm

Collect of the Feast of the Righteous Gentiles
Lord of the Exodus, who delivers your people with a strong hand and a mighty arm: Strengthen your Church with the examples of the Righteous Gentiles of World War II to defy oppression for the rescue of the innocent; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

A Collect for Protection
O God, the life of all who live, the light of the faithful, the strength of those who labor, and the repose of the dead: We thank you for the blessings of the day that is past, and humbly ask for your protection through the coming night. Bring us in safety to the morning hours; through him who died and rose again for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.* (BCP, 124)

For a child not yet baptized
O eternal God, you have promised to be a father to a thousand generations of those who love and fear you: Bless this child and preserve his/her life; receive and enable *him* to receive you, that through the Sacrament of Baptism *he* may become the child of God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (BCP, 444)

In the Order of Worship for Evening
Almighty, everlasting God, let our prayer in your sight be as incense, the lifting up of our hands as the evening sacrifice. Give us grace to behold you, present in your Word and Sacraments, and to recognize you in the lives of those around us. Stir up in us the

flame of that love which burned in the heart of your Son as he bore his passion, and let it burn in us to eternal life and to the ages of ages. *Amen*. (BCP, 113)

A Collect for Mission
O God of all the nations of the earth: Remember the multitudes who have been created in your image but have not known the redeeming work of our Savior Jesus Christ; and grant that, by the prayers and labors of your holy Church, they may be brought to know and worship you as you have been revealed in your Son; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (BCP, 257)

Daily Office Gospel, Matthew 26:1-16
26:1When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, 2'You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.' 3Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, 4and they conspired to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. 5But they said, 'Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people.'

6 Now while Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, 7a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, and she poured it on his head as he sat at the table. 8But when the disciples saw it, they were angry and said, 'Why this waste? 9For this ointment could have been sold for a large sum, and the money given to the poor.' 10But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, 'Why do you trouble the woman? She has performed a good service for me. 11For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. 12By pouring this ointment on my body she has prepared me for burial. 13Truly I tell you, wherever this good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.'

14 Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests 15and said, 'What will you give me if I betray him to you?' They paid him thirty pieces of silver. 16And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

Daily Offices in the Book of Common Prayer

Morning Prayer, Rite 2, page 75, *The Book of Common Prayer*
Noonday Prayer, page 103, *Book of Common Prayer*
Order of Worship for Evening (Vespers), p 109, *Book of Common Prayer*
Evening Prayer, Rite 2, page 115, *Book of Common Prayer*
Compline (Night Prayer), page 127, *Book of Common Prayer*
Daily Devotionals, page 136, *Book of Common Prayer*