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MARK 14:1-11

BROKEN AND POURED OUT

Part One: The Setting

Mark 14:1-2 After two days was the feast of the Passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people.

Note: The Contrast

The opening and closing details of this event in Christ's life, show how dark those last hours were. The venom of the Sadducees and the hatred of their religion opens the text. The sinister and dark Judas closes the section. Between those two shines a bright light. A woman who loved so much she gave her best to Jesus.

And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.

First: Was it Coincidence or Confidence?

We know very little of this supper. It is sure that this could not be the same event as in Luke 7 when the sinful woman anointed Jesus. But could it be as some suggest, that this Simon is the father of Mary, Martha and Lazarus? The Scriptures are silent but that possibility exists. So possibly in her family home, Mary who three times sat at Jesus feet [Lk 10:39; Jn 11:32; 12:3] is giving Him her best. Sitting at the feet of Jesus was no Coincidence, it was her place of Confidence.

John tells us this was a pound or about 12 ounces of this precious ointment. Nard was the costliest of the perfumes of Christ's day. Some of the rare ingredients were only found on the steppes of the distant Himalayas. As the Scripture records in Mk 14:5, the nard was worth a years wages. Such perfume was reserved in that day for royalty and the super rich. That makes this a most moving scene in our Lord's life.

Second, was it merely Sufficient or was it Sacrificial?

Let the thought of a whole years wages expensed in one moment settle on your mind. The truth is that a few drops would have been sufficient. This was the custom, a guest entered, their feet were washed by a servant. Then as a token of hospitality, a few drops were sprinkled on them of oil. A few drops of Her nard would have made the customary greeting and anointing so memorable and so special. A few drops? No she could not bear to think of it. It was all she would give. No less than a broken and poured out treasure would be her offering to the one she loved. It was not merely a Sufficient offering it must be a Sacrificial one!

Thirdly, is it just a Nice story or a challenge to us?

How often we give a nice offering to Jesus. Out of the abundance of our time, talents and treasure. But, have you ever lavished all you have on Jesus? The reason we remember this woman is she gave it all to Him.

Part Two: The Story

Lets remember three truths from the three scenes of this special story:

1. The Opinion of the Observers = Extravagant and Wasteful
2. The Motivation of Mary = Love and Adoration
3. The Commendation of Christ = Sacrifice and Ministry

Scene One The Opinion of the Observers = Mary was Extravagant and Wasteful

Mark 14:4-5 “And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.”

Two facts come to the forefront:

Mary's gift was EXTRAVAGANT, and Mary's gift was a WASTE.

Mary's gift was EXTRAVAGANT to them.

What prompts such extravagance? Love in this case. “Prudence and parsimony, with cold calculation, would dictate how much (or how little) would be sufficient for the occasion. To them it was a matter of profit and loss. To Mary it was the supreme moment of her life, the moment when she avowed her pure love for her Lord.”¹

Think of this, if Mary had only sprinkled the few drops that was customary, this account would not have touched hearts for centuries, even to this day. We would not have an example that Christ said would be remembered and followed for all of time. Let me ask you:

- Do we calculate precisely our gifts to Jesus? Are they a careful measure of the time, strength and money we can spare without too much upset to our plans, goals and lifestyles ?
- Do you think Jesus' heart aches for some to love Him so profusely today? Does He look for the abandon of sacrificial love He saw in Mary? Can He find such love today? Do we love that way?

Mary's gift was WASTE to them.

Just think of how many poor people could have been fed for this amount! That was the disciples point of view. Yes, their ideals were noble. Poor do need to be fed. but they missed the timing.

Jesus was going. No one had sat long enough at His feet to catch that. Except Mary. That was her favorite spot, His feet. And she heard Him say He was leaving, the Cross loomed.

¹ J. Oswald Sanders. *Spiritual Discipleship*, p. 70.

And she was going to prepare Him with the gift of love she had prepared. What about giving Him something that would last more than a day?

Yes, these were the criticisms Mary faced. She had many options:

1. She could have saved the nard for her golden years, to retire on.
2. She could have sold it and given some to the Lord and the rest for herself.
3. She could have used it to enhance her own personal beauty. Are we guilty of hoarding Christ's gifts for our own advantage and not to advance His cause?
4. She might have saved it until it was too late and Jesus was no longer there to have it lavished upon Him.

But she chooses to do none of the above, she lavishes her best, her only -- on the One she loves so deeply. We can hear their words today: What a waste!

- *What a waste! That was what Henry Martyn's friends said. When this Cambridge mathematics scholar who won the highest honors in Math in the world, then left it all behind to go to translate the Bible into 3 eastern languages and then die for Christ in the end. What a waste! He could have stayed in safe England and maybe even won the Nobel prize. Was it a waste?*
- *What a waste! That what William Borden's friends said when he distributed the family fortune he inherited to Christian work. What a waste! When he left for the mission field and prepared to reach the Moslems for Christ. What a waste! When he died before he ever got to preach, write a message or lead a Moslem to Jesus. Yet, Borden of Yale, a biography of his life has been used to literally influence thousands to go to the mission field. Was it a waste?*

How much have we experienced this extravagant, wasteful lavishing of our lives, our children, our time, our treasures, our best -- upon Jesus. Simply because we love Him. What does Paul say?

2 Corinthians 9:6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. (KJV)

Scene Two: The Motivation of Mary = It was Pure Love and Adoration

v. 6-9 And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whenever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, *this* also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her. (KJV)

Look at the setting Mary acted with in. There are three main characters:

- Simon the Leper a portrait of sin, decay, uncleanness and impurity. He is a picture of a sinner who is forgiven.
- Mary a portrait of love and devotion. She is a picture of a worshiper who is serving.
- Jesus in the shadow of the cross and still serving. He is a picture of love that is sacrificing.

But why do we remember Mary after so long? Because of three profound facts:

1. Because she offered an outward demonstration of an inward devotion. Do you have an inward devotion for Christ. What ever we love we are devoted to! What are you sacrificing for? What consumes your time, strength and resources?
2. Because she made a permanent investment out of a fragile and transient commodity. Did you know our time, our life, our breath are all very fragile? They fly away so swiftly. In a land of wars and quakes she had preserved an heirloom. But instead of sheltering it for the earth, she crushed it so it would last forever...
3. Because she focused her outpoured love and devotion on the right target. Paul said 'I press toward the mark'. The writer of Hebrews said 'these all died in faith...looking for a city.' What is the target or goal that you are aiming your life at? What are you offering to Jesus this holiday season? What will remain of your life 100 years from today?

What a contrast she was to those who criticized her. They knew the price of everything, but the value of nothing!

Scene Three: The Commendation of Christ = He saw Sacrifice and Ministry

v. 6-9 And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, *this* also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her. (KJV)

Jesus sharply rebuked the disciples and strongly commended Mary. In this dark hour facing the cross Jesus longed for someone who would lavish their love on Him. And in Mary He found such love. The disciples missed the point at that time. They were still figuring and had stopped worshipping. They were insensitive to a heart poured out and a Savior accepting.

“She did what she could” as a woman there were so many things she could not do, but this is the one no one could keep her back from.

“Throughout the world” expresses the strong confidence Christ had the disciples would see this loving sacrifice for what it was. And, that they would take the message of the Savior so beloved, to every corner of the globe. We are the fruit of their effort. We still can smell the fragrance of her broken and poured out perfume today.

Matthew 25:23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. (KJV)

Have we ever offered to Jesus our best, our dearest and costliest treasure?

Has it been a jar of perfume spilled all over Him because of an inexpressible love and devotion?

This is His desire, more than all our service, He longs for the pure love of sacrificial, broken and poured out extravagance.