

## The Good Work of Wasted Ointment

In Mark 14:3-9, a woman anoints Jesus with expensive perfume, a lavish act that some disciples criticize as wasteful.

- Jesus defends her action, calling it a beautiful thing done in preparation for his burial.
- Declaring that **her deed will be remembered** wherever the gospel is preached.

### Mark 14:3-9 - The Anointing at Bethany

3 And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an **alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard**. Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head. 4 But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, “***Why was this fragrant oil wasted?*** 5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.” And they criticized her sharply.

6 But Jesus said, “Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? **She has done a good work for Me.** 7 For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. 8 She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. 9 Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.”

**Mark 14:3-4 CEV** - Jesus was eating in Bethany at the home of Simon, who once had leprosy, when a woman came in with a very **expensive bottle of sweet-smelling perfume**. After breaking it open, she poured the perfume on Jesus' head. 4 This made some of the guests angry, and they complained, “**Why such a waste?**

- Jesus **eating** at Simon the Leper's house, demonstrating His willingness to associate with those considered out-casts and showing His compassion...
- It also highlights **the redemptive power of Jesus**, as Simon, a former leper, is now hosting a meal.

**Setting:** Jesus is in Bethany, at the home of Simon the leper, when a woman enters, carrying an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume.

**Anointing:** *She breaks the jar and pours the perfume on Jesus' head.*

**Criticism:** Some disciples, **particularly Judas**, object to this act, suggesting the perfume could have been sold and the money given to the poor.

**Jesus' Defense:** Jesus rebukes the disciples, stating that the woman has done a beautiful thing by anointing him for his burial, and that her act will be remembered.

**The Significance:** Jesus' words highlight the woman's deep love and devotion, recognizing her act as a symbolic preparation for his upcoming death and burial. The anointing with perfume was a customary practice for preparing a body for burial, and **Jesus interprets the woman's action in this context**.

**The Memory:** Jesus emphasizes that her deed will be recounted wherever the gospel is preached, signifying **its enduring importance** and the woman's place in the narrative of Jesus' life and ministry.

**Contrasting Perspectives:** The passage contrasts the woman's selfless act of worship with the disciples' focus on practical concerns and social justice. It also reveals **Jesus' unique perspective**, valuing the woman's devotion even when it seems extravaqant or unconventional.

**With every sacrifice that is offered, there is a sense of hope that accompanies that sacrifice, no matter what it is!**

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**The very event for the supper** appears to have been **motivated by gratitude** that Simon had for Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead.

While they are silently eating the meal, **a woman approaches the Lord**. This woman was **Mary**, the sister of Lazarus and Martha.

**John 12:2-3** - 2 There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. 3 **Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed** the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

She, without uttering a word, comes with a vessel that has a long, narrow neck that could be easily broken or crushed, is broken and the Lord is anointed.

**William Barclay refers to this act as “an oasis of sweetness in the desert of bitterness.”**

**Mary is literally preparing Him for His burial John 12:7-8** But Jesus said, “Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. 8 For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always.”

**The disciples had been around and had heard all His words and yet it never connected with him.**

- **How is that Mary “knew” what was going to happen to Him?**
- **The clue is to look at the place where she was.**

**Luke 7:37-38** - And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, 38 and **standing behind him at his feet**, weeping, she began to **wet his feet** with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment.

- **She is at the feet of Jesus**, anointing Him and wiping His feet with her hair

**Luke 10:39-40** - 39 And she had a sister called Mary, **who sat at the Lord's feet** and listened to his teaching. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.”

- **She is at the feet of Jesus**, when Martha is preparing supper in their home.

**John 11:2** - It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and **wiped His feet with her hair**, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

- **She is at the feet of Jesus** when Lazarus has died.

**In all three of these times that Mary is specifically mentioned to have been in the presence of Jesus, she is at His feet.**

- **There is a posture and position that comes with real spiritual hunger.**

**Proverbs 16:19** - You are better off to be humble and poor than to get rich from what you take by force.

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**Reaction to the Anointing - The silence is shattered by murmuring disciples.  
“Why was this fragrant oil wasted?”**

**The Criticism, “Why this waste?!”** Particularly Judas objected to this act, suggesting the perfume could have been *sold and the money given to the poor.*

- These are the words that come from a man who has **lived all his life without really learning very much at all.**
- Little did he realize that there is much, ***in fact a great chasm or abyss that exists*** between wasting and giving.

**Mary did not waste it, she gave it!**

**There will always be a cost involved in consecration or being “Set-Apart!”**

- No matter how pure, holy, or sacred the act may be:
- There will be those who question & accuse *the person who goes beyond.*
- Much comes from worship that is given.
- Worship is not coerced, or demanded, but is *spontaneous and real.*
- “Let her alone!” *These words came from the mouth of the Lord!*
- The words are calm, but *the command is unmistakable.*

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**A Memorial to Broken Things – “Wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.”**

**There are memorials that come with things that are broken:**

- Crushed grains and wheat **become bread that sustains us.**
- Bruised plants give up substances **that help us to heal.**
- Broken pitchers helped **Gideon to defeat his foes.**
- It was a wasted barrel and empty cruse that *the prophet of God was sustained.*
- It was on the boards and broken pieces of the ship ***that Paul and his companions were saved.***
- Although no bone of the Lord was broken, **it was His broken life that brought salvation to those who needed it.**
- It was by the scattering of the early Church that **the Gentiles were saved.**

***The broken parts of life sometimes yield the greatest motives for service to God.***

- It became a memorial in the eyes of God.
- The memorials of God *are far more lasting* than are the memorials of man.

That will be the catch of life, some memorials are for God and others for men.

Those who offer memorials will always have to understand that **Mark's narrative displays to us two distinct classes: The Grippers and the Givers!!!!**

- The griper always hangs himself - Yikes Judas...
- Not with rope but does so with there words.
- The giver gives themselves immortality or eternal life!

**"Why this waste?"**

There is always imminent danger when the cost of love is attempted to be calculated. This precious perfume **was not wasted**.

- Judas had the perception that allowed him to understand the price Of -
- The perfume but not the purpose of the perfume.

**This perception would dog his trail –**

- Because later *he would understand the price of blood* –
- But never grasp the beauty and power of love.

This precious perfume was poured out by a loving heart, and it was not wasted!

**The question:**

Would it have been wasted if she used it on the body of Lazarus, her brother?

She never got the opportunity because a miracle had walked into her life and caused her to save the perfume for another day, a far more important day.

She did not waste the perfume on the dead, but she allowed it to consume the living.

**This is what life is really about!!!**

**Allowing what God has given to you to be consumed on others.**

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**The Horror of Hoarding - There is a purpose for all things in life and the greatest waste in life comes from hoarding things.**

- In keeping them from their proper use in life.
- The perfume would have been wasted had it not been used.

**Some hoard up:**

- Bitterness when they ought to let go of long past and often forgotten hurts.
- Anger when they ought to pour out forgiveness.
- Jealousy when they should find contentment with life.
- Long nurtured grudges when they ought to pour out thankfulness.
- Old hurt when they ought to give in to spiritual healing.
- Past mistakes of others when they ought to hold themselves to the same expectations. **This will generate mercy in your life.**

**Hoarded up perfume will never become a memorial before God.**

- Only when ***we really let things pour out of our spirit***, God can use us as He sees fit.
- Mary had to break open the alabaster box.
- If she would not have broken the vase, her heart would have been broken.

**This perfume cost her a single year's work.**

- Perhaps her life's savings were wrapped up in the cost of it.
- **Love & worship** have its moments, If they pass us by, they're gone forever.
- You may not always have the opportunity to express your love.

**Did Mary really understand her actions on that day?**

**Did she understand what her heart was feeling on that day?**

- I doubt she really knew! She simply responded to a much deeper call.

**A call that knew that there was some good work in wasted ointment.**

**Mark 14:8 She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial.**

- Mary put her gift into His hands rather than saving them for His grave.
- He did not need a marble monument; He longed for true worship.

**Although Mary did not mean it as such, this was exactly what she was doing....**

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Mark 14:6 - But Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me.

### Greek Word Study

In the Greek language, there are two words that are **used for "good."**

- There is **agathos**, which **describes** a thing that is morally good.
- There is **kalos** which **describes** a thing which is not only good but lovely.

A thing might be **agathos** and yet it can be **hard, stern, and even unattractive. Justice, ethics, and honor** can fall into this category.

**Good and necessary, but they are rigid and sometimes can be unmerciful.**

**Kalos** can be appealing, lovely and have a certain appeal to it.

That is exactly what Mary did.

**Love does not do only good things; love does lovely things.**

- If love is true, there will always be some extravagance about it.
- If love can see, there will be a sense of recklessness that comes with it.
- If love is alive, it will not calculate, in fact **if it gave everything, the gift would be too small**.

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**CLOSE: "Waste" The Ointment**

**One of the greatest tragedies of life is that we are often moved to do something great, and we do not do it.**

- **We may give in to** a certain sense of shyness or awkwardness or even give in to second thoughts.

**It often occurs with the simplest of things.**

- The impulse to send a letter of thanks...
- The impulse to tell someone how much they really mean to us...
- The impulse to give some special gift...
- And far too often *we give in to the ordinary...*

**And we never "waste" our perfume for the occasion that it was meant to be "wasted" on.**

***To Mary, Jesus Christ was all the world to her, and she would not save her treasure for a lesser use!***

**Why do so many insist on keeping their treasures, their alabaster boxes, their hoarded gifts away from the highest use of the Master?**

Was it really reckless extravagance of an impulsive and demonstrative woman?

**Mark 14:8** “She has done what she could.”

**This was the description of the Lord as to her actions.**

**Our actions will always perform a ministry beyond our immediate intentions.**

- **When you live your life, this is crucial to understand.**

**If I could, I would:**

- **Energize your prayers** with faith and desire.
- **Give you a restlessness** that tormented your mind until you **let your whole life collapse in the presence of God.**
- Bless you **with a desire for holiness.**
- Touch you in a way **that crippled your flesh** but **would exalt your spirit.**
- **Impact you with passion** that rages to have true revival.
- Entrust to you a **holy, godly, and awe-inspiring devotion** to God.
- Impart to you a **burning zeal to not just know the Word but to live the Word.**

**I would do something for you that caused you to break the alabaster box into a thousand pieces!**

- **I can't do it for you!      All of this must come from somewhere within.**

**You must long for a good work to come from “wasted ointment.”**

**Industry leader in perfume: “Perfume is a promise in a bottle. Perfume speaks more to our vulnerabilities than our strengths.**

**We sell hope.” With every sacrifice that is offered, there is a sense of hope that accompanies that sacrifice. . . . no matter what it is!**