

**Title:** A Beautiful Thing

**Passage:** Mark 14:1-11

**Context of Passage:**

- Jesus had been talking about signs of the End Times (Chapter 13)
- Here, transition about the context of the final days before the crucifixion

**Passage:** Mark 14:1-11

It was now two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him, for they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people."

And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head. There were some who said to themselves indignantly, "Why was the ointment wasted like that? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they scolded her. But Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."

Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. And when they heard it, they were glad and promised to give him money. And he sought an opportunity to betray him.

**EXPOSITION**

**Opening Context**

Mark 14:1-2

It was now two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him, for they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people."

*And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him*

- the religious leaders were jealous of Jesus and wanted to get rid of Him.

*Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people*

- but they feared the people so they made plans to make things secret.
- The religious leaders plan was to arrest Jesus quietly

Mark 14:10-11

Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. And when they heard it, they were glad and promised to give him money. And he sought an opportunity to betray him.

- Judas eventually came alongside the religious leaders.

Proverbs 19:21

Many are the plans in the mind of a man,  
but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand.

- but the religious leaders plan was part of God's greater plan of redemption

**A Beautiful Thing**

## Overview: Key Phrases

- I. "A Woman Came" (v.3) (A Woman Devoted)
- II. "And They Scolded Her" (v.5) (A Woman Scolded)
- III. "She Has Done a Beautiful Thing" (v. 6) (A Woman Commended)
- IV. "What She Has Done Will Be Told In Memory of Her" (v.9) (A Woman Remembered)

### I. A Woman Devoted (v.3)

#### Mark 14:3

And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head.

#### *Simon the leper*

- he was previously healed by Jesus
- He then wanted to express his gratitude for Jesus' healing by hosting a meal for Jesus.

#### *a woman came*

- Mary, brother of Lazarus

#### John 12:3

Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

- Context: Jesus had recently raised Lazarus from the dead. Jesus had said to her:

#### John 11:25-26

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

- Mary understood who Jesus really is.

#### *an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly*

- Container = alabaster flask
- Content = ointment
  - Purpose: Either for her potential wedding or for her burial
- Cost = very costly = incredible worth and value of the gift = a year's wages

#### *she broke the flask and poured it over his head.*

- Broke the flask = irreversible decision placing her trust and faith in Jesus.
  - She held nothing back. Container broken.
- Poured it over His head = she placed her future in Jesus.
- Meaning = Jesus matters more important than my own hopes of the future and what others may think about me.

#### 2 Timothy 4:6-8

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

- Mary believed Jesus as the Messiah who would come again as beloved King.

*The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.* (John's parallel passage)

2 Corinthians 2:14

But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.

- Fragrance = your life is like a fragrance of Christ to God and to others.
- God sees you as a precious fragrance of great worth and value
- God is also working through you to affect others (spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere)
  - God draws people to Him through you (not because of you but because of what He is doing)

*Application:*

In context of coming persecution of believers, do not fear but be ready!

Philippians 3:10

that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

- those who have suffered deeply know God greatly.

*Story:* William Borden

- “No reserves. No retreat. No regrets.”

## **II. A Woman Scolded (v. 5)**

Mark 14:4-5

There were some who said to themselves indignantly, “Why was the ointment wasted like that? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.” And they scolded her.

*someone who said*

John 12:4-6

But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, “Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it.

- Judas criticized the act of devotion to Jesus.

*Story:* Jim Elliott

- “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

Luke 9:23-24

And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

## **III. A Woman Commended (v.6)**

Mark 14:6

But Jesus said, “Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me.

*She has done a beautiful thing to me.*

- Beautiful = beautiful in the sight of Christ
- Question: What is beautiful to Jesus?
- Answer: A heart wholly devoted to Him

- Not just acts but the heart

#### 2 Chronicles 16:9

For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him. You have done foolishly in this, for from now on you will have wars.”

#### John 4:23

But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

### **IV. A Woman Remembered (v. 9)**

#### Mark 14:9

And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.”

- Her act of grateful love anticipated the burial of Christ
- Her act was of worshipping love of Jesus
- The pathway to lasting honor is to treasure Christ.

### **Application**

- How are you seeing the time you have and your future?
- Reconsider how you use your time regardless of season.
- See Mary: Her future, her hopes/dreams are in Christ. Is yours?
- Finishing life in the glory of Christ is to treasure Christ.
- How treasure Christ? Live in ways where this world is not our treasure. Use whatever abilities to treasure Christ and serve people (not ourselves)

### **Quotes:**

“Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last". (C.T. Studd)

“If Jesus Christ is God (and He is) and He died for me and you (and He did), then no sacrifice that I could ever make for Him could ever be too great.”

- your mission field is where Christ has placed you (ex: family, neighbors, work, on-line community, etc.)

### **Other Passages**

#### 1 Peter 1:6-9

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.