

Text— Mark 14:3-9

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Today is Palm Sunday. Consequently, we especially remember Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem when He was hailed as the King He most certainly is. However, just days later the people's voices changed to cries of, "Crucify him, crucify him," as Luke 23:21 reports.

Nevertheless, some folks did believe on Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord, for they had genuine, God-given, living faith— that is, a "faith which worketh by love," as Galatians 5:6 describes it.

Our sermon text supplies us with a beautiful example of one who had genuine, God-given, living faith, as we there behold:

"A WOMAN'S ACT OF LOVE TO THE LORD JESUS"

With that as our theme, may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) What a woman's act of love to the Lord Jesus was
- 2) How some observers reacted to the woman's act of love
- 3) What was Jesus' response to the woman's act of love

-1-

Prior to our sermon text, we read in 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." So, the Jewish high-churchmen, in their bitter hatred of Jesus Christ, were actively planning how they might have Jesus arrested and put to death. Notice Jesus' enemies were sneaky, desiring to catch Jesus when He was not among crowds of

people. Oh, they would then soon get their wish when one of Jesus' twelve apostles, Judas Iscariot, would sell-out Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, subsequently betraying Jesus with a kiss when He was in the garden of Gethsemane with but few disciples present.

However, just days before the terrible betrayal of Jesus took place, He was in the village of Bethany, which was located on the south-eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, about two miles east of Jerusalem, on the road to Jericho.

Bearing the afore related facts in mind, we now proceed into our sermon text.

Verse 3, ----- (Mark 14:3)

While in the village of Bethany, Jesus was present in the house of Simon the leper to eat a meal. Jesus was not fearful about being in the home of a man who was, or had been, a leper. Jesus also had other friends in the town of Bethany, such as Mary, Martha and Lazarus. But, at this time Jesus was dining with Simon the leper in that man's home, with some other folks present as reported later in our Scripture selection. Jesus was ever willing to go wherever He was welcome.

An interesting thing happened as Jesus was sitting at meat in Simon the leper's house, for *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.* Several commentators say that the woman was Mary the sister of Martha, because John 12:1-3 relates, "Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." Nevertheless, we observe that Mary anointed Jesus' feet, while the woman in our text poured her precious ointment on Jesus' head.

Thus, it appears that the incidents are likely distinct— Jesus being anointed on separate occasions by two different women. There was certainly more than one woman who had faith in Jesus and loved Him as her Lord.

Anyway, the woman mentioned in our sermon text surely showed her love to the Lord Jesus when she came to Him in the house of Simon the leper, *having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.*

The ointment was very expensive, being a perfume made of pure nard which was extracted from the roots of an Indian plant. Alabaster is a soft-stone which could be carved into containers and sealed. Consequently, the seal and/or neck of the box could be broken to allow the contents to be poured out. Hence, the woman's act of love to the Lord Jesus was that she spared no expense in showing Him that He meant so very much to her. Yes, that woman knew that Jesus of Nazareth was much more than a mere man, for she showed she highly valued Him as the Messiah foretold of old, Christ the Lord and Savior of sinners.

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As we ponder the next two verses of our sermon text, let us see how some observers reacted to the woman's act of love.

Verses 4 & 5, ----- (Mark 14:4-5)

Simon the leper had other guests present who saw what the woman did in anointing Jesus' head with expensive ointment. However, instead of complimenting the woman for showing love to the Lord Jesus, we are informed *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.*

Three hundred pence was equal to about \$45—

probably more like \$75 today, with inflation. So, it was an expensive ointment that the woman poured on Jesus' head. Nevertheless, let's think about the reaction of some of the onlookers.

Can you imagine it? A number of people present considered it a waste of money to show honor and love to the Lord Jesus Christ! They were angry within themselves; they grumbled and complained against the woman; they considered the woman's act of love to the Lord Jesus a waste of resources; they protested that the spikenard could have been sold and the money given to the poor; they had nothing good to say about the woman.

Interestingly, a similar complaint was made in the incident where Mary the sister of Martha anointed Jesus' feet with the same type of expensive ointment and wiped His feet with her hair, for we read in John 12:4-6, "Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein." Yeah, the traitor, Judas Iscariot, was the type of treasurer who would steal some of the funds for his own use. So, it's likely Judas was part of the bunch who objected to the act of love done by the woman in our sermon text as well.

My friends, we must all be on guard against sinful inclinations, since we all dwell in sinful flesh, "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not," declares Ecclesiastes 7:20. Therefore, 1 John 2:15-17 warns us, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." Let us value the Lord God much more highly than any of the things of this world. Let us show our love to the Lord Jesus for all that He has done and still

does for us, because He is our only Savior, for Acts 4:12 clearly states, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Accordingly, Jesus Christ is of infinite value to each and every one of us sinful human beings, for He is the ONLY WAY to God and heaven.

Let us remember how some observers reacted to the woman's act of love to the Lord Jesus as related in our sermon text, for those complainers failed to properly value the Lord Jesus Christ.

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As we ponder our sermon text to its conclusion, let us see what was Jesus' response to the woman's act of love.

Verse 6, ----- (Mark 14:6)

Jesus did NOT approve of those who grumbled and complained about the woman's anointing His head with the expensive spikenard ointment, for He said to those who murmured against her: *Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.*

Think about Jesus' words, because He thereby indicates the woman had true faith since He stated she did "a good work" on Him, for Hebrews 11:6 declares, "without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Additionally, we read in Romans 14:23, "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Therefore, it is evident that the woman's work was indeed a good work because it was truly a fruit of her faith in Jesus her Savior, her Lord and God.

The woman's act of love to the Lord Jesus indicated her faith in Him was alive and sincere, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also," relates James 2:26.

My friends, our faith in Jesus Christ is to manifest itself in good works, if our faith is the real-deal.

Mere lip-service is NOT genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us therefore strive to continue to be fruitful in the faith, never forgetting the following words found in Ephesians 2:8-10, "by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Yes, God would have us be fruitful in the faith of Jesus Christ which He has graciously gifted us with, for Hebrews 10:23-31 says, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Therefore, God grant that we all continue in the true faith unto life everlasting, clinging to Christ Jesus and His pure, preserved, Holy Word.

Verse 7, ----- (Mark 14:7)

After Jesus reprov'd those who murmured against the woman who had wrought a good work on Him, He told those complaining grumblers: *ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.*

Now, it's a fact that Jesus, being true God in addition to true man, is always present everywhere, as He was even during His visible sojourn on earth, for He once said straight-out, as John 3:13 reports, "no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." Yes, as Jesus walked upon earth in the days of His humiliation He was also present in heaven, for Jesus Christ IS TRUE GOD in addition to being TRUE MAN. Nevertheless, when Jesus said: *ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always;* Jesus was making the point that He would then soon suffer, die, be buried, rise again and subsequently ascend into heaven, and thereby remove His visible presence from the earth. People would no longer be able to see Him with their eyes and touch Him as the faithful woman had done when she anointed His head with costly ointment.

Those who muttered needed to appreciate Jesus Christ! They needed to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior! They needed to obtain true faith, faith that works by love, by heeding the Gospel of Christ! It was vital then and still is, for John 3:16-18 clearly states, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

Looking again at verse 7 of our sermon text, observe that Jesus said: *ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good.* Has not such been the case throughout history? Is it not still the case? Indeed, there are always poor people throughout the world. Everyone is NOT rich in worldly wealth, no matter what country one may be a citizen of; and so, let us never forget that 1 John 3:17-18 says, "whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need,

and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." Hence, we should not grumble and complain when some of our tax money goes to help the truly poor so they can have food, clothing and shelter.

Verses 8 & 9, ----- (Mark 14:8-9)

Jesus concluded His remarks to the murmuring complainers by saying, in regards to the woman's act of love to Him: *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.*

Accordingly, Jesus referred to His then approaching death and burial— the Gospel of His dying for the sins of the whole world, paying for them in full with His holy blood while nailed to the accursed tree of the cross, which would be and was followed by the burial of His lifeless corpse in a tomb.

My friends, the woman's act of love to the Lord Jesus is still spoken of for a memorial of her, as it has been recorded for us in the Holy Scriptures. The woman's faith in Christ was fruitful, as shown by that work of love in which she anointed His head with expensive ointment, because she truly valued Jesus Christ as the Savior and Lord He most certainly is. That woman's living faith is a fine example for all of us.

Jesus Christ gave up far more for us than any of us could ever give, for Jesus Christ – true God and true man, but one Christ – humbly, willingly and voluntarily kept God's Law perfectly for all of us, and then He willingly paid for our lack of keeping God's Law, for Jesus paid for all of our sins in full with His own infinitely valuable blood. Indeed, it's as we read in 1 Peter 1:18-21, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your

fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.”

Fellow Christians, we can never show Jesus enough gratitude and love for all that He has done and still does for us. But, we can learn from a woman’s act of love to the Lord Jesus to strive to be more fruitful in our God-given faith.

Therefore, let us daily and sincerely repent of our sins; let us go forward clinging to Christ Jesus in heart-deep faith; and, let us endeavor to be fruitful in the faith. Amen.

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