



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

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## She Has Done What She Could"

Devan Harber

"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. But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, 'Why was this fragrant oil wasted? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.' And they criticized her sharply. But Jesus said, 'Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. 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'" (Mk. 14:3-9).

We get beat up. We get pushed around. We think we are big ol' failures. Who knows, maybe we are.

"I couldn't see a way to connect this conversation to Christ, but I was trying..."

"I tried to invite my friend, but they were cold and dismissive."

"I'm trying to show them the truth..."

"I just don't think I'll ever get anywhere with them! But I am going to keep at it..."

"I can't seem to help them, but I'm praying about it!"

"We talked about spiritual things, but I can't make any headway — I'll pray and keep trying."

Get out of your own head. Remember the statement Jesus makes: "She has done what she could..." Our God will ask no more of you. If you are trying — constantly, continually, courageously — YOU have done what you could. It's hard to imagine this woman had ANY concept for the lasting impact of what she was doing. To the point Jesus even says, "Wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will be told as a memorial to her..." Just a little thing — yet her efforts ended up as part of the greatest event in human history.

You may never fully know the depth of impact you had on a person. You may never see them again. You may never even hear about how they are doing. Yet, through your faithful efforts (teaching, implying, example-setting, encouragement, etc) you quite possibly could walk the streets of glory with them in the eternal day.

***Keep your head up my friend. The work you're doing is a good work!***

## The Poor

Roger Shouse

Matthew 26:11 "For the poor you have with you always; but you do not always have Me."

Our verse rather surprises us. It's not what we would expect Jesus to say. We would think that Jesus was a defender of the poor. The poor in spirit is what leads off the beatitudes. The poor have the gospel preached to them. Jesus seemed to be a friend to those who were troubled and down on their luck, as some express it. A woman with, as Matthew states it, "an alabaster vial of costly perfume," pours it upon the head of Jesus. Mark tells us that this perfume could have been sold for three hundred denarii. One denarii was a days wage for a common laborer. So, we are looking at perfume that

cost nearly a whole year's income. What do you make in a year? Fifty thousand? Seventy-five thousand? A hundred thousand? Imagine having one bottle of perfume that costs that much.

This wasn't common everyday stuff. This was saved and used for one of two purposes: either a bride for her wedding, or for a funeral. If sold that would have bought several meals for poor people. It could have helped many, many people. The disciples were ugly towards this woman for her wastefulness. But Jesus saw it differently. Our verse sets the tone: the poor are always here, I'm not.

Some lessons for us:

First, Jesus never tried to rid the world of poverty. Some seem to think that was His purpose. Improving life here came secondarily to improving our relationship with the Lord. It seems that some politicians have in their thinking that if more was done then we could rid this country or even the world of poverty. Give away money. Provide all that they are lacking. Ideas, programs and legislation all aimed at removing the plague of poverty. If enough was done, it is thought, our country would be rid of this once and for all. Jesus said the poor are always with us. Always. Some do not know how to manage money. The more money given to them, the more they would waste it. Others could be helped and life changes could be set in place. But still the words of Jesus ring true, "the poor you have with you always."

Second, many today would really be bothered by Jesus' words. They'd expect Jesus to side with the disciples and rebuke this woman for wasting valuable perfume. Rather than hoarding it, sell it. Give the money to the poor. Help your fellow man. But that wasn't the direction the Lord went. He praised this woman. He said what she did was good. And, this is a good reminder that we can't always anticipate what the Lord would say. Let the Lord speak for Himself. He understood that this woman recognized what was about to happen. She was anointing the Lord before His awful beatings, scourging, being spit upon, carrying a heavy cross and finally, being nailed to that cross. He would die. She grasped that.

This tells us that when someone says, "I think God would like this," they might just be wrong. We might say, "Sell and help the poor." Jesus didn't say that. Don't guess what God would say. Look and see. Unless revealed, we simply do not know.

Third, John reveals that it was Judas who demanded that the perfume be sold and the poor helped. John adds that Judas didn't care about the poor. He was wanting to steal the money. He was dishonest and a thief. He hid his intentions behind a noble cause of helping the poor. The same happens today. People will use the name of Jesus to promote their own agendas or themselves. The idea of Judas was ruined by his wicked heart.

Fourth, selling the perfume would have helped some poor, but it would not have eliminated poverty. It was a band-aid for a much deeper and more serious problem. And, this reminds us that Jesus didn't come to fix all the woes of society. He left this planet with poor people here. There are still poor people here. Jesus didn't solve crime. Jesus didn't solve pollution. Jesus didn't fix corruption in politics. He didn't wipe out diseases. He didn't end racism. He didn't even tell us how to deal with weeds in the garden, that has been around since the days of Adam. In some ways, a person could say, "It looks like Jesus didn't do anything worthwhile or lasting." "The world was a mess then, and it is still a mess today." However, that wasn't the intention nor the purpose of the Lord's coming. He came to seek and to save what was lost. He came to give abundant life—and that wasn't by changing the weather patterns, or ending corruption. What Jesus did had an eternal factor to it. It was the salvation of our souls. It wasn't His job to end poverty. It wasn't His job to end diseases. His role was spiritual and His death brought about salvation.

I saw recently that one politician was advocating giving everyone \$1,200 a month. Not for a month—but forever. Where will that money come from and who will pay for it was not in the article. And, in a pipe dream, some believe that would end poverty. It wouldn't. Double that amount and poverty will still be a part of our times. Jesus said, the poor are always with you.

Wasting perfume or honoring the Lord? Wasting time or praising the Lord? Better use of things or the best use of things? Sure makes us think for a moment...