

# Words of Life

(April 4, 2007)

*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.*

Mark 14:3-5

\*\*\*\*\*

*This account of the anointing of Jesus by Mary of Bethany is repeated in three of the four gospels. If you read John's account it may be misunderstood that Judas was the only one that was critical of Mary. But in Matthew and Mark's account it is clear that more than just Judas considered this to be an inappropriate use of the costly oil. Matthew makes it clear that it was the disciples who were indignant toward Mary. These were Jesus' closest followers. And they viewed this action by Mary as being a bad choice. Their reason? It was very expensive stuff! It would have commanded an exceeding high value at the market. Why not sell it and use the money to feed needy people?*

*Well, if you're a man, it makes perfect sense, right? But herein we have one of the classic sections of Scripture that shoots an arrow directly at the heart of difference between the male and female species. Yes.....species. We are wired completely differently. For you men and women that have been married for more than a few years, you know this. For you young lovers that are newly married, or looking to get married, I predict that you will learn much about this in the years ahead!*

*I remember times when we had all the children with us (all five) and we would be coming home after our evening church service. One of those summer nights when the kids are off school, and Dad is the only one that has to get up early so everyone else wants to do something. Like get a treat. Since ice cream is always a favorite that wins the vote. But here is where the difference comes in. Mom wants to go out to the ice cream shop and get ice cream cones. Dad immediately goes through the mental calculations. Seven ice cream cones times about three bucks each.....twenty one bucks for ice cream!!! Hey, I have an idea, Dad says. Why don't we go to Albertsons and buy a box of ice cream and take it home and all have a bowl? Well, that idea goes over like a lead balloon. While dad never admits it out loud, his reasoning is that he can save about eighteen bucks that way!*

*This is exactly what is happening in this account. The disciples have lost complete perspective. The issue is one of blessing someone else. Mary had it right. She didn't care how much the oil cost. As a matter of fact, I believe the more expensive the oil the better, as far as Mary was concerned. Her desire was to bless her Lord. It is a heart versus a head matter. We men struggle with this one often times. Too many times our logical side takes control and we respond according to human logic instead of a heart to bless. We can learn much from Mary here, and many of us can learn much from our wives in this area.*

*Over the years I have watched closely as my wife has always been first to bless others. The amount is never the issue. If we have it, she is desiring to use it to bless another person. And she never looks at the use as something that is wasted. Yes, the spikenard could have been sold and the money could have been used to feed the poor. But later on Jesus declares that they will always have the poor. However they would not*

---

*The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.*

John 6:63

*always have this opportunity. We must seize the opportunity that is before us to bless others. God isn't poor and doesn't need our money. If he desires us to use our resources for a different purpose at a later time, he will give us the ability at that time.*

*I believe many times we miss the immediate opportunities for a future opportunity that may never come. John captures the result of Mary's action of blessing Jesus. He tells us that the house they were in was filled with the fragrance of the oil. Not just the room where she anointed Jesus but the entire house. Every room was filled with the fragrance!*

*In the Bible, oil is often used as a type of the Holy Spirit. As we extend acts of love and blessing toward others, the fragrance of the Holy Spirit is dispersed throughout the area. It would have been an impossibility for someone to enter that house and not smell the fragrance of the spikenard. If we live our lives to bless others, no one will be able to be in our presence without sensing the sweetness of God's Holy Spirit in and upon us.*

*Lets look for opportunities to bless others this week from our heart, and not from our head.*

*Pastor Ted.*