

“She Hath Done What She Could”
Mark 14:3-9

Introduction: In Mark chapter fourteen, we see a very interesting contrast between someone’s devotion toward the Lord and someone’s deception toward the Lord. This woman reveals her love toward the Lord while Judas renders his lies about the Lord. Obviously we see that there are two ways in which we can treat the Lord and that is we can believe and follow Him or we can betray and forsake Him. Although neither Matthew nor Mark names this woman, John informs us that she was Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. There are many lessons we can learn from this devout saint of God. Notice:

- We must not confuse this story with the one in Luke 7:36-50. The unnamed woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee was a converted harlot who expressed her love toward the Lord for forgiveness of her sins. In the house of Simon the leper Mary expressed her love to the Lord for going to the cross for her sins.

- 1. The Magnificence of Mary v. 3
 - a. In Her Presence v. 3- “*...in the house of Simon the leper...*”
 - (1) It was unwise and illegal for Jesus to attend a supper in the house of a leper, for it was not permitted that a clean person to contaminate himself with a leper.
 - (2) Leprosy was a dreaded disease that separated the leper from family and friends. Unless a miracle was performed, the leper would suffer until the day of his death.
 - (3) Evidently, at some point in Simon’s life he had come into contact with Divine grace and Jesus healed him.
 - (4) Gratitude had filled this man’s heart and he wanted to fellowship with the Lord.
 - b. In Her Presentation v. 3- “*...she brake the box...*”
 - (1) Spikenard was imported from India, and a whole jar would have cost the equivalent of a common worker’s annual income.
 - (2) It would be interesting to find out how Mary was able to acquire this precious box. Did she belong to a wealthy family? Was it a gift from someone? Did she work for it? We may never know the answer, but it certainly revealed her love toward the Lord.

- 2. The Murmuring against Mary vs. 4-5
 - a. Because of the Waste of the Box v. 4
 - (1) Judas was not the only one upset about the breaking of the box.
 - (2) Even the disciples saw it as a waste of money.
 - b. Because of the Wealth of the Box v. 5
 - (1) This box could have been sold for three hundred pence. Since a man who worked in the vineyards for a twelve hour day and only received a penny in wages, it becomes evident that the box was valuable. A man would have to work twelve hours a day, six days a week for almost one year in order to get enough money to purchase such a gift. (Keep in mind that out of his wages he would have to buy his clothes, food, housing, etc. It would take more than a year.)
 - (2) It would almost be impossible for an ordinary man to purchase this box.

- (3) It sounded pious for Judas to talk about the poor, but he wanted the money for himself. John 12:4-6
- (4) It is interesting that Judas criticized Mary for wasting a box while he wasted his entire life.
- 3. The Misunderstanding about Mary vs. 6-8
 - a. In Her Work vs. 6-7
 - (1) The fact that others misunderstand and criticize us should not keep us from showing our love toward the Lord.
 - (2) Our Lord began to comfort Mary from her critics.
 - b. In Her Will v. 8
 - (1) Somehow Mary knew that the Lord was about to be crucified. It was a Jewish custom to anoint a dead body prior to burial.
 - (2) There was no time to be lost and she had to anoint our Lord's body for the crucifixion. Therefore, she surrendered the best of her possessions.
 - (3) Our Lord revealed to us that she hath done what she could. This indicated that it was impossible for her to do more.
- 4. The Memorial of Mary v. 9
 - (1) The escaping fragrance not only filled the house, it entered the street, filled the town, and proceeded to fill the world.
 - (2) The gospel story is now published in thousands of languages, and it has been preached for more than two thousand years. In country after country and for century after century, this woman's good work has been told.
 - (3) Her fragrance is still flowing today as we preach about her gift.

Body: Let us draw our attention back to verse eight. It should be remembered that in Mark 12:42-44 that there was a widow woman that gave what she could as well. Mark's gospel unites two widely separated women and makes them twin sisters in the family of faith. Mary revealed her gift while the widow woman concealed her gift. Nonetheless, they both revealed their love toward the Lord in giving of themselves. Now that we learned a lesson from these women, can we do what we can?

- This woman could not raise the dead or feed the multitudes, but she had done what she could. She could not heal the leper or restore sight to the blind, but she had done what she could. She could not calm the storms nor go to Calvary, but she had done what she could.
- Peter could have anointed our Lord. John could have anointed our Lord. Thomas could have anointed our Lord. Luke could have anointed our Lord. Any of them could have anointed our Lord. But none of them did. Mary did it.
- Allow God to use you. God can use anyone. Noah was a drunk; Abraham was too old; Jeremiah and Timothy were too young; Isaac was a daydreamer; Jacob was a liar; Leah was ugly; Joseph was abused; Moses had a stuttering problem; Gideon was afraid; Samson had long hair and was a womanizer; Rahab was a prostitute; David had an affair and was a murderer; Elijah was suicidal; Isaiah preached naked; Jonah ran from God; Naomi was a widow; Job went bankrupt; John the Baptist ate bugs; Peter denied Christ; Martha worried about everything; The Samaritan woman was divorced, more than once; Zaccheus was too

small; The disciples fell asleep while praying; Paul was too religious; Timothy had an ulcer; and Lazarus was dead. We are not the message, just the messenger.

- I. Doing What You Can When It Comes To Giving John 6:1-14
- A. Some of you will spend \$1,000 on a gun, but will turn up your nose when an offering is taken. You will spend \$20,000 to \$40,000 on a vehicle, but you will turn up your nose when an offering is taken.
 - B. You borrow money from banks, credit cards, and lay-aways for houses, cars, boats, motorcycles, vacations, time shares, etc., but you will not borrow \$10.00 to complete an offering.
 - C. You spend money on everything from: bullets to beauticians, computers to cosmetics, cars to cell phones, fishing to flowers, hunting to hiking, knitting to knives, perfumes to pontoons, sports to salons, toys to tools, tree stands to toe nails, but you do not have money for an offering.
 - D. You spend money on:
 - 1. Boats, bobbers, baits, balls, bats, and ballgames, but you do not have money for an offering.
 - 2. Chips, cokes, cookies, cakes, coffee, and candy, but you do not have money for an offering.
 - 3. Dogs, doodads, decorations, doctors, and deodorants, but you do not have money for an offering.
 - 4. Guns, gold, gardens, gum, and gyms, but you do not have money for an offering.
 - 5. Mowers, makeup, makeovers, and manicures, but you do not have money for an offering.
 - 6. Restaurants, radios, recreations, romance, and roses, but you do not have money for an offering.
 - 7. Some of you are addicts to flea markets, yard sales, thrift stores, Salvation Army, Goodwill, and Wal-Mart, but you do not have money for an offering.
 - E. Don't be a skinflint, tightwad, miser, cheapskate, Mr. Scrooge, penny-pincher, stingy, greedy, hoarder, rotten Mr. Grinch.
 - F. Malachi 3:8- *"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings."*
 - G. Matthew 6:21- *"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."*
- II. Doing What You Can When It Come To Going John 4:1-4
- A. Matthew 28:19- *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"*
 - B. Mark 16:15- *"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."*
 - C. Luke 14:23- *"And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."*
 - D. Psalms 126:5-6- *"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."*

- E. In 1831, four Nez Perce and Flathead Indians came to St. Louis seeking to learn the secret of the white man's success, convinced that the white man's God was more potent than their own. These Indians were Black Eagle, Rabbit Skin Leggings, No Horns on His Head, and Man of the Morning. They were members of a declining Indian tribe in Oregon that were searching to find the one, true, triune God. Their request was that the missionaries be sent among them to tell them of the white man's God. (Catherine Millard, pg. 183)
- F. In 1866 there appeared in a lecture by missionary Henry Spalding an account of the sorrowful appeal of one of these Indians to General Clark when they were leaving to go back to their own people. Said the Indian: "I come to you over a trail of many moons from the setting sun. I came with one eye partly open, for more light for my people who sit in darkness. I go back with both eyes closed. How can I go back blind to my people? I made my way to you with strong arms through many enemies and strange lands. I go back with both arms broken and empty. My people sent me to get the white man's Book from Heaven. You took me where you allow your women to dance, as we do not ours, and the Book was not there. You took me where they worship the great Spirit with candles, and the Book was not there. You showed me the images of good spirits and pictures of the good land beyond. But the Book was not among them. I am going back the long, sad trail to my people of the dark land. You make my feet heavy with burdens of gifts, and my moccasins will grow old in carrying them. But the Book is not among them. When I tell my poor, blind people after one more snow in the big Council that I did not bring the Book, no word will be spoken by our old men or by our young braves. One by one they will rise up and go out in silence. My people will die in darkness, and they will go on the long path to other hunting grounds. No white man will go with them, and no white man's Book, to make the way plain. I have no more words." (Catherine Millard, pg. 184)
- G. The only ones that I know of that went to them was Marcus and Narcissa Whitman, but they were Protestants.

Conclusion: In 1799 Andrew Fuller, pastored a discontented people, and he wrote about the effect of missions on his discouraged people, "There was a period of my ministry marked by the most pointed systematic effort to comfort my serious people; but the more I tried to comfort them, the more they complained of doubts and darkness. I knew not what to do or what to think; for I had done my best to comfort these mourners in Zion. At this time, it pleased God to direct my attention to the claims of the perishing heathen in India. I felt that we had been living for ourselves and not caring for souls. I spoke as I felt."

"My serious people wondered and wept over their past inattention to the subject. They began to talk about a Baptist mission, and considered what could be done amongst themselves for them. They met and did what they could."

"While this was going on, the lamentations ceased; the sad became cheerful, and the despairing calm. No one complained of want of comfort. I, instead of having to study how to comfort my

flock, was myself comforted by them. They were drawn out of themselves. The real secret was that God blessed them while they tried to be a blessing.”

➤ What did this mission accomplish? The Baptist historian Thomas Armitage would write in 1890:

1. The missionary zeal of the English Baptists is as great as ever, their field including India, Ceylon, China, Japan, Palestine, Europe, Africa and the West Indies. The Baptist Missionary Society early became interested in the West Indies, and they have been rewarded with great success. In the West Indies and Bermuda there are now nearly 40,000 Baptists, and the missions there are practically self-sustaining. Preachers are sent forth from the Baptist College in Jamaica, not only to supply the needs of the home churches, but to enter on mission work in Africa, under the auspices of the English and American Baptists. In the Congo Free State they have a strong mission, employing twenty-two missionaries, side by side with their American brethren. The increase of converts in Africa is not large, but the churches in the West Indies have added to their membership about 1,000 a year, for the past two years.
2. The English Baptist Missionary Society has recently entered on mission work in the North of China. In the various parts of China they have now twenty-one missionaries. A mission has also been established in Japan, where they have three missionaries.
3. Their older missions in India and Ceylon are still in a flourishing condition. They support 67 missionaries in those fields, with 140 evangelists and 224 teachers. The whole number of missionaries employed by the Society is 122, being an increase of 5 for the last two years; and of evangelists 699, being an increase for the same period of 399. The entire number of communicants in the mission churches is 46,962, being an increase for the same length of time of 1,851.