

Something Beautiful

“Leave her alone,” said Jesus. Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me.” Mark 14:6

It would be wonderful if we could all do something really, really, beautiful for Jesus, like the woman who broke her expensive jar of perfume and poured it on the feet of Jesus. It would be even more magnificent if everything we did for Jesus were beautiful.

This woman, in the middle of a group of people standing there, many of them disciples of Jesus who were engaged in ministry and service to him, was the only one who stepped forward with great price to herself to honor Jesus in that moment. What a beautiful moment, as Jesus himself described it.

Perhaps the ones who complained about it wished they had thought of it first. They were certainly at cross purposes with Jesus. They were dedicated. They were committed. They just could not see what the woman saw as she gave her most precious possession to Him.

When Jesus was born, wise men came from the east. Do you remember their gifts? Yes, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Frankincense is a white resin, very fragrant, and is burned in worship as an offering to God. Myrrh is a spice used for anointment of a body for burial.

An offering for the present and the future. The perfume for the moment, and also looking ahead to the burial of Jesus after he had hung on the cross and died for you and me. She had no idea of the total import of Jesus. She just knew she should give to this special person.

Interesting, is it not, in the account in Matthew 14, that there are two verses given to describe what she did, and all the rest are given to discussion about it. O that we had more moments like the first part! Our world would be a much better place, and heaven’s mansions would be filled to overflowing!

In the latter part of the 17th century, German preacher August H. Francke founded an orphanage to care for the homeless children of Halle. One day when Francke desperately needed funds to carry on his work, a destitute Christian widow came to his door begging for a ducat--a gold coin. He had almost no money, but, trusting the Lord to meet his own needs, he gave her the money. Two mornings later, he received a letter of thanks from the widow. She explained that because of his generosity she had asked the Lord to shower the orphanage with gifts. That same day Francke received 12 ducats from a wealthy lady and 2 more from a friend

in Sweden. He thought he had been amply rewarded for helping the widow, but he was soon informed that the orphanage was to receive 500 gold pieces from an estate. When he heard this, Francke wept in gratitude

He did something beautiful for the Lord. And it bore much fruit to help others. Time after time this is repeated in Christian circles all over time and history.

When God's people do something good in the name of Jesus, there is no limit to what can happen. Lives are changed. Hearts are blessed. And, above all, God is honored.

We cannot give what we do not have. We can have great thoughts and intentions, with no results.

"When 67-year-old carpenter Russell Herman died in 1994, his will included a staggering set of bequests. He wanted to give two billion dollars for the City of East St. Louis, another billion and a half for the State of Illinois, two and a half billion for the national forest system, and to top off the list, Herman left six trillion dollars to the government to help pay off the national debt. That sounds amazingly generous, but there was a small problem—Herman's only asset when he died was a 1983 Oldsmobile. He made grand pronouncements, but there was no real generosity involved. His promises were meaningless because there was nothing to back them up." +~ Chicago Tribune

We do have unimaginable riches in faith. We have this precious gift of knowing Jesus. In his presence we are to honor him in any way possible. For the young woman with the jar of perfume, that was her gift. For someone else, it could be the gift of being able to work with their hands, the gift of music, the gift of prayer, or the gift of listening.

It doesn't have to be perfect to be something beautiful for Jesus. It could be that we give him all of our struggles. And that will be enough.

"Something beautiful, something good," wrote the singer Bill Gaither. "All my confusion He understood. All I had to offer Him was brokenness and strife, but he made something beautiful of my life."

Do something for Jesus, or through Jesus, that he will pronounce "something beautiful." It's an attitude, a way of thinking, a miracle-producing thought that people will want to write home about!