

October 5th 2008: Mark: THE LOVE GIFT: Mark 14:1-10

If there is one story in....like to know more details about.....it's story of this woman

Some suggest...same as the account in John 12 of Mary anointing
But altho remarkable similarities.....many major differences...sets them apart

Consequently what Mark tells us....is all we have to go on...and he leaves many gaps

No name

And perhaps even more important.....no reason given for this act that expressed so
much thankfulness....so much honourso much **love**

We are told that the act took place.....**Bethany**.....just 2 days before the Passover
In the house of Simon the Leper

- **This in itself tells a story**

For Simon to live in his own house.....meant...that he previously ..a leper
but had now been healed

Was Jesus then.... the guest of honour.....because He was also the healer?

- **And was this woman connected in some way with Simon??**

His wife.....His daughter.....or even His mother

Was it the miracle of Simon's restoration....from an outcast...back into
that led her to take this act of taking a beautifully made alabaster jar
filled with extremely expensive perfume ???

- **A possession that had great value as a dowry.....**

or as an investment for future security

- **A product so precious.....that the only way to release the exquisite
fragrance within was to break the very container that held it:...**

- **An offering that was all or nothing**

for once that jar was broken.....there was no reclamation possible

Was it something like that.....which compelled her that day.....to pour out the most
precious thing she owned.....onto the head of the Saviour of the world ??

Or indeed.....she may have had no connection with Simon at all

Perhaps she herself had been so ministered to by Jesus

Rescued from sickness or from slavery to demons.....**Forgiven** of great sin as had been the woman caught in adultery

Whatever it was that motivated her that day.....it caused her to make a sacrifice left her with a greater treasure in her heart.....than any worldly treasure could match

For though others condemned her heartlessly...

for what they saw as foolishness..... as criminal waste

Jesus both praised and commended her.....for what he knew....act of love

Mark tells us that:

they talked about her indignantly with one another.....

Loudly proclaiming her foolishness in wasting something that cost.....years wages

And they rebuked her harshly...They screamed at her...spoke down to her...humiliated

And because of her act of love.....Evil stepped into the picture...as Judas went off..

**We wont always expect be praised by men....for doing what is right
But we can depend on the response of God**

14:6 ***"Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."***

Suddenly Jesus.....in defending her.....reveals that her act of love.....was more imp than she could ever have realised

- **For her it was a big act of sacrifice.....Of** setting herself up for ridicule...misunderstanding

- **For Jesus it was a** massive confirmation.....of his coming death and burial
He knew that her act.....was nothing less than **HS** motivated
The pre-anointing of His body.....with a precious.....**fit the KING**

That her simple but sacrificial response.....would become part...of the Gospel message ...throughout the whole world.....through the ages still to come

And this is a major lesson for all who love Jesus

When the HS motivates us.....to do a work of love.....we may never know all that He will achieve though our response

Whether the act seems large or small

Whether the reaction...is favourable...hostile....unknown

There is more going on....than we may ever know

Stephen Lungu spoke the other evening at the JBC...Out of the Black Shadows He was a gang leader in Rhodesia in the early 60's....involved in acts of terror On may 14th 1962 there was an evangelistic mission being run....Dorothea...just outside of Harare. He went there with his gang intending to fire bomb the tent. He had a bag full of petrol bombs and a knife. Yet out of curiosity he first went inside and sat at the rear. That night a riot did start at that place, but he was not part of it. He was converted.

30 years later Stephen was preaching in a small methodist church in Durban. As he told his story two old ladies began to talk to each other and then started to point at the Bible that belonged to one of them. Then they moved towards the front calling out to him. Stephen was talking about being in that tent hearing the preacher, with his bombs in a bag by his side, and he didn't intend stopping for anyone. But these ladies persisted. Finally they stopped him and told him that 30 years before on the morning of the 14th May 1962, **the Lord had called them both to give Him a love gift.** To spend time together in prayer for the Dorothea Mission Tent. And so they had.

And they had written down in the Bible the prayer that God had laid upon their hearts that day. And as he looked at the Bible Stephen saw written the date: 14th May 1962. And their beside it a simple prayer. 'Lord Jesus, will you save one gang leader tonight.' 30 years later they realised that God had honoured their gift to Him, answered their prayer, and touched thousands of people with His Gospel, through the gang leader who was saved.

• **You see this woman's** love gift was precious oil....to anoint His head
But ours is anything....that the H Spirit lays upon our heart...that we do..out of love

**But of course.....the most precious gift of love....as far as Jesus is concerned
Is the gift that** furthers the sharing of the Gospel.....**LIKE that gift of prayer**

Like the gift of the woman....whose anointing said Jesus....would be remembered wherever the Gospel is preached

For whenever our act of love.....**results** in some way in the Gospel.....
We are furthering a gift of love.....that is so desperately needed

(I have just finished reading the book Kokoda...

I do not wish in any way to detract from that moment in Australia's history of pain and suffering and mateship, as men fought and died for this country of ours,

but I also found in it...a passage ...that vividly illustrates the battle for souls that we are at the forefront of.

Written about a journalist, Osmar White, who was heading back to safety with the wounded. none daring to stop despite the darkness of night and the uncertainty and peril of the terrain. All around him men were crying out for a light, but none were to be had. But White knew that within his haversack he had a torch.

"Men were sinking and dying for want of a light in the darkness. Osmar had one, stored against the moment of a life-threatening emergency, and now he could stand it no longer. He took it out. Turned it on. There was a stirring behind him. From the darkness, from places unseen, the mumbling gathered. A light. A light. There was a light in the darkness. First a man who had been shot twice in the chest came up and put his arm on Ossie's shoulder.... And they kept coming, the black figures rising towards the glowing, and others moving to him from the shadows as they kept on down the track.

In no time at all no fewer than a hundred Diggers had formed up a line behind him and they were now all gingerly picking their way forward.....a hundred sons of Australia, a hundred fathers. Husbands, brothers and friends, a hundred souls in search of home." KOKODA p344 by Peter Fitzsimons.

WHEN I read of the value of a light to those wounded soldiers, as they struggle back along the track to safety.

I thought of how well it illustrates the saving light of the Gospel.

and we have been given the light,

and what we do with it is our gift of love to Jesus, and to those for whom He died.

An interesting thing about this story in Mark.....is that the jar....though beautiful **needed** to be broken.....before the very precious ointment.....could be shared

- **Like Jesus Himself.....**though so special in who he was.....what he did **Had to be broken upon a cross.....**in order that His blood thus spilt would cover your sins.....**and cause** you and I to become children....

***"When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died
my richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride***

***Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.***

