

## **“Broken Vessel”**

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There was a woman named Mary, 12 disciples, a room filled with the fragrance of finest perfume, a broken alabaster flask, and the Savior drenched and dripping with the finest imported nard. You know the story, right?

Just the facts! When? It was Jesus’ last week before He was crucified for us. Where? Bethany. The hometown of Jesus’ dear friends, Lazarus, Martha and Mary. Who? Mary and the incredible thing she did. Why? Mary’s humble devotion for Who Jesus was. The broken vessel? It was Mary, not just the alabaster jar!

Mary really did it! Sometime, while everyone was seated, or as John tells us, reclining around the table, she came up to Jesus with an extraordinary gift. The nard was from northern India, from a plant that grew at foot of Himalayas . It wasn’t cheap! Mary had almost 12 oz. of it, worth about year’s wages back then. Today, would be worth over \$40,000!

This precious nard was bottled in a glass-like, alabaster flask with no lid. The bottle didn’t have screw top, wax plug, or even a cork. There was only one way to open it—snap off the top. It was a single-use dispenser! There was no way to save some for later. So Mary used it, pouring all 12 oz. of it, over Jesus’ feet and hair. The disciples came unglued! They were shocked! Look at verses 4-5, *“There were some who said to themselves indignantly, “Why was the ointment wasted like that? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.” And they scolded her.”*

They couldn’t believe what they were seeing. Just like that: snap—pour. The bottle was broken and \$40,000 worth of perfume were dripping over Jesus’ clothes and onto the floor. This was incredible, way over the top!

Sitting and listening while Martha, worked was one thing and Jesus had turned the bit of wasted time into a teaching moment. But this was different. This was money—lots of money being wasted. It was wrong! It’s hard to fault the disciples here. There’s only one reason you’d probably side against them is because you know how the story ends.

But, what was so wrong about the disciples’ reasoning? Jesus Himself taught the lesson well: deny yourself, focus on the needs of others, pay attention to the poor and social outcasts. So, why not sell the perfume so the money could be used for something helpful?

The disciples were just being good financial conservatives, demonstrating great responsibility and even caring for the poor and needy while they were at it. Mary was the one who had no explanation and really didn’t know limits. There’s no doubt about it, we find ourselves lining up with the disciples. It might be tough to admit, but it’s probably true.

Look at verses 6-9 as Jesus speaks about the whole event, *“Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.”*

What does this mean for you? Jesus wants people who are broken and pouring themselves out without limit. The vessel that won Jesus’ praise was Mary herself. She didn’t give herself halfway, she gave it all. Jesus calls you to a life of all-out giving. Jesus praises her because of her total surrender and complete giving. An all-out, totally sold-out life is precisely what He wants for every one of His people!

Jesus calls you to a life without the safety barriers you might put up and go all-out in living for Him. What are you waiting for? If Mary had waited just a week, she’d have missed her chance!

So what are you waiting for? Quit playing it safe. Quit looking 4 the balance. Quit hiding behind comfortable. Quit honoring reasonable way. Be willing to do something that might seem unreasonable or impossible and give God glory. Remember, He’s the One who’s given you everything!

Break the vessel! Go all out. Be willing to truly trust and serve. Jesus said He will be with us always, and the Holy Spirit is always there guiding and leading and building us up. Live all-out. Walk into world around you and share the message of Jesus Christ.

Clear your over-extended schedule of all the worthless busyness and pour your precious 24 hrs each day into things that count for eternity. It’s a hard lesson. It’ll demand much of you! It won’t be safe or easy or even smart. But that’s the way it is with broken vessels. It can’t be reasonably explained. There’s nothing held back. Spend what you’ve received from G, now. Spend it doing what God asks you to do. Spend it in service to Jesus Christ and His people.

I’m not sure Mary fully realized what she was doing that evening in Bethany. She just did what she knew she had to do. And it was right thing. Jesus was anointed, in preparation for His passion, death, and burial that was only a few days away. You never know what will come of your all-out giving. Just give it and let God take control.

He’s full of surprises, you know. Think about it, it turns out Mary was the only one who got to anoint and embalm the body of her sacrificed Savior. The women who waited until Easter morning never got chance! Take a chance. Go all-out for Him!