

## HE SAID WHAT?!?!

Title: Part 5 – “Beautiful”

Date: May 10, 2026

While everyone here in the house is saying “Hi” to each other I want to say “Hi” if you are joining us online or on our app, thank you for spending some time with us! To all the moms out there, hope you had a blessed Mother’s Day as well.

Well, to all the moms, stepmoms, foster moms, spiritual moms, grandmas, and every woman who has poured herself into the life of a child... This church would not be what it is without you! Thank you for everything you do, I pray a blessing over your life, in Jesus name. Happy Mother’s Day!

If you've got a Bible or a Bible app, meet me in Mark chapter 14. If you don't have a Bible, no worries, we'll put everything on the screens. But Mark 14, starting in verse 1 says this:

Now the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were scheming to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. <sup>2</sup> “But not during the festival,” they said, “or the people may riot.” <sup>3</sup> While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. <sup>4</sup> Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? <sup>5</sup> It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly. <sup>6</sup> “Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? **SHE HAS DONE A BEAUTIFUL THING TO ME.** <sup>7</sup> The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. <sup>8</sup> She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. <sup>9</sup> Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

If you are just joining us we are in week 5 of a collection of messages called “He Said What?” where we have been meeting the real Jesus in His own words. Over the past four weeks, Jesus has asked the question that everyone has to answer for themselves, He says, “Who do you say I am?” Then He revealed what God is actually like, He audaciously says, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” Then He diagnosed what keeps us stuck when He said, “They say the old is better.” And last week, He held grace and truth in perfect tension when He declared, “Now go and leave your life of sin.”

If you missed any of this I can’t encourage you enough to go back and get caught up on our app or website. What an amazing thing to have the words of Jesus reliably preserved

in the Gospels and there for us anytime we want to really know what Jesus is like. Let's not take that for granted, amen! Let's not let familiarity breed blindness.

This week, we come to one of the most beautiful scenes in the New Testament. A woman does something extravagant. Everyone in the room criticizes her for it. And Jesus says eight words that, as He promised, have echoed through 2,000 years of history.

Today I want to preach a message I am simply calling:

## **Beautiful**

Here's the tension I want to work with today, and moms, I think this will land a little different for you. BUT what do you do when you pour yourself out and feel completely unseen? What do you do when you give up your time, your energy, your talent, your money, you give your all... and nobody says a word. Or worse, somebody criticizes you for the way you did it? What do you do with that? Can anyone relate to that tension? Any parents in the House ever feel that way?

We live in a culture that celebrates the visible. We celebrate the stage, the platform, the promotion, the achievement, the thing that gets posted and liked and shared. But what about the invisible stuff? What about the sacrifice that doesn't have a hashtag? What about the woman who held her family together through a season of hell and nobody even knew it was happening? What about the dad who works two jobs so his kids can have what he didn't have, and nobody throws him a parade? What about the person who has been faithfully serving in the background of the church for years and has never been recognized from the stage?

See, here is what we are going to get to know about Jesus today:

***We celebrate what we can see. Jesus celebrates what nobody sees.***

And I think this is especially true for moms. AND I know Mother's Day can be complicated. For some of you, this is a day of celebration. For others, it's a day of grief, maybe you've recently lost your mom, or maybe you're longing to be a mom and that door hasn't opened. And I want to honor the complexity of this day. I really do.

But here's what I also know. For many of the moms in this room, the thing you feel most often is not celebrated. It's invisible. You pour, and pour, and pour out your life. You give everything. You sacrifice sleep, career opportunities, hobbies, friendships, your own identity sometimes... and at the end of the day, nobody notices. The laundry doesn't thank you. The carpool doesn't applaud. The emotional labor of holding an entire household together gets no performance review, no bonus, and no promotion.

Psychologists call this “invisible labor.” All the unpaid, unrecognized emotional and logistical work primarily done by women and mothers. A 2023 study in the “Journal of Family Psychology” found that, “The perception of being unseen in one's sacrifices was more damaging to relationships than the actual workload itself.” Let me say that again. It wasn't the amount of work that broke women down. It was the feeling that nobody noticed!

Moms don't burn out because the work is hard. They burn out because the work is invisible. They're holding the schedules, remembering the allergies, tracking the shoe sizes, managing the emotions, anticipating the needs, and carrying the mental load for an entire household. AND the thank you they get is everyone asking, “What's for dinner?”

And it's not just moms. It's anyone who has ever poured themselves into something and felt like it evaporated into thin air. The volunteer who shows up every week and nobody thanks and it is just assumed they will show up next week. The employee who carries the team and watches someone else get all the credit. OR maybe you have experienced this, the friend who always checks in but nobody checks on.

If you feel that way today I want you to hear me, Jesus noticed! Jesus noticed and He calls it beautiful!

How do we know? Because in a room full of people who only saw waste, Jesus looked at one woman's extravagant sacrifice in Mark 14 and called it the most surprising thing: beautiful. SO, let's break this down. The first takeaway truth I have today is this:

## 1. What the world calls waste Jesus calls worship.

SO, the scene of Mark 14 is two days before Passover. Jesus knows what's coming. The cross is 48 hours away. He's in Bethany at the home of a man named Simon the Leper—which tells you that Simon was almost certainly healed by Jesus at some point, because nobody is having dinner at the house of Simon the currently suffering from leprosy, leper. So, even the setting tells you something, that this dinner is happening because Jesus changed someone's story.

During the meal, a woman enters, Mark doesn't give us her name, which is ironic because Jesus is about to say she'll be remembered everywhere the Gospel is preached. John's Gospel tells us this is Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. But she comes carrying an alabaster jar of pure nard. Which I am sure everyone has at home on their dresser, right?

So, what was this actually? Spikenard (or nard) is a rare, expensive, and intensely aromatic essential oil derived from a specific Himalayan plant. In other words, this wasn't Cool Water! In fact, alabaster jars of nard were often family heirlooms, passed down from

mother to daughter. Meaning, this wasn't just expensive perfume. This was her inheritance. Her security. Her future. In a culture where women had very few financial resources of their own, this jar may have been the most valuable thing she possessed. It was worth 300 denarii—roughly a year's wages for a common laborer. In today's terms, we're talking about \$40,000 to \$60,000 in a single jar!

AND what does she do with it here in Mark 14. She doesn't dab a little behind Jesus ears does she? Look at verse 3 again:

**She BROKE the jar and poured the perfume on his head.**

She breaks the jar. Meaning it can never be resealed, never reused, never returned. Breaking the neck of the jar ensured all the contents would be poured out, which was an act of complete, extravagant surrender and devotion. Her gift was total and irreversible. She literally held nothing back.

Think about what that took. Every eye in the room is on her. She's not a guest at this dinner, the text implies she came in uninvited. A woman, walking into a room full of men, holding the most valuable thing she owns, about to do something nobody asked her to do. She didn't announce it. She didn't explain it. She didn't ask permission. She just did it.

Charles Spurgeon was preaching on this on Nov. 28, 1859, and noted something curious. He noted that Mary did all this without saying a word. Martha was the talker, right? “Lord, if you had only been here my brother would not have died...” “Jesus tell my sister to get up and help...” But Mary was silent. She didn't describe what she was about to do beforehand, she didn't narrate it as it happened, and she didn't explain it afterward like some Instagram or TikTok personality. She simply poured out all she had. And sometimes the most powerful worship doesn't have words. Sometimes it's just a broken jar and a room that smells like heaven.

I also want you to notice the cost in context. This is a woman who probably didn't have much else. 300 denarii wasn't pocket change for her like it might have been for someone else at that table. This was everything. This was her nest egg. Her Plan B. Her safety net. And she poured it all on Jesus in about thirty seconds. Can I be honest? That's not stewardship. That's total abandonment. And there's a difference between strategic giving and abandoned worship. One is calculated. The other is reckless. And Jesus loved the reckless one.

SO, this woman silently does this, the room is filled with intense fragrance, then verse 4:

<sup>4</sup> Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this **WASTE** of perfume? <sup>5</sup> It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly.

Bible nerd alert! The word translated in English as **WASTE** here is the same root word used in John 17:12 to describe Judas, the disciple who betrayed Jesus, who also happened to be in the room. Jesus is praying to the Father in John 17 and says:

<sup>12</sup> When I was with them I protected them in your name that you gave me, and I guarded them, and none of them was lost except the son of **DESTRUCTION**.

Same root word to describe “wasted perfume” and a “wasted life.” Judas criticized Mary for wasting money, but he wasted his entire life! The man who called her gift wasteful was the biggest waste in the room. Someone needs to hear that today! Sometimes your biggest critic is only calling you out because of the hypocrisy in their own life. Amen?

BUT, and let’s get honest here, let’s admit that on the surface their objections sound reasonable, even spiritual. Because what did they reason? “This could have been sold and the money given to the poor.” AND come on, that sounds responsible. It sounds like good stewardship. BUT Jesus in His wisdom calls it exactly what it is, judgment dressed up as generosity. They weren’t concerned about the poor. They were offended by the extravagance. They couldn’t understand why someone would give that much to Jesus when there were “better” uses for it.

When Charles Spurgeon preached on this passage he described her act as “the deed of a soul all on fire—the deed of a woman filled with deep devotion and reverent love.” Then he said this about her critics:

“I shall always feel obliged to Judas for figuring up the price of that box of costly nard. He did it to blame her, but we will let his figures stand, and think the more of her the more he put down to the account of waste.”

In other words, thank God the critic counted the cost because it lets us see just how much she was willing to give. Amen?

Because the world will always call extravagant devotion wasteful. The world looks at a woman who steps back from a career to raise her kids at home and says, “What a waste of potential.” The world looks at someone who gives sacrificially to the church and says, “That money could have been better spent.” The world looks at a life poured out in service and says, “You’re not being smart with your time.”

But Jesus looks at that same sacrifice and uses a word the critics never would. He calls it BEAUTIFUL.

What the world calls waste Jesus calls worship, and... number 2:

## 2. Devotion is never measured by those watching; it's measured by the one receiving.

A few years ago, I read about a study where researchers asked grown adults to describe the single most formative spiritual moment of their childhood. The most common answer wasn't a church service. It wasn't a youth camp. It wasn't a Bible study or a baptism. It was this, "I accidentally walked past my mother's bedroom door and heard her praying for me." Come on, how awesome is that? No performing. No posting about it. Just moms pouring out what they had, alone in a room, to an audience of One. And it changed their child's life.

Devotion is never measured by those watching. It's measured by the One receiving it.

This takes us to verse 5 of Mark 14. Remember, they piously protest the use of the nard and how it could have been given to help the poor and, rest of 5:

And they rebuked her HARSHLY.

This is one of those understatement in the Gospels because this wasn't a polite, civil disagreement, no this was public humiliation! She came in with the most precious thing she had, gave it to Jesus, and got torn apart and utterly humiliated for it! She went from unseen worshiper to a public spectacle in thirty seconds.

BUT then Jesus steps in. Verse 6:

<sup>6</sup> "Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? [And then here it is, the one-liner] SHE HAS DONE A BEAUTIFUL THING TO ME.

The Greek word for "beautiful" here is **{KAH-Lin}** kalon and it doesn't just mean aesthetically pretty. It does mean that, beautiful to behold, BUT it also means morally excellent, noble, praiseworthy, inherently good. It's the same word used in the Septuagint—the Greek translation of the Old Testament—in Genesis 1, when God looks at everything He's made and says, "It is good," **{KAH-Lin}** kalon.

Jesus looks at this woman's extravagant act of devotion and uses the same word God used when He looked at the sunrise, the oceans, the stars, and the mountains. He's

saying, “What you just did belongs in the same category as creation itself. It's that beautiful.”

Here's my point. The critics had opinions. Right? But Jesus had the only one that mattered!

And here's the thing that I need every mom in this room to hear. You live in a world that measures your worth by productivity. By output. By efficiency. By how well you're keeping up. And that same world will look at your sacrifice—the sleepless nights, the carpools, the homework battles, the emotional labor that nobody sees—and it will either ignore it completely or tell you you're doing it wrong. The internet has an opinion about how you feed your kids, how you discipline your kids, whether you work outside the home or stay home, how much screen time you allow, whether your house is clean enough, whether you're present enough, whether you're doing ENOUGH.

AND into all of that noise, into all of those voices, Jesus says one word: **{KAH-Lin}** kalon. Beautiful.

He doesn't measure your devotion by the opinions of the people watching. He measures it by His own heart. And what He sees when He looks at your sacrifice is not waste. It's worship.

Verse 8: **She did what she COULD. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial.**

Jesus says, “She did what she could.” Not she did everything perfectly. Not she did what was expected. Not she did what the critics approved of. She did what she COULD. That phrase should be so freeing! Because “what she could” was different from what anyone else in the room could do. Simon could host. Martha could cook. Peter could preach. Judas could fundraise and work a spreadsheet. But Mary... Mary could pour out what she had, and Jesus honored what she brought.

Some of you have been beating yourself up because what you can do doesn't look like what someone else can do. Your best looks different than her best. Your resources look different. Your capacity looks different. And you've been measuring yourself by someone else's jar. Stop it! Jesus doesn't compare your alabaster to anyone else's. He just asks, “Did you pour out what you could?”

Come on, can I preach this for a minute? Because I think some of you need to hear this today. You've been listening to voices that sound a lot like the critics in this room. Voices that say your sacrifice isn't enough. Voices that say you should be doing more, giving more, being more. Voices that look at what you pour out and say, “why this waste?”

Maybe it's the voice on social media of the mom who seems to have it all together—the clean house, the organic meals, the perfect family photos—and you're sitting there in yesterday's shirt wondering if you're ruining your kids. Maybe it's the voice of a family member who doesn't understand why you do what you do. Maybe it's your own voice—that internal critic that says, “It's not enough. You're not enough.”

But I need you to hear this. Those voices are not the voice of Jesus! Jesus is not standing over you with a clipboard evaluating your performance! Jesus is standing between you and your critics saying, “Leave her alone! She has done a beautiful thing!” Come on, that's the Jesus we've been meeting in these messages! He's the one who looks at your extravagant, exhausting, underappreciated sacrifice and He calls it the most beautiful thing in the room!

AND that takes us to this, number 3, you need to know that:

### **3. Jesus sees what no one else sees, and He calls it beautiful.**

{PAUSE} Look at verse 9 again. Whether you are a mom today or not. For anyone feeling like what they do is unseen and unappreciated, Jesus says this to you:

**<sup>9</sup> Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”**

Think about what Jesus just said. He's about to be betrayed, arrested, beaten, and crucified. He is hours from the cross. And He takes a moment to make a permanent, global, eternal declaration about this woman's act of devotion. He says everywhere my story is told—in every language, on every continent, for the rest of human history—her story will be told with it.

AND 2,000 years later, every time you read Mark 14, every time someone preaches this passage in Nairobi or São Paulo or London or right here in Florida, she's there! Mark doesn't include her name, but her legacy is woven into the fabric of the gospel itself. 2,000 years later and we are still talking about what she did! Jesus made sure of that.

And isn't that just like God? The disciples who argued about who was the greatest (and let's be honest, most of us couldn't name all twelve without looking it up) but this unnamed woman who just poured out what she had? She's in every Bible on the planet! She never wrote a book. She never preached a sermon. She never led a ministry. She broke a jar. And Jesus wrote her into not one but ALL FOUR of the Gospels!

That tells us something about what God values, amen? He doesn't measure impact the way we do. We measure by visibility, by reach, by numbers. God measures by devotion. By sacrifice. By the heart behind the gift. The world will forget your name in 100 years. Jesus will not.

AND here's what I don't want you to miss. Jesus didn't just accept her gift. He publicly defended it. He stood between her and every critic in the room. He shielded her. Just like He did with the woman caught in adultery in John 8 last week, He positioned Himself between a woman being shamed and the voices doing the shaming.

Do you see the pattern? Jesus keeps stepping in front of people who are being attacked. He keeps defending the ones the world discards. He keeps using His voice to silence the critics and honor the broken. And if He did it for her, He'll do it for you!

That's what He does. That's who He is. He sees the sacrifice no one else sees, and He calls it by its real name. Not waste. Not excessive. Not misguided. Beautiful.

Come on, does that give any weary hearts some hope in the house today? John Eldredge makes this so personal, he writes:

“You are far more than what people see. There are depths to you that have been pushed down, beauty that's been buried, glory that's been covered over. But God sees.”

One more thing I want you to see and then I'll give you a couple of things to do this week. Number 4:

#### 4. Sacrifice sees what ambition misses.

{PAUSE} Verse 8 adds one more layer that most people miss. Jesus says:

She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial.

Nobody else in the room understood what was about to happen. The disciples were arguing about thrones and positions. Peter was going to draw a sword in a few hours and take off a guy's ear. But this woman, she got it. She was the only one in the room oriented to Jesus' actual mission. While everyone else was confused about the timing, she was preparing for the cross. **AND** she didn't calculate. She didn't strategize. She didn't form a committee. She just poured out all she had. And the fragrance filled the whole house. In John's Gospel we read that the fragrance filled the entire house.

**BECAUSE** here's the thing about sacrifice: **even the people who criticize it can't avoid being touched by it.** The aroma of her worship reached every corner of the room, including the nostrils of the man who would betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver.

That's what happens when you pour yourself out for Jesus. Your sacrifice creates an atmosphere that changes the room. Moms, your homes smell different because of what you pour out. Your kids' lives carry a fragrance they may not recognize until they're thirty-five, but it's there. Every prayer you whisper over a sleeping child, every meal you cook when you'd rather collapse, every time you show up when you're running on fumes—that's perfume on the head of Jesus. And the fragrance fills the house.

You might not see the fruit of it now. You might feel like you're pouring into a void. Like nobody notices. Like the investment isn't producing any return. But let me tell you something about nard—it lingers! The fragrance of what this woman did would have stayed on Jesus for days! When He was arrested in the garden, He smelled like her worship! When He stood before Pilate, the scent was still on Him! When they nailed Him to the cross, the perfume was still in His hair!

**AND** your sacrifice lingers too! Long after you think it's forgotten, the fragrance is still there! In the character of your children! In the atmosphere of your home! In the quiet moments when someone remembers, "My mom prayed for me!" In the way your grandkids and great grandkids will love God because you loved Him first! That's a broken alabaster jar of nard poured out, and it doesn't evaporate! It fills the house for generations!

Let me close with two things.

If you're here today and you're still exploring what it means to follow Jesus—you're not sure what you believe, you're kicking the tires—I want you to look at what Jesus does in this story. If that kind of God is interesting to you, a God who sees the unseen and values what the world discards, then I just want to invite you to keep coming back. Keep listening to His words. Keep watching what He does. Because the Jesus we've been meeting is not a distant deity who demands your performance. He's a person who notices what nobody else notices and calls it the most beautiful thing in the room.

If you are a follower of Jesus, I've got two things for you this week:

First, go tell a woman in your life—your mom, your wife, your sister, your daughter, your friend—that what she does is beautiful. Use that word. Not "good job." Not "thanks for everything." Beautiful! Because she probably hasn't heard it in a long time. And she needs to hear it from someone other than a preacher on Mother's Day. Send the text. Write the note. Say it out loud over dinner. Let her know that what she pours out is seen and honored and beautiful.

Second, ask yourself this question:

***What's my alabaster jar?***

What is the most precious thing I'm holding onto that Jesus might be asking me to pour out? Maybe it's time. Maybe it's money. Maybe it's control. Maybe it's your reputation. Maybe it's comfort. Whatever it is, I want you to consider the possibility that the thing you're most afraid to give is the thing that will produce the most beautiful worship of your life.

Next week, we're going to see a very different side of Jesus. We've spent five weeks watching the compassionate, gracious, beautiful Jesus. But is He safe? Is He tame? Next week, He says something that will shatter that assumption entirely: "I did not come to bring peace, but a sword." Don't miss it and invite someone to join you!

But for now, on this Mother's Day, I want you to sit with what Jesus said. In a room full of critics, in the shadow of the cross, with the weight of the world on His shoulders, Jesus looked at one woman's reckless, extravagant, hold-nothing-back devotion, and He said the only word that mattered.

Beautiful.

AND that's what He says about your sacrifice too. He sees it. He honors it. And He calls it beautiful.

Moms, you might go home today, and the breakfast dishes will still be in the sink. The laundry will still need folding. The kids will still need you before you've had five minutes to yourself. And none of it will feel beautiful. But I want you to carry one thing with you: the God of the universe, the one who spoke stars into existence and called them good, looked at a woman who poured out everything she had and used the same word. Beautiful.

And He's using it about you right now. Would you bow your heads with me?

**[PRAYER TIME]**