



The Shepherd's Church
February 25, 2024
Guest Speaker: Aaron Bashore

Message Summary:

In the heart of our faith lies the transformative power of the Gospel, a message that transcends borders and cultural barriers, reaching into the depths of human experience with the hope and love of Jesus Christ. This morning, I shared with you the story of Mary and her alabaster flask, a narrative that captures the essence of what it means to live a life poured out in extravagant worship and mission.

Mary's act of breaking her precious flask of nard over Jesus' head was not merely a gesture of devotion; it was a prophetic act that prepared Jesus for His burial. Her sacrifice, criticized by some as wasteful, was in fact a beautiful display of worship and understanding of Jesus' impending sacrifice. Mary's offering was costly, representing perhaps years of savings or a family heirloom, yet she chose to pour it out entirely for her Lord.

This act of worship by Mary is a model for us. It challenges us to consider what our own 'alabaster flask' might be. What is the most precious thing we hold onto that God is calling us to break and pour out in service to Him? For some, it may be a career or a relationship that does not honor God. For others, it might be a call to cross-cultural missions or to serve the unreached in our own communities. Whatever it is, the call is clear: to offer our lives as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, which is our true and proper worship.

The Gospel is not a call to a life of comfort and security but to one of sacrifice and service. As we pour out our lives for the sake of the Gospel, we may face trials and even persecution. Yet, even when we do not see the immediate fruit of our labor, we trust in the resurrection of Christ, which guarantees a glorious and happy ending to our story of faith.

In my own journey, I have witnessed the power of the Gospel to break through barriers, as seen in the story of a Kurdish family in Atlanta and the unnamed woman who shared Jesus with them through simple acts of kindness. This is the mission of Christ—to pour out His Spirit through us in ways that may seem extravagant to the world but are simply acts of obedience to our Savior.

Discussion Guide

Bible Reading:

Mark 14:3-9; Romans 12:1; Matthew 25:40

Observation Questions:

- In Mark 14:3-9, what was the woman's act of worship, and how did those present respond to it?
- How did Jesus interpret the woman's actions, and what significance did He attribute to them?
- What does Romans 12:1 suggest about the nature of true worship and sacrifice?
- According to Matthew 25:40, how does Jesus equate service to others with service to Himself?

Interpretation Questions:

- Why might the woman in Mark 14 have chosen to use such a costly ointment to anoint Jesus, and what does this tell us about her understanding of His identity and mission?
- Considering Jesus' response to the woman's act, what can we infer about the value of sacrificial giving in God's eyes?
- How does Romans 12:1 redefine worship in terms of daily living and personal sacrifice?
- Reflecting on Matthew 25:40, what implications does this have for how we view and treat those in need around us?

Application Questions:

- Reflect on something valuable in your life that you might be holding onto tightly. How can you offer it to God as an act of worship this week?
- Identify a situation where you may have judged someone else's act of service as impractical or wasteful. How can you instead encourage and support their sacrificial giving?
- Choose one aspect of your daily routine that you can dedicate to God as a living sacrifice. What specific change will you make to honor this commitment?
- Think of a person or group in your community who is often overlooked or marginalized. What is one concrete action you can take this week to serve them as if you were serving Christ Himself?
- Consider the concept of 'pouring out' your life for the Gospel. What is one step you can take to move beyond your comfort zone in sharing your faith with others?