

Little Things?

by Linville Dunaway, Corinth Christian church

Mark 14:3, 8 "And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. --- She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying."

This account tells of the woman who anointed the Lord with the ointment. Some of the people there grumbled when they saw what she had done, finding fault with her and saying that she had wasted the ointment. One thing is as true today as it was then, there will always be some who will find fault with a person and what they try to do. Jesus found no fault with her pouring the ointment on him. He told the complainers to let her alone and that she had done what she could.

The Lord said that she had done what she could. She didn't have the ability to do some great work and the Lord didn't expect her to. He only expected her to do the same as he expects of you, or me, to do what you can do. That is fair isn't it? Face the facts, not all of us have the same abili-

ties, some can do much more than others. If a person can do a big service then the Lord wants that person to do a big service. God desires that we do what we can, whether it is big, or small.

Sacrificing the ointment for the Lord was not a great work, but she was willing to give it to the Lord. It might have been the most expensive item that she owned, yet she gladly gave it up. What moved her to do this act of kindness for the Lord? Whatever her reasons and purpose, the Lord said that she came to anoint his body for the burial. He was pleased, no matter what anyone else thought about her, or what she had done.

A lot of folks don't think that anything is worth doing if it is not something that will stand out and bring praise to them. Many others could have done what this woman had done, but none did. They worried about what the ointment was worth and what they would have done with it. How sad that so often the main consideration is the worth in money of something. To excuse their lack of giving to the Lord, they said that it could have been sold and the money given to the poor. Jesus told them that the poor were with them and that they could give to the poor whenever they wanted to. I doubt that they were as interested in the poor as they were in the money that the ointment would have brought.

In **Matthew 25:31-46** the Lord speaks of the coming judgment. Those on his left and right hands were separated by the lives that they lived. On the right the people had fed the hungry, clothed the poor, visited the sick and those in prison, doing what we might call little everyday things. They were surprised when the Lord said, "Verily I say unto you, *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*"

Those on his left were told that they had not bothered to give food to the hungry, clothes to the poor, and had not visited the sick and those in prison. Likewise they seemed to be surprised when told that they had not done these things for the Lord himself. His answer to them should make us all think of what we do in our day to day lives. Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, *Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.*" (**Matthew 25:45**)

No they had not done any big works as far as we know, but the trouble was - they didn't do the "little things" either. He didn't say, you didn't go into foreign countries and win thousands to Christ, or some other great work. However, he did find fault with the fact that they didn't help those that they could have helped in their day to day lives. Little things? Not to God.

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TO MAKE A LIVING—PICK UP STICKS!

AS IN EVERY PERIOD THROUGHOUT THE WORLD'S HISTORY, THE POOR AND NEEDY OUTNUMBERED THE WEALTHY AND MIDDLECLASS IN BIBLICAL TIMES—ESPECIALLY IN THE CITIES! THOSE WITHOUT A FAMILY BUSINESS, OR SOME SMALL PLOT OF LAND ON WHICH TO GROW FOOD, WERE HARD PUT TO EKE OUT AN EXISTENCE! ONE MEAGER METHOD BY WHICH A POOR MAN COULD MANAGE TO SUBSIST, WAS GATHERING TWIGS FOR FIREWOOD. IN A PLACE LIKE JERUSALEM, IT WAS AT A PREMIUM FOR NONE COULD BE FOUND, IN THE CITY, AND THE OUTLYING AREAS BOASTED OF VERY LITTLE MORE! EVERY STICK AND TWIG THAT LAY ON THE FLOOR OF THE KIDRON VALLEY, EVERY FALLEN BRANCH FROM THE OLIVE TREES ON THE MOUNT ABOVE, WAS POUNCED UPON. THE WOOD-GATHERERS SPENT LONG, BACK-BREAKING HOURS AT THIS TASK, FINALLY TO CARRY THEIR HEAVY BUNDLES IN A WEARY CLIMB UP THE HILL TO THE CITY, DURING THE DIM TWILIGHT AT THE END OF DAY—THERE, TO BARGAIN WITH SOME ANXIOUS HOUSEWIFE NEEDFULL OF WOOD TO COOK THE EVENING MEAL OR TO WARM THE HOUSE AGAINST A CHILLY NIGHT!

PERHAPS THE OLIVE GROVES WERE THE BEST PLACES FOR WOOD GATHERING, ALTHOUGH IT DID MEAN A LONG TRUDGE DOWN INTO THE KIDRON VALLEY AND A HARD CLIMB UP THE MOUNT OF OLIVES TO GET THERE! BUT, WHEN THE TREES WERE PRUNED, ALL FALLEN TIMBER BELONGED TO THE WOOD-GATHERERS, FOR THIS CAME UNDER THE MOSAIC LAW OF GLEANING, AS STATED IN DEUT. 24:19-21. LIFE WAS HARD FOR THE POOR BUT AT LEAST THESE LAWS GAVE THEM SOME HELP!

NEXT WEEK: THE KING WHO CAUSED AN EARTHQUAKE!

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