



THEME – SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

Lesson Notes

Subject: Break Open Your Box (Mark 14:3)

Scripture Passage:

“And being in Bethany at 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; she brake the box and pour it on his head.”

Introduction:

During the biblical time, when a young woman arrived at the age to marry, her family would buy an alabaster box for her and fill it with ointment. The size of the box and the value of the ointment was to display the amount of wealth her family acquired. Generally, alabaster has been used to symbolize transparency and purity.

Some commentaries say this vial (box) of expensive perfume was equal in value to a whole life’s savings. The alabaster flask was an expensive clay jar that was used to carry oil or perfume and it was crafted by the best craftsmen. It was very expensive to buy. The only way to get to open the flask in those days was to break it open.

The question is, “What is the spiritual significance of breaking the box (jar, flask, etc.)?”

Scripture References:

Genesis 28:18, Exodus 25:6; Esther 2:12; Song of Solomon 1:12, 4:13-1; Joel 1:10; Matthew 6:17, 26:7; Mark 6:13; Luke 7:37; John 12:3

“Pray for God’s help and guidance in applying these verses”.

Biblical Applications:

1. Why did Mary break the alabaster box?

- **Mary broke the alabaster box** so she could not use it for anything else. **Had** she only taken the lid off, it could have been used for something else or she might have been tempted not to pour out all of the perfume; in her **breaking** the **box**, she made a complete sacrifice.
- **Mary had**, like the day she sat at Jesus' feet, drinking in His every word, **it seems, chosen what was better** (Luke 10:38-42). Jesus' point to the disciples, just as she had chosen the best use of her time, she had now **chosen the best use of her treasures**.
- **Mary's alabaster jar's precious contents poured out**. So too Jesus' body was broken, His precious blood poured out. **She did it for love**, so did He.
- **Mary** through her act that night **was preaching His gospel**. A gospel of great cost, great sacrifice, and great love.
- **Mary broke her alabaster jar forgetting herself**, symbolically showing that very soon the Master would do likewise. Because of His **great love, Jesus' death was the breaking of an alabaster box for us**. Shouldn't our lives be the same for Him?

2. What are the healing properties of alabaster?

- **Physical Healing:** Alabaster is a well-known crystal which heals its wearer against **tension, headache, lack of concentration and problems related to painful joints**. It is believed that these crystals can also be used to lighten up the hormonal imbalance in the body. Psychologically, it is considered that alabaster stones can prevent its wearer from an outburst of emotions and anger. This stone is also used for easing **anxiety and nervousness**.
Alabaster crystals have a strongly purifying effect on the vegetative nervous system. **Controlling anger and diminishing temper** are some of the beneficial traits of Alabaster crystals.
- **Emotional Healing:** Alabaster is the pure form of transparency, as it symbolizes **purity**. It is used to encourage **feelings of peace and calmness**. The powerful energies of these crystals are used to increase flexibility and let the wearer be more adaptable. Alabaster comprises effective energies which let the wearer **fight against stress, heal arguments and provides inner harmony**.
This stone is used majorly to lessen the fear into the wearer and helps him to resolve disturbance and problems. Alabaster is known as the protective stone that teaches its wearer how to be calm and **grow stronger**.
- **Spiritual Healing:** Alabaster **expands the ability to forgive others and even oneself**.
Alabaster **inspires positivity when it is used at home**.

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3. What was spikenard oil used for in the Bible?
 - An aromatic plant, [Song of Solomon 4:13-14](#)
 - Perfume prepared from, [Song of Solomon 1:12](#)
 - A fragrant oil from, used in anointing, [Mark 14:3](#); [John 12:3](#)

4. What is the spiritual significance (meaning) of spikenard?
 - **Spikenard** essential oil is a highly regarded healing and **spiritual** oil that has been used throughout the world for thousands of years. ... To **anoint** the feet with **Spikenard** was considered a humbling act, and in Mary's case, an act of worship and appreciation for Jesus.
 - The primary **purpose** of **anointing** with the holy **anointing oil** was to **sanctify**, to **set** the **anointed** person or object **apart as** qodesh, or "**holy**" [Exodus 30:29](#). Originally, the **oil** was used exclusively for the priests and the Tabernacle articles, but its use was later extended to include kings [I Samuel 10:1](#).

5. What is in your box and why do you need to break it?

Closing:

It certainly was not a common occurrence at the time, nor would it be today, for one to bestow upon another a gift worth a year's wages, especially if it served no seemingly useful purpose. That was precisely what took place when a village woman broke an alabaster box of perfume and lavished it upon Jesus' feet. It was truly an unusual act of devotion. Although thought to be foolish by most observers at the time. Just as Jesus foretold, today we remember a woman's extravagant expression of worship and honor.

Many of us find ourselves unable to offer such extraordinary and expensive gifts to the Lord, yet we yearn to give but often question what. Lift the lid of your heart's alabaster box and offer unto God those treasures, things that we find hard to release. Take it to the king!!!!

References:

“Pray for God's help and guidance in applying these verses”.

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Cross, M. (1983). *The Alabaster Box*

“Giving Your Best to Jesus”, wellspringchristianministries.org

While Mark does not disclose the name of the woman who anointed Jesus with a very expensive oil, in John 12:2-3, John tells us the woman’s name is Mary of Bethany. Everything about this flask of oil is expensive. An alabaster flask was a long-necked perfume vase that was considered a luxury item. In verse 5 of Mark 14, we learn that this bottle of oil could have been sold for 300 denarii, which equaled about a year’s wages.

Mary didn’t just break open any bottle of oil to anoint Jesus. She broke the best of what she had – the most expensive one. Some of the people that witnessed this heartfelt act of worship grumbled and complain about the waste. But Jesus commended Mary. Her act was similar to the poor woman at the temple who have two mites in the temple offering. The widow’s offering had very little value. Mary’s offering was very expensive. Yet Jesus commended both equally, because both women gave the best of what they had to offer.

Over in Luke’s gospel, chapter 7, Luke tells about a woman who washed Jesus’ feet with her tears and dries them with her hair. When Simon, a Pharisee, complained, Jesus told a parable:

There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?”

Simon answered and said, “I suppose the *one* whom he forgave more.”

And He said to him, “You have rightly judged.” Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped *them* with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. Therefore, I say to you, her sins, which *are* many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loves little.”

The more we realize the depth of our sin and the price Jesus paid, the more willing we are to give to Him from our best. When you are called to give, do you give of your best? Do you grumble or complain about the “waste” when others give something that is very costly? When you give of your time, talent, and money do you give just enough to feel like you met a requirement – or do you give your best – or even your all like the poor widow?

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God, thank you for the many blessing you bestow on us every day. Thank you for your grace and forgiveness. Lord, when we give, may our hearts be full of gratitude and love for You out of thanksgiving for the price you paid for our sin and may we give our very best.

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