

Mark 14 : 3 – 9

JESUS ANOINTED AT BETHANY

³ Meanwhile, Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon, a man who had previously had leprosy. While he was eating, a woman came in with a beautiful alabaster jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard. She broke open the jar and poured the perfume over his head. ⁴ Some of those at the table were indignant. “Why waste such expensive perfume?” they asked. ⁵ “It could have been sold for a year’s wages and the money given to the poor!” So they scolded her harshly. ⁶ But Jesus replied, “Leave her alone. Why criticize her for doing such a good thing to me? ⁷ You will always have the poor among you, and you can help them whenever you want to. But you will not always have me. ⁸ She has done what she could and has anointed my body for burial ahead of time. ⁹ I tell you the truth, wherever the Good News is preached throughout the world, this woman’s deed will be remembered and discussed.”



BEAUTIFUL WASTE : INSPIRED BY JOHANNES HARTL

“Was it really necessary?” . That is the question at the heart of the disciples’ protest as this woman poured out her extravagant offering to Jesus.

No. It wasn’t. It was a waste. But it was a beautiful waste. And wherever in the world you hear the story of Jesus, you will hear too about this woman and her worship.

Jesus himself was a man in his prime who was prepared to hang from a cross when he could so easily have taken himself down, could so easily have chosen a more convenient way. But instead he wasted his best years, he wasted his blood, for the beauty of something bigger.

If we’re honest though, few things can be more offensive to us than waste. Wasted money, wasted time, wasted opportunities; we hate them. Even the thought of a wasted youth can haunt us and push us into decisions we might not otherwise have made. Waste make us feel like we’re being cheated, that someone else is winning at our expense. You’ve probably felt that pressure already to maximise your time at university and to make sure you’re not missing out. It’s why we’re constantly comparing grades, experiences and connections. We want to make sure that they measure up. For every activity, every interaction, even the “holy” ones, we need to know that it was worth it. We need assurance that we didn’t lose out and that we got the best deal possible.

But could you imagine a different way? A more extravagant way? A more beautifully wasteful way? A way of radical abandonment to the kingdom of God, regardless of the cost?

If your time at university is an alabaster flask, what would it look like to break it into pieces and pour out the contents on Jesus in worship?

To stop asking, “was it necessary?” And to start asking, “was it beautiful?”

“It isn’t about giving much, it’s about giving all.”

- Johannes Hartl