

DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

“While He was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as 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. Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor”. And they rebuked her harshly. “Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body before hand to prepare for my burial. I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached through out the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her”. (Mark 14:3-9)

Imagine viewing the above scene from a TV program as part of Jesus Life Story. You may enjoy but wonder what made a mere woman poured an expensive perfume over an ordinary looking man; it is an odd act. You may describe it as an act of a woman who admired Jesus. But, do you understand?

This woman’s act was not understood even to her time. People who knew the background of the woman and the identity of Jesus even had wrong impression about the event:

1. **A waste of money:** Because the nard perfume is expensive they claimed that it is a waste of money and a prodigal act. Instead of pouring the perfume on Jesus’ head she could have helped herself, her family, her friends or could have sold it and given the money to the poor. Well, what the disciples said seems right and logical; it is better to feed the poor, clothe the naked, adopt the orphan, or shield those without shelter rather than doing this show. We can honour Jesus by caring for others and giving to the destitute. But one thing will stop us from criticizing the woman’s act; she gave from her personal money, not from the pockets of other people or from her budget for other people. She offered what belonged to her.

2. **Done by a sinner:** In the book of Luke, the woman is mentioned as a sinner. But Jesus has come for the sinners not for the righteous as He said, ***“For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”*** Jesus did not come only for the good people but more to those who are bad, to those who do terrible things. He came so that many would turn back from their wrong ways. Exactly this is what happened to this woman. She turned from sin and served Jesus. Yet, the people did not realize the woman’s act of worship or service but rather rebuked her harshly. But Jesus said, ***“Leave her alone, why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me.”*** And ***“I tell you the truth, wherever the Gospel is preached through out the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”*** The act of this woman was justifiable in front of Jesus. He knew the woman more than anyone else. He knew her motive and He understood and honoured her action:

a) **Her sins have been forgiven:** Sin is any thought or act that displeases God, like anger, selfishness, pride, fight, bribe, fraud, stealing, speaking lies, slander, adultery, etc. The woman was described as a sinner. In the time of Jesus it meant that she was doing adultery. She was guilty -

one of the heaviest ill feeling that could oppress and torture a person. A guilty conscience would not only be relieved when the person stops doing sin but when she receives forgiveness from God. A convicted sinner knew that she has to pay the penalty of her sins. And it meant her life because the wage of sin is death. But, the woman was forgiven by Jesus. The authority of Jesus in forgiving sin gave her relief, as if she was raised up from the grave. No more judgment or punishment. ***“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8: 1)*** Considering her situation, just imagine her feeling toward Jesus, the one who made her free from sin and judgment. Her new condition made her gave to Him the most precious thing she had. This would be the same feeling of everyone who invites and accepts Jesus to enter his or her personal life. The forgiveness she received from Jesus made her elated because all her previous wrongdoing and bad reports were already cancelled. Jesus freed her, and in response she wanted to give the best of what she owned and offered it to glorify Jesus. She did what she could to express her gratitude to the One who forgave her sins.

b) **Jesus has forgiven her sins:** Jesus said to the woman, ***“your sins are forgiven.”*** The only one who could forgive any sin is God. So the people who heard Jesus began to say among themselves, ***“Who is this who even forgives sin?”*** Jesus has the authority to forgive sin because He is God who came down from heaven to save people from sin and death. ***“Jesus being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!”*** For Jesus to be the King and to have the victory over the sin and death He must die on the cross paying the penalty and to rise from death to give life to those who believe in Him. Jesus said that the woman has prepared Him for burial by pouring Him perfume. Because it is only by Jesus’ death on the cross that there is redemption for sinners. The woman believed that Jesus has the power to forgive. She had the faith in Him that He is the King who came to save the sinners. Jesus said to the woman, ***“Your faith has saved you; go in peace”. (Luke 7:50).***

My dear reader: This message is for you to know that you are, as any human, is a sinner. Whatever you do, you cannot get rid of sin and its effect on your life. You need a Saviour. And this is what God did when He sent His Son Jesus, to show His love for you. ***“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)*** Therefore, you have a big hope in God, that your sins whatever big and offensive can be forgiven and your life can be renewed through Jesus Christ.

Dearly beloved, I wish you follow what the woman did; she repented and received forgiveness and entered new life by honouring Jesus and giving Him her best. I wish you to give your life to God as you pray: ***“Father God in heaven, forgive me my sins. Today I accept Jesus’ death on the cross for my forgiveness. Lord Jesus, I invite You to enter my life and to be my Lord and my Master. Today I commit my life to You, to give you the best I have. This is my prayer in Jesus’ name.”*** Amen.