

## Doing What You Can

**Text: Mark 14:1-11**

### Understanding the Contextual Setting and Particulars:

- The overall setting of vv.1-11 is “two days off” from “the Passover and Unleavened Bread” and “the chief priests and scribes were seeking how to seize Him by stealth and kill Him.” Though the *time* aspect is a bit tricky to understand, the **motive of Judas’ betrayal** is the real emphasis in vv.3-9. Here’s why...
- The *story/events* of vv.3-9 actually took place “six days before the Passover” according to John 12:1ff. It is parenthetically inserted in Mark 14 between v.2 and v.10 to help explain **why** Judas “went off to the chief priests, in order to betray Him,” vv.10-11. However, to follow this thread we also need to understand that it was **Judas** who apparently proffered the notion that the ointment was “wasted” and could have been “sold... and the money given to the poor,” cf. John 12:4-5. And of course, this idea was not born of philanthropy, but corruption, John 12:6. Now, here’s the point...
- **Judas**, having scolded the woman (Mary, sister of Martha, John 12:3; 11:2) and hypocritically suggested that the ointment should have been sold and the money given to the poor, and therefore became the **primary target** of Jesus’ rebuke, vv.6-7; and he’s been stinging from and seething in it for a few days now. How does this information aid the context of Mark 14:2ff? It shows **why** Judas was **NOW** willing to seek out the chief priests in order to betray Jesus! Which seems to be the reason Mark inserted the events of a few days earlier into the narrative here.

**There’s a lot that could be considered from our text of vv.3-9, but let’s just look at one verse, v.8, for some Three Primary Points of Consideration**

**V.8, “She has done what she could”** is a simple, straightforward statement, but it is filled with meaning if you think about it. To this end, let’s emphasize individual words and phrases:

1. **“She has done what she could”**- So many in our world, and unfortunately even some in the church, think it’s a *male* world. But God has never been, and still isn’t, a *respector of persons*, Acts 10:34, or of *gender*, Gal.3:28. Yes, He recognizes the differences in *gender* (He *created* them both after all, Gen.1:27!), and even gave them different *roles in and out* of the church which were suited to them, cf. 1Tim.2:8-15. But there is a definite *place in and work to do* in His kingdom for **females!** Think of the prominence given in Scripture to women like Sarah, Rebekah, Jochebed, Rahab, Deborah, Esther, Elizabeth, Mary (Jesus’ mother), and “the women” (cf. Luke 23:49,55-56) who did so much to care for and minister to Jesus, as well as Priscilla, Phoebe, Eunice and Lois, etc.! And what a legacy this dear lady has because of her *faith* and the Lord’s words, v.9! Sister(s), don’t ever think there’s “nothing for me” in the kingdom!
2. **“She has done what she could”**- She didn’t just *think about it*- she **did it!** She didn’t just *plan to*, **she did it!** She didn’t just *want to*, **she did it!** She didn’t just *intend to*,

**she did it!** I have no idea how long she planned or saved or thought about it, I just know what Jesus said, “*She has done...*” past tense! We can *want to, intend to, plan to,* and *prepare to* all we want, but what counts is what we actually **do!** And what prompted this particular act? Mary **understood** some things about Jesus that even His disciples had missed, v.8b (that He was going to die, cf. Matt.16:21-22). And how did she come to this particular understanding? Perhaps it was because she **listened** closely to Him, cf. Luke 10:38-42! Therefore, even when her (and Martha’s) brother, Lazarus fell ill and died, it was Mary, specifically, that the Lord called, cf. John 11:20,28-33; and it was Mary who was attributed with causing others to believe in Him after He raised Lazarus, John 11:45! Apparently, Mary **knew** that Jesus was going to die (she believed what He said), and likely also **understood** that He would rise again on the third day (because she had seen Him raise her brother). **Knowledge-** gained from *listening/learning,* and **understanding-** gained from *experience,* allowed her to not only **act** specifically and contrary to others around her, they also allowed her to **bring others to belief in Jesus** subsequently!

3. “*She has done what she could*”- She didn’t demand to become one of *the Twelve*; she didn’t try to become the next “John the Baptist;” she didn’t, like Peter, fail to get point and say “*May it never be with you, Lord!*” (cf. Matt.16:22); or take up arms to prevent His arrest (cf. John 18:10); or *deny Him* at a crucial moment (cf. Luke 22:31-34, 54-62). She simply did **what she could.** She *listened to, learned from,* and *accepted* what He said, and **acted accordingly** in **ways she could** (which, by the way, is also known as “faith!”), and then did what *she could* to bring others into that same *knowledge, understanding,* and *faith,* John 11:45!

**What are we to learn from these things? At the very least, that...**

- **God is no respecter of persons or of gender.** Male and female *roles* are indeed different within His kingdom, but there is *work* and *reward* based faithfulness (not gender), 2Cor.5:10. So, whether *male* or *female,* are YOU *listening, learning, understanding,* and courageously *acting* within your appointed *role(s)* regardless of your gender?
- **Desires, intentions, and plans are all important, but ACTIONS count.** Compare Rom.10:1-3 and Jas.2:14-26. Mary not only had the right *desires, intentions,* and *plans,* she was willing to *act* upon them- even at great personal expense to herself (nearly a *year’s wage* for the average worker). Are you willing to put *your money* and *actions* where you say your *heart is* as she did?
- **We often are willing to let “others” do while we coach or criticize.** Mary didn’t *tell others* what needed to be done; nor did she stand aside and *criticize* them for what they *were/weren’t* doing. **She did what she could, period, and full stop;** and was immortalized from that day to this and to/through eternity for it! Are **you** willing to **do what you can do?** Are **you doing** what **you can** for the Lord and His kingdom? **Service** is critical, cp. Mark 14:3b; John 12:3 and John 13:1-17; and it seems Mary understood this very well. Do you?