

In this passage we have the account of an unnamed woman anointing the Lord. She pours nard, an expensive perfume, over His head from an alabaster flask. Matthew chapter 26 has a nearly identical account. Luke chapter 7 also has a woman anointing the Lord from an alabaster flask. But the incident in Luke occurs at a different point in the Lord's ministry, takes place in the home of a Pharisee rather than a leper, and ends with a completely different lesson. We can assume it's a separate occasion.

One detail, however, is unique to Mark: The woman breaks the alabaster flask. Why?

Alabaster is a translucent white mineral. It is similar to marble but softer and easier to carve. Perhaps (and this is only a guess) the flask was made of alabaster so it could have a narrow neck like modern perfume bottles. The nard inside would cost around \$5000 in today's dollars.

You would want to dispense it a precious drop at a time, not pour it out.

But this woman does not want to meter out her adoration of her Lord and Savior. She wants to flood Jesus with her love. So she breaks open the soft alabaster bottle and unreservedly pours it on His head. The fragrance fills the room. Her act of worship is complete like the widows two pence. Nothing is withheld. It is irreversible like Elisha's sacrifice of his twelve oxen. There is no going back.

May we all learn from this woman not to parcel out our devotion to the Lord in drips and drops. Well might the Lord say, *“And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.”*

Questions:

1. What is “the day and the hour” the Lord is speaking of in verse 32?
2. How is it possible that the Lord as the Son in verse 32 does not know of “that day and that hour”?
3. What are the points the Lord is making in verses 33-37?
4. What Old Testament scripture speaks of the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread?
5. Why don't the chief priests and scribes want to put the Lord to death on the feast day?

6. What is the difference in thought and attitude towards the Lord between the woman in verse 3 and those in verses 4 and 5?

7. In verses 6-9, the Lord defends and commands the woman for what she has done. What does He say that could encourage her? Does the Lord encourage us in a similar way at times when we do things for Him that are met with opposition?

8. What motivates Judas to do what he does in verse 10?

9. Why are the chief priests glad in verse 11?

10. What are the things we can learn from verse 12-16?

11. What attribute of God is Jesus manifesting by what He says in verse 18?

12. What are some Old Testament scriptures the Lord is referring to in the first part of verse 21, where He says “as it is written of Him”?