

She Did What She Could

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By Lenny Cacchio

LEE'S SUMMIT, Mo.—Near the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus was hosted at the house of one of His followers, and "there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very costly."

The woman broke the box of ointment and poured it on His head. This stuff was worth the equivalent of 300 days' worth of wages, so the term "very costly" is an accurate one.

As the story goes, the disciples protested this "waste," and perhaps they had a case. Such an act would not change the course of history, nor would it feed the hungry, nor would it bring many to salvation, nor would it hasten the Kingdom of God to earth.

But Jesus made a comment about this that puts it all in perspective: "She did what she could." It might not seem like much, and it might not end all suffering for all time, but she did what she could, and for that she is honored (Mark 14:1-9).

Too often people discount the good things they do because their acts fall short of a historical epic. Jesus addressed this in one of His last discourses to His disciples, where He explained to them how the Judgment will work. He will separate people to His right and to His left, and those on the right will be praised because "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

The people so honored make the most-interesting response: "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?" (Matthew 25: 31-46).

They had no idea that God greatly honored the apparently little things they were doing. God does not despise the day of small things. The widow's mite is a greater gift than the loud sacrifices that echo through the temple.

The son or daughter who cares for an elderly parent, or the volunteer at the crisis-pregnancy center, or the friendly encouragement to one in the dol-

drums, or the parents who raise their children in a godly home, or a hot casserole delivered to a hungry family—they might seem small in the grand scheme of the universe, but such acts are not to be despised.

As with the woman and the alabaster box of ointment, such deeds will be honored wherever the Kingdom of God will go, for those who have done such things have done what they could, and that is all that God requires.