

Mark 14 v1-3

‘More Extravagance’

Hello! Welcome to this midweek talk / video for 31st March – the Wednesday of Holy Week.

Last Sunday, I talked about the extravagance of Palm Sunday. Well, it doesn't stop there – it carries on during the Wednesday before Good Friday.

We read this at the beginning of Mark 14:

*‘It was two days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him; <sup>2</sup>for they said, ‘Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people.’ <sup>3</sup> While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head.’*

You probably remember the criticism and argument that followed – if not, do go back and read it!

For now, I'm going to read you a poem which puts words into the mouth of this woman. It's from a book called "Stages on the Way" (1998 © WGRG) and has the title **"I will give what I have"**:

From a high, secret shelf, I take what I hid myself –  
perfume, precious and rare, never meant to spill or spare.  
This I'll carefully break, this I'll empty for his sake:  
I will give what I have to my Lord.

Though the action is crude, it will show my gratitude  
for the truth that I've learnt from the one who's heaven-sent;  
for this life once a mess which his beauty can express,  
I will give what I have to my Lord.

With his critics around, common gossip will abound.  
They'll note all that they see to discredit him and me.  
Let them smirk, let them jeer, say what people want to hear;  
I will give what I have to my Lord.

It's because he'll receive, that the likes of me believe  
God has time for the poor. He has shown us heaven's door.  
Be it perfume and care, be it anger or despair,  
I will give what I have to my Lord.

So what do you want, what do you have to give to the Lord?

Is it grief from the last month, year or decade?

Is it joyful commitment of time or skill?

Is it a precious possession that someone else would value as a gift?

Is it something else entirely?

I'll repeat the last verse again as you ponder:

**It's because he'll receive, that the likes of me believe  
God has time for the poor. He has shown us heaven's door.  
Be it perfume and care, be it anger or despair,  
I will give what I have to my Lord.**

May each of us be drawn in love to respond to Jesus this week:

**I will give what I have to the Lord. Amen.**