

Ladies Prayer International Newsletter



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Alabaster Box Prayers

by Kathleen Arcidiacono



"And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she broke the box, and poured it on his head." (Mark 14:3)

An anonymous woman, an alabaster box of a precious perfumed oil, in an atmosphere where this lady was not wanted nor welcome. She was met with anger and murmurings by all present in that room except for one: Jesus. That precious box, sealed by wax to keep the oil inside fresh and pure, was poured on the head of none

else but the Creator of the entire universe and humanity. An anointing. A preparation for the burial of His earthly body. An act of worship, sacrifice, and love.

This box was the price of a year's wages, and the men present in that room considered it a total waste of money poured out on Jesus' head. But Jesus did not think so. In fact, He told those men and disciples to leave her alone and that she had done a good work on Him. We never need to fear when we give something to Jesus; He takes note. Jesus said, "She has done what she could: she is come beforehand to anoint my body to the burying" (Mark 14:8).

I am a great believer in essential oils and the oil mentioned here was spikenard, an oil often used for emotional and physical wellbeing. It is also noted to bring tranquility to the user. As we read further, we find Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, praying to be able to accept the "cup that was given to Him to drink." The Bible clearly shows us He was under a great physical, mental, and spiritual stress. Perhaps Jesus Himself, in His mortal body, benefited from the spikenard oil poured upon His head, where not too long after a crown of thorns would be brutally pushed into His scalp. Jesus called this work that the woman did an anointing for His coming burial. Is not prayer and intercession a preparation for that day when we will go to be with Him in our celestial body and home?

Our prayers for our children and our family are never a waste of time or effort or sacrifice. Praying for them is a declaration of our devotion and love to them and to God.

Each day, we need to take time to fill our spiritual alabaster box with the precious ointment of our prayers and permeate our home with the odor.

Note: Kathleen Arcidiacono is wife to Italian Superintendent, Reverend Salvatore Arcidiacono. They have three beautiful children and three beautiful grandchildren. They pastor in Catania, Sicily.

Perfume and Prayers

by Liane Grant



One day, I walked into the bathroom and was surprised to smell the expensive perfume my husband had recently given me as a gift. Hmm... which of our three sons had been playing around with my perfume?

I finally tracked down the culprit: our second son who was about 10 years old at the time. I asked him why he had wasted my perfume, and he sheepishly said, "Well, the bathroom was kind of smelly and the label on the bottle said 'Eau de toilette', so I thought that's what it was for." My annoyance dissolved into laughter, and this has become one of our favorite stories when reminiscing with family.

However, the perfume incident also makes me think about the woman with the "*alabaster box of very precious ointment*" who poured it on Jesus (Matthew 26:7). The first reaction of the disciples was shock about what they perceived as wastefulness: "*For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor*" (Matthew 26:9). In their opinion, it would have been better to focus on physical needs.

Just like my son used my special perfume for a trivial need, the disciples considered this woman's use of her precious ointment to honor Jesus as an unnecessary expense. My son could have used cheap air freshener; that would have been adequate. Couldn't this woman have honored Jesus in a way that cost her less?

What the disciples forgot is that Jesus deserves our very best. Giving him glory and honor is never trivial. And that makes me think about prayer. With our busy schedules, sometimes it can feel like a real sacrifice to carve out time alone with Jesus. It can be tempting to spend the majority of our prayer time focusing on physical needs because they are so obvious and pressing.

But consecrating a large amount of our prayer time to glorifying and honouring Jesus is never a waste! He deserves our very best. According to Revelation 5:8, our prayers are like perfume to God.

Jesus said of the alabaster box woman: "*Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.*" Worship in our praise time has long-lasting impact, so let's always put that first, before we plunge into praying for needs.

Note: Liane R. Grant is a certified English/French translator with a PhD in Translation. She has written several books, including the *Order My Steps* devotional journal and *The 3-Hour Translation Team*. She and her husband Scott are missionaries in Quebec City, Canada. Liane serves as President of Quebec Ladies Ministries and also of Nonprofit Translation Solutions, a new organization dedicated to helping missionaries and ministries make written materials available in other languages.

Brokenness Reveals

by Cassie K Huslage



The fragrance filled the room, the pungent aroma so thick that it permeated the crowd. Even those individuals who could not see through the group could smell the perfume. Silence struck the audience. Then came the whispers.

Those who were seated close voiced their opinions. Criticism was passed through sideways glances. "Think of the money that could have been made; we could have sold the perfume," some whispered (Mark 14:4-5). Only to have someone reply, "How could she have even afforded such a luxury?"

A woman caused this commotion. A woman who had her head bowed low. She held a sealed vessel, then broke it in her hand to pour the precious ointment on her Master.

A stunning alabaster vessel, which held approximately a year's worth of wages in the form of perfume (verse 5). With abandon she had emptied it on Jesus. Most would not understand. Most did not understand. Onlookers thought it a waste of the precious perfume. She knew that brokenness reveals what is on the inside.

We pour our soul out in prayer during our brokenness, often with tears. Then, the fragrance fills the air around us. It permeates our environment. Fragrances from our past provide keen memories for our future.

Is it possible that the fragrance of prayer, when prayed around our children, will link them to their own future prayer life? Will that be one of the tethers to their salvation and a healthy relationship with the master? Dare I say "YESSSS!!!"

Prayer is the conversation of a deep relationship with Jesus Christ.

Prayer is the avenue to find our way back to what is healthy and wholesome.

Prayer creates that spark to give us the strength to hold on to another day.

The atmosphere changes when you break open your soul to reveal the precious fragrance of prayer and praise. Those you influence — your children, your family, your friends, your church family, your community — will be able to detect the power of prayer. The woman, spoken about in the book of Mark, gave of her broken vessel a beautiful offering. We can provide our offering through prayers for those who have walked away from God.

"Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice" (Psalm 141:2).

Note: Cassie K Huslage has served alongside her husband of thirty-three years in Texas and Alaska. Her love of people has propelled her into many situations all of which God has equipped her for. Currently, Cassie serves as the South Central Texas District Ladies Ministry Director, pastors wife of Apostolic Lighthouse Church of Georgetown, Texas, Mom to four fantastic children, grandma to nine perfect grandchildren, and "mom" to her English Bulldog, Pixie. Her hobbies include gardening, rock collecting, beachcombing, and mowing the grass. Cassie is a worshiper of Jesus Christ.

From the Editor



God is doing mighty things!

God is opening many doors and this newsletter is now available in:
English, Arabic, Chinese simplified, Chinese traditional, Czech, Dutch, Fijian, Filipino,
French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish,
Sri Lankan, Swahili, Swedish, and Thai.

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