



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

July 23, 2017

Jump Start # 1887

Mark 14:6 "But Jesus said, 'Let her alone; why do you bother her? She has done a good deed to Me.'"

Our passage takes place in a home in Bethany, which was just a short distance from Jerusalem. It would be that short journey that Jesus would take to meet His appointment with the cross. While in this home, a woman anoints Jesus with some very expensive perfume. The disciples, Judas in particular, suggested that the perfume could have been sold for three hundred denarii, which would have been more than a year's worth of wages. In today's money, I don't know anyone that has perfume that costs \$50,000 or more. This wasn't the everyday stuff. You wouldn't splash this on and go shopping. This was saved. There were one of two reasons for keeping this around-either a wedding or a funeral.

Jesus was being anointed before His burial. To show the difference in cultures, most men today would not want a woman to put her perfume on him. Jesus recognized that what was being done was a good deed. He defended her. This happened often in the Gospels. Someone would get upset and Jesus would defend. Zacchaeus took some heat for having Jesus come to his home. Jesus defended him. The bent over woman was rebuked for being healed on the Sabbath. She was told to come back on another day. Jesus defended her. And, here in this story, Jesus defends her pouring the perfume on Him.

An expression that stands out in our verse today is "why do you bother her?" That spirit prevails even today. We get bothered by what others are doing so we feel compelled to bother them. We bother them with unkind words. We bother them with stares that could kill. We bother them by being nosey and asking too many questions. We bug them. We butt into things that are not our business. We become critical. We point fingers and accuse.

Martha was like this. She was bothered that Mary wasn't helping her serve, so she bothered Jesus to get Him to do something. Bothered by others.

There are a lot of things that bothers us these days. It doesn't take a very long road trip to get bothered by the way some drive. Just yesterday I was driving to a Bible study. A semi had been in an accident. It was laying on it's side. It was well off the road. Tow trucks were there to take it away. But traffic was at a snail's pace because everyone had to get a good look. Just drive!

(OVER)

We can be bothered by prices, the way some dress, slow service, mixed up orders and air conditioners that don't seem to be working. When we are bothered we sigh. Sometimes we sigh real loud. When that doesn't change things, we have to say something. We complain. When that doesn't fix matters, we complain a whole bunch to a whole bunch of people. Folks that were happy with their day are now bothered because we bothered them about the things that bothered us. Now, they have joined us in our bothered parade. Eventually, our upset, unhappy spirit is taken to someone who is in charge. We complain to the manager. We fuss at the elders. Here, in our passage, the disciples bothered this generous woman who had anointed Jesus. Instead of being amazed, they were bothered. Instead of enjoying the sweet smell that filled that house, they complained. Instead of thanking her, they bothered her.

If you stay with this passage you'll notice that the disciples were not doing anything. They were reclining at the table with Jesus. They were eating, not anointing. They were complaining, not praising. They were pointing fingers, not lifting hands to help. She was doing what she could, and they were doing nothing.

I've found that's often the way it is with folks who get bothered. They'll complain about trash on the floor, but they won't pick it up. They'll complain about the kids running in the church, but they won't help slow them down. They'll complain about a class but they won't teach. They'll complain about the way the shepherds plan things but they won't step up and serve themselves. These disciples weren't using any of their perfume on Jesus. In fact, they weren't doing anything, except being bothered.

It seems to me that if we looked in the mirror as much as we pointed our righteous radar gun at others, things would be so much better. Sometimes, taking a step back and looking at the big picture of things helps. We may complain about the kids at church, how sloppy they dress or where they sit, but have you ever given thought to the fact that they are there. Most that I have seen want to be there. Most that I know love the Lord. Congregations that are near college campuses have students sliding in late, often hair still wet, and the look that they just got out of bed about five minutes ago. But they are there. Be bothered or be thankful. They could have stayed in bed. They could have been so drunk from the night before, like the majority of the students in the dorm, that they wouldn't even wake up until afternoon. But these students are here. Bibles in hand. Wanting to honor their God.

I knew a family that shouted when they sang hymns. It was full volume. They sat behind me. My ears were ringing when I stood to preach. I tried to sit somewhere else, but somehow they always managed to sit right behind me. That bothered me until I saw that they truly loved the Lord and were given it their all. I stopped being bothered. My ears still rang, but that was ok.

Being bothered by others during worship can just ruin worship for us. We focus more on what bothers us than what we are doing. We can get so worked up and bent out of shape because of what others are doing that we forget what we are supposed to be doing, and that is, praising the Lord.

Why do you bother her? That's what Jesus said. There was no decent answer to that question. The text tells us that they were even scolding her. Their lame excuse was that the perfume could be sold and money given to the poor. That may help for a short time, but it wouldn't change things. Jesus wasn't bothered. Jesus was honored by what she did. We can be so wrong sometimes. We can have things all figured out how this ought to be done and miss a great opportunity to honor the Lord.

I wonder if the disciples were ever bothered by what they were doing? I wonder if I am ever bothered by me? Does my attitude bother me? Does my tone of speech bother me? Am I only bothered by what others are doing, or am I ever bothered by what I am doing? We need to put down the radar gun and hold up the mirror. We ought to put more attention on improving ourselves and less on fixing the other guy.

Was the perfume in this passage wasted? Could more people have benefited from it had it been sold? We could, like the disciples, sit around and discuss this over and over. And while all that is going on, we miss the opportunity to serve others or honor God. She did a good deed.

If we were busy doing good deeds, we wouldn't have time to be bothered by what others are doing.

Are we pouring perfume or are we complaining about it? That's something to think about.

Roger Shouse