

Monday Morning Rewind – August 4, 2008

Happy first Monday of August. I feel like smashing some vases in extravagant celebration. Want to join me?

On Sabbath we revisited Mary's extravagant gift of love to Jesus in Mark 14. Jesus was the guest of honor at a feast prepared for him by Simon, the leper. Jesus had healed Simon and now, just days before the crucifixion, Simon puts on a Thank-you dinner for Christ. Mary, whom Jesus had also healed of demonic possession, came into the room where the men reclined at the table. In her hands is a sealed alabaster jar containing close to 12 ounces of pure nard—an extremely expensive imported perfume that cost the equivalent of an entire year's wages.

Then Mary does something unexpectedly extravagant. According to Mark 14:3, "She broke the jar and poured the perfume on His head." She broke her jar! The only way to get the expensive contents out was to break the beautiful jar. Once the bottle was broken, there was no turning back. The entire contents had to be used because there was no resealing the jar. Once broken, the vase was committed to fulfilling its purpose—releasing its contents. Was Mary tense before she broke her vase? Did she hesitate to commit to giving Jesus her all? I don't think she hesitated a second. Mary could break her vase because she had been broken herself and knew what it was like to be made new.

Christians who have been broken and know what it's like to be touched by Jesus and made new don't hesitate to give their all to Him! They gladly, excessively, lavishly, boldly, commit themselves to Christ. And right here is the key to a living Christian faith that makes the world smell good, as opposed to a dead faith that stinks—brokenness! A broken vase is a fulfilled vase. A broken vase releases blessing and joy on others. Is it possible that our response to God's extravagant grace is lukewarm because our vases remain intact? Unbroken? Folks, let's take a clue from Mary and *break our vases!* The personality and omnipotence of God can only mingle with and saturate the personality and *impotence* of a man or woman who has been broken and spilled out.

Then, as now, the times demand something extraordinary—something extravagant. Rewind to 2 Tim. 3:1-5 for a reminder about the times in which we live. It is no time now to be timid, self-focused, uninterested and uninspired. These are vase-breaking times and woe to us if we keep the greatest force in the universe locked up within the unbroken confines of "normal" Christianity.

What are some "vases" that need breaking? How about these?

- The vase of "Won't let go of the past"
- The vase of "Too Afraid of the future"
- The vase of Timidity
- The vase of Non-commitment
- The vase of "Never-good-enough"
- The vase of blame

As you contemplate these vases, I want to challenge you to think of a few of your own. What are the vases in your life right now that need breaking? Don't just think about them, write them down. Then pray about them. If you want to share them with me, just shoot me an email, but you don't have to. Vase smashing can be painful and sometimes God should be the only guest at the ceremony.

How do you break a vase? If you do it like Mary, your vase will break in proportion to your love. Brokenness is the cost of discipleship. But it's also the reward. Let's break a vase and allow the sweet fragrance of the indwelling Christ—His life and love—to fill our lives and spill out onto those around us. Happy smashing! –Pastor Randy