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THE ALABASTER BOX

The story is told in each gospel of a woman of the city of Bethany that was called a sinner that came to a Pharisee's house to see Jesus. (See Luke 7:36-40.) The Pharisee was Simon the Leper who was also Judas Iscariot's father. He had invited Jesus and the disciples to dinner. This woman was called a "sinner" by Simon and he was displeased that she was there. This woman was Mary, the sister of Lazarus. Lazarus had been raised from the dead and was also there.

Mary brought with her an alabaster box with spikenard in it. The spikenard was a very expensive perfume costing a years' wages. Most women in those days had a box like this that they saved for their wedding night. They would pour it upon themselves and present themselves to their husbands. It had a sweet-smelling savor. Mary took no thought of the expense. She loved Jesus so much that she broke open the box and poured it upon his head. She anointed him with the perfume out of her love for him. The entire house was full of the wonderful aroma that the spikenard gave off.

Simon the Pharisee was upset with this act. The very thought of her touching the "messiah" or a prophet disgusted him. He didn't understand her act of love. Mary's deep love for Jesus (not a sinful lustful love) caused her to take her most precious possession and give it to her "Lord." She not only poured it out on his head she also anointed his feet with the perfume and then washed them with her hair. Tears fell in abundance out of this act of love. She gave him "her all."

The alabaster box sounds like a simple thing my friends, but it was not simple. It was Mary telling Jesus that all that she was and had belonged to him. She poured herself out at his feet.

Little did she know that soon Jesus would be broken like that alabaster box and would pour his life out for her and for us also. In Isaiah 53:12b it says, ***"and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death...."*** In Ephesians 5:2 we are told, ***"And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour."***

Jesus poured his life out for sinners. When we receive his precious gift, then we are filled up with his Spirit, and become like new alabaster boxes, ready to pour out our lives for him because of our love for him.