

Mark 14:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.

Analysis

She hath done what she could (οἱ ἔσχεν ἐποίησεν, ho eschen epoiesen)—Jesus defends the woman's act with this profound commendation. The Greek literally means 'what she had, she did,' emphasizing the totality of her devotion. Her act was not measured by external standards but by the completeness of her sacrifice.

She is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying (προέλαβεν μυρίσαι, proelaben myrisai)—Jesus reinterprets her act of worship as prophetic preparation for his death. The verb 'come beforehand' (προλαμβάνω) means to anticipate or do beforehand. While others would seek to anoint his body after death (Mark 16:1), finding the tomb empty, this woman accomplished the anointing while he lived. Her extravagant love achieved what the devoted women at the tomb could not—she anointed the Messiah for burial.

Historical Context

This anointing occurred at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, just two days before Passover (Mark 14:1-3). Anointing corpses with spices was Jewish burial custom, but Jesus was buried hastily without full preparation due to the approaching Sabbath. The woman's use of pure nard (worth 300 denarii, nearly a year's wages) reflected extraordinary devotion that scandalized the economically-minded disciples.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to do 'what you could' for Christ rather than what others expect or demand?
2. How does this woman's prophetic act of worship challenge your understanding of extravagant devotion to Jesus?

Interlinear Text

ὅ	εἰχεν	αὕτη	έποιησεν·	προέλαβεν	μυρίσαι	μου
what	could	she	She hath done	she is come beforehand	to anoint	my
G3739	G2192	G3778	G4160	G4301	G3462	G3450
τὸ	σῶμά	εἰς	τὸν	ἐνταφιασμόν		
G3588	body	to	G3588	the burying		
	G4983	G1519		G1780		

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 8:12 (Parallel theme): For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

John 12:7 (Parallel theme): Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.