

## “WHY WAS THIS NOT GIVEN TO THE POOR?”

Bryan Matthew Dockens

*“A woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head. But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, ‘Why was this fragrant oil wasted? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.’ And they criticized her sharply” (Mark 14:3-5).*

This attitude persists to the present. The news reports that a billionaire has spent money on something extravagant – traveling to low-orbit space, sailing on a yacht, or exploring the wreck of the Titanic in a submersible – and the comments pour in, asserting what has been done is wasteful and the poor are being neglected.

John reveals a detail not included in Mark’s account: *“This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it” (John 12:6).* Just as Judas had an ulterior motive for scolding Mary’s apparent excess, namely: his intent to steal, so the naysayers now are less than altruistic. They speak of the poor while resenting the prosperity others enjoy, which is envy. Envy is “the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others... envy desires to deprive another of what he has” (Vine). According to Peter, Christians are to be *“laying aside all... envy” (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:1)* since it is a *“work of the flesh” (Galatians 5:20-21)*.

Unless an expenditure is actually immoral, those who are uninvolved really have no business interjecting their opinions about how someone else spends their money.

Jesus defended Mary, saying, *“Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her” (Mark 14:6-9).* Critics are seldom aware of the good accomplished by others with their money because sincere almsgiving is done discreetly (Matthew 6:1-4). It is wickedly judgmental to assume a lavish spender has not also performed righteous works out of his own accounts. Besides, the employment made possible by the extravagance of the wealthy is not irrelevant to the needs of the poor.

## THREE ANSWERS TO ONE QUESTION

Robert F. Turner, adapted

Could one question be given three differing answers, and all answers be correct? Seems unlikely doesn't it? Yet this is the case in the New Testament book of Acts when the question, *“What must I do (to be saved)”* is asked.

The expressed answer given to the Philippian jailer was *“Believe!” (Acts 16:25-34)*. Some insist that this expressed reply is complete, and hence salvation is by faith only. However, a consideration of the expressed replies given this question on the other occasions will show the fallacy of such reasoning.

When some of the Pentecost multitude asked, *“What shall we do?”* they were told, *“Repent, and be baptized” (Acts 2:6-38)*. And when Saul asked what to do, he was directed to Ananias who told him to *“Arise, and be baptized” (Acts 9:1-18; 22:6-16)*.

If only the expressed reply is to be considered we would have to conclude that the jailer was saved by faith alone, that those on Pentecost were saved by repentance and baptism (without any faith), and that Saul was saved by baptism alone, without either faith or repentance. Of course, none of these conclusions are valid.

A fair study of the context shows that the same elements, and all three of these elements, were present in each of the cases examined. One must have faith in Christ to be saved, but faith that is not strong enough to cause one to obey the Lord’s commands is a dead faith (James 2:24-26).

The answers were different because the questions were asked by people in different circumstances. A man in Burnet may ask, “How far is it to San Antonio?” and be told, “100 miles.” In Marble Falls, this question would get a different answer. And in Blanco, the same question would get a third and different answer. Yet all would be part of one great truth.

There is no indication that the Philippian Jailer had either knowledge or faith in Christ, so he was told to believe, and then *“they spoke unto him the word of the Lord.”* He repented as indicated by washing their stripes, and he was baptized, as stated (Acts 16:38). Thus, he truly believed (34).

But those on Pentecost heard the preaching of Christ before they – Continued on page 4 –

**"WHAT MUST I DO  
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

**LEARN THE GOSPEL**

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

**BELIEVE IN CHRIST**

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

**CONFESS CHRIST**

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

**REPENT OF SIN**

Acts 3:19; 17:30

**BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST**

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

**REMAIN STEADFAST**

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF  
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

**SUNDAY**

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

**WEDNESDAY**

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard  
Belén, New Mexico

**Seekers Welcome.  
Members Expected.**

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN  
ANY TRESPASS...  
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

GALATIANS 6:1

**CONFESS TRESPASSES**

James 5:16; 1<sup>st</sup> John 1:9

**REPENT OF SIN**

Acts 8:22

**PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS**

Acts 8:22

**REMAIN STEADFAST**

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

– Continued from page 1 –  
asked their question. The preaching "pricked" their hearts; i.e. they believed, and then they were told, "repent and be baptized."

And Saul had already believed, and had spent three days penitently praying, when he was told, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins."

Where Are You? Your condition before God must be considered in answering your question, "What must I do?" The Lord will save "all who will obey" (Hebrews 5:9) and has given one gospel to all (Galatians 1:8; Romans 2:11). Have you proven your faith by full and complete obedience to His will?

**"WHOLE COUNSEL"**

ACTS 20:27

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**UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT**

David McPherson

The story is told of a man who, after being converted to Christ, put on a shirt that said, "Under New Management." When asked about it, he explained how he was now under Christ and not himself. Oh, that more would respect this relationship with the Lord!

As a Christian, one's purpose of life is to be different from those of the world. He is no longer living for self, but for the One who died for his sins. Life is no longer about what "I" want to do, but rather, "what would God have me do?"

Under new management, one will say with Paul, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

What is your purpose in life? What goals are you setting for yourself? Where and how are you spending your time? "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1-2).

Friend, put the Lord first. Get under His management today!

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