



POUR OUT

THE BEAUTY OF BROKENNESS

A BIBLE STUDY BY MICHELLE KAREN D'SILVA





®POUR OUT - THE BEAUTY OF BROKENNESS

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SETTING THE SCENE

In the Japanese art of kintsugi, broken pottery is not discarded. Its pieces are fused together and remade. Gleaming gold is set into the seams between the cracks. The brokenness is not hidden. It is accentuated, becoming the very centerpiece of beauty.

As humans, we all experience the cracks of sin, sorrow and suffering. Overwhelmed by our circumstances, we envision a world broken and irreparable, a life harrowed by pain, meant to be hidden. Yet, in the grand design of Grace, God has other plans.

Like the master craftsman in kintsugi, God never discards what's broken—He redeems it. He brings fragrant beauty out of all that bleeds.

In this Bible study, through the lens of the sinful woman who anointed Jesus (Luke 7:36-52), we reflect on what a life poured out to Christ looks like. Her story helps us confront the many questions we would rather keep confined.

What does it look like to bring our whole selves - our past, our pain, our most precious offerings, to Jesus' feet? How does His love transform our brokenness into something beautiful?

Luke tells us that the woman came, not with status or reputation, but with her brokenness.

She poured out her tears, her costly perfume, her dignity. To the world, it seemed scandalous. But to Jesus, it became a satiating drink. In her intimate act of worship, a 'sinful' woman foreshadowed what Christ, the perfect vessel Himself, would pour out on the Cross – His body, soul, divinity, for the salvation of souls.

This we know: the poured-out life is not a calling reserved for the Christian elite. It is a privilege entrusted to every disciple of Jesus Christ; one not out of compulsion or personal glory, but of love poured out - completely, sacrificially, and joyfully.

To truly live the Christian life is to imitate Christ Himself, who did not cling to His divinity but emptied Himself (Philippians 2:6-7) completely, becoming the servant of all and laying down His life for love.



POUR OUT... COURAGE

And a woman in the city who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment.

LUKE 7: 37

In first-century Jewish society, women were generally confined to domestic roles, with little or no participation in public and spiritual activities. Women labelled as 'sinners' received even harsher judgement, leaving them marginalized and ostracized. Luke's account does not reveal the woman's name, only her reputation. She is a 'sinner'. Yet despite her harrowing circumstances and compounding pain, she does something startling.

Having heard about a dinner gathering at Simon the Pharisee's house, and a 'special' man visiting town, who is rumoured to cast out demons, raise paralytics and open blind eyes – for the first time, in the hope of a way out of her misery, she steps forward... *with courage*.

Leaving the past behind to embark on the 'new' takes courage. It means admitting that we have wandered and must choose a different path. It means acknowledging that sometimes, freedom requires an unsettling journey, to places where we are not welcome, amongst people who will only remember us as 'sinners'. It means facing the possibility of being rejected, even by family.





But we cannot cling to the past while stepping into the future.

How often do we allow the voices of others to dictate our steps? How often do we let our past keep us from seeing a future God promises us?

The woman in Luke 7 knew this pain intimately. She was labelled a sinner, and in the eyes of society, that was all she would ever be. The judgmental stares and the whispered condemnations as she walked in, pierced her heart and spirit. Yet, something greater propelled her forward—a longing to be restored, an opportunity to begin anew.

True courage often involves vulnerability. *Are we willing to confront the deep deranged places that we feel are better left hidden?* On the other hand, having courage does not mean having no fear, it simply means we move forward despite it.

The alabaster jar of perfume she carried wasn't just costly - it represented her livelihood, her identity, and her sacrifice. In one bold and scandalous moment, she broke the jar- an irreversible act, a sign that there was no turning back.

Likewise, each of us is called to take this step of faith - to leave behind what is broken and trust that God can restore us to something new. St. John Paul II reminds us, "Do not be afraid. Open wide the doors to Christ." Leaving the past behind requires this same trust that when we step into the unknown, God is waiting to meet us there.

The guests at Simon's house saw a 'sinner', but Jesus saw a broken heart ready to be poured out and renewed.

What about you? Where is Jesus calling you to step forward that would take real, unlikely courage?



***Do not remember the former things
or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth;
do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.***

ISAIAH 43:18-19

POUR OUT... BROKENNESS

She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair, kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment.

LUKE 7: 38



Banquets were normally reserved for men. As the woman made her way slowly into the room of men-only guests, she carried with her an alabaster jar, containing rich perfume, called nard.

Ancient culture often bestowed small alabaster jars containing costly aromatic oil to young women at the time of their betrothal. They were used to smear the heads of banquet guests as a sign of welcome. The rich oil also served to anoint dead bodies of eloquent families during burial. Spiritually, the costly perfume was used to anoint Kings, to demonstrate that they were chosen by God. One thing was clear – the alabaster jar contained something that was designed to be broken open only once, and with great intention.

We don't know what compelled the young woman to bring it forward. Was it a gift given by her lovers? Was it kept hidden to let shame be silenced? How much of her identity and her heart were attached to it? We don't know. But we know that she broke it, pouring its rich contents on Jesus' head (Matthew 26:7) and feet (Luke 7:38) as shocked guests stared in amusement.



The Christian journey is marked by seasons of breaking and pouring. The idea that God sometimes “breaks” us can be difficult to grasp, especially in a world that values instant gratification and celebrates self-sufficiency. Yet, throughout Scripture ‘breaking’ is often the journey God uses towards his chosen. Moses was broken in the wilderness before leading Israel out of Egypt. David was broken in hiding before becoming king. Paul was broken and blinded before embarking on his missionary journey.

The alabaster jar is not foreign to us. How often have we tucked away secrets and kept our wounds hidden? How deeply have we harboured resentment and struggled with unforgiveness? How long have we battled with an addiction or destructive behaviour that we resist to confront?

Undoubtedly, an unbroken heart rivals with God. Therefore, Christ’ breaking of our ‘alabaster jar’ is akin to a surgeon’s incision - intentional and for our healing. Only when we are broken of our pride, old mindsets, sin, woundedness – do we become more aligned with His will. Only when we are emptied – of self-protection, self-preservation and selfishness – can God pour out His Presence.

Are there areas in your life that remain hidden? What things do you consider “precious,” that are taking up space in your life?

By breaking the jar, the woman was demonstrating that her heart needed breaking and building in a way only Jesus can. By breaking the jar, she was demonstrating her willingness to let go of something that was seemingly precious, to make room for something infinitely supreme. By breaking the jar, she was declaring that the scent of the perfume would not mask the stench of her sin any longer. She broke not just her alabaster jar, but her alabaster heart. She didn’t circle around the edges. She went all in. She gave Jesus everything.

It was only when she broke something she so precious carried that she was bathed in the fragrance of His beauty.

God breaks us so He can build us. To see brokenness as a blessing may seem paradoxical in our culture, but it is the path that God uses to lead us to true wholeness.

Just as the fragrance of the perfume filled the room after the alabaster jar was broken, so do our lives emit the sweet aroma of Christ, and our stories become sanctuaries of hope even as our brokenness is poured out.



***The sacrifice acceptable to
God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart,
O God, you will not despise.***

PSALM 51:17



POUR OUT... TREASURE

“You gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair... her many sins have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven loves little.”

LUKE 7: 44-47

Casting aside her fears and insecurities, the woman approached Jesus, knelt before Him and began to weep, her warm tears streaming down. Then she gathered her long hair and began to wipe his feet, kissing them. As if that scandalous display of affection weren't enough, she broke the alabaster jar, containing a pint of expensive perfume and poured it over Jesus.

Immediately, a breathtaking fragrance filled the air. Some who were seated there instantly identified this rare and costly perfume; others were offended. Still others were pragmatists who claimed to think about the poor. But that wasn't the real problem. They were embarrassed because their relationship with Jesus was merely transactional. They were self-righteous and failed to see their need for a Saviour.

Many of us struggle with the idea of total surrender without expecting anything in return. How easy it is to fall into the trap of treating our relationship with God like a business transaction, where we pray for things and expect immediate results.

How easy it is to be intimidated by the scorn of the world that sees our offering as 'waste'? (Matthew 26:8) Do family members question the value of your ministry service? Do friends scoff at the use of your gifts for the advancement of God's kingdom rather than your own? Do you find yourself staring back in the mirror, questioning whether a heart surrendered in obedience to Christ is worth losing all earthly treasures?

The contrast between the woman and the host, Simon the Pharisee, could not be more pronounced: She is generous; he is greedy. She is humble; he is arrogant. She is selfless; he is self-centered. He stands aloof; she kneels in humble adoration. Together, they serve as vivid contrasting illustrations of Jesus' own teaching: "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21).



Like the sinful woman, Simon had much to be forgiven - but he was too smug to acknowledge it, and Jesus had a response for him. "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven loves little." (Luke 7:44-47)

Jesus' rebuke of Simon the Pharisee stands as a stark invitation to true discipleship. Is it possible to be near Jesus yet remain distant in heart? Is it possible to be greatly religious but not deeply relational?

What kind of treasures occupy your heart? What treasures keep you blinded to see Jesus as the true Treasure?

Jesus is not seeking the size of our sacrifice. What matters is not the measure one gives but the measure one keeps for oneself. Often, Jesus appeals that our offering involves things far more than precious oil. We may be invited to give up self-preservation, self-dependence and self-control. We may be asked to let go of past bitterness and betrayal. We may be asked to offer up spaces of suffering and sorrow. These and many more can blind us to see Jesus, our true Treasure.

The woman gave up 'all that remained of her life' and perhaps the only thing that made her worth loving. Yet she was willing to pour it all. A treasure, worth a year's wages, representing her entire livelihood, yet she was willing to let go.

Because Jesus is worth it.

Her gift was more than an act of devotion. It was a declaration that she was pouring her life to Him, not begrudgingly but freely. Giving Jesus our treasure is not a one-time act but a daily offering. Each day, we place our worries, desires and plans into His hands. Each day, we surrender our dreams and offer up our suffering. Each day, we trust Him with our children, finances, career choices, and even our weaknesses.

When we pour out what we hold most dear, we make room for the true treasure - Jesus Himself. Like the woman with the alabaster jar, we discover that nothing compares to the joy of being treasured by Him.



***You show me the path of life.
In your presence there is
fullness of joy;
in your right hand are
pleasures forevermore.***

PSALM 16:11

POUR OUT... WORSHIP

"Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

LUKE 7:50



A woman with a 'reputation' had nothing that the world considered valuable. She had nothing to offer. So she gave Jesus the only thing she had left, the only thing He most valued - her heart in worship.

We often think of worship in safe, structured ways - songs sung in Church; prayers spoken in quiet devotion. But the story of this 'sinful' woman confronts us. Why do we worship Jesus? How do we consider those whose devotional lives do not align with ours?

What makes this act so striking is her complete lack of self-consciousness. For a woman to loosen her hair in public was considered an act of extreme vulnerability - something that could even be seen as scandalous. By using her hair to dry Jesus' feet, she was not just performing a service - she was offering Him something deeply personal. By kissing his feet, she was not just pouring affection, she was offering Him self-giving love. She was not bound by social customs or religious decorum. She did not weigh what was appropriate or respectable. She gave Jesus everything - her most costly perfume, her deepest emotions, her own dignity - because she knew He was worthy.



True worship is costly. It is not always neat or conventional. Sometimes it means kneeling when others are standing. Sometimes it means weeping when others are silent. Sometimes it means lifting our hands when others are restrained. Worship that moves the heart of God is not about performance; it is about presence.

Jesus said, "She has anointed my body beforehand for burial" (Mark 14:8). True worship always enters the passion and death of Christ. It does not remain distant but unites with mission. It does not choose what's comfortable, it fixes its sight on the Cross.

The woman willingly poured out the expensive perfume without fully understanding that it would forever be symbolic of the priceless blood of Jesus, poured out for her forgiveness. She broke the flask, not knowing that within a short time, his head would be pierced by thorns. And Jesus did not turn her away. Against the protests of wastefulness and impropriety, He defended her (Luke 7:44) and He gave her peace (Luke 7:50).

We do not know her name. But Jesus declared that she would be remembered for generations to come, that her worship would forever point to the Good News, that she would be spoken about wherever the message of the Cross is proclaimed in all the world (Matthew 26:13).

This is her legacy. This is our legacy.

LIVING THE POURED-OUT LIFE



What does living a Poured-out life look like practically?

It means recognizing Jesus as Lord over our lives and saying “yes” to His calling, even if it means letting go of comfort or personal plans. It means giving not just money, but time, talents, and emotional availability for God’s work and people in need. It means serving without expecting recognition. Trusting God through trials and living with eternal purpose, not just for the here and now. It means living in a way that points others to Jesus - not by perfection, but by devotion.

From St. Francis of Assisi to St. Teresa of Calcutta, the saints show us how to live the poured-out life. Mother Teresa for instance, spent her life serving the poorest of the poor. She lived not for herself but for others, seeing Christ in every face, especially in the suffering and the poor. Her life was not easy or glamorous, but radiant with joy - the fruit of a life poured out in love.



While not all are called to martyrdom or missionary life, every Christian is invited to live the poured-out life. Whether in marriage, priesthood, religious life, or singlehood, our vocations are the context in which we pour ourselves out. For spouses, this means daily dying to self in love and service to one another (Ephesians 5:25). For parents, it means sacrificing comfort, sleep, and time for the good of their children. For the single or consecrated, it may mean availability to serve the Church and others with an undivided heart.

These daily sacrifices, offered in love, become holy.

Let us look to Our Blessed Mother, the epitome of a life poured out. Her fiat - "Let it be done unto me according to your word" (Luke 1:38) - was not a one time yes, but a lifelong surrender. From Nazareth to Calvary, Mary gave herself entirely to God's plan, not holding anything back. The Church sees her as the first and most perfect disciple, the one who teaches us how to live in total self-giving love.

As we receive the love of God in the Sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, may we be transformed into that same love and go out to pour ourselves into the world, so that Christ may live in us and through us.

May we continually discover that our life, bought with great cost, will find true fulfilment when it is poured out - not wasted, but offered.



I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, on the basis of God's mercy, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable act of worship.

ROMANS 12: 1