

Rock Johnson, from
Let Me Tell Yuh: Stories of the Main Messiah
Chapter 14, by Steve Hammond ©2019

~ Perfume ~

Them priests, Televangelists, n' lawyers was desperate on gettin' hold a Josh when he was alone or with a small enough group that wouldn't start a riot, but no one was tellin' where he was. He weren't always on the *Jonah Whale* [trawler]. Sometimes he was at Lazarus' place in Hampden. Sometimes he was in Glenburn. Once we was even on Boynton Street, just a block from the Police Station and County Courthouse

Well now, that makes me think of a true little story that took place right around that Thankspassover vacation and the feast a flatbread. It's about something I don't imagine you'd expect from a fisherman, even if I ain't been fishin' now for some time. It's still a surprise to my own ears to be telling yuh about it. It's a story about ... well, ... it about perfume. 'Hyuh. Perfume. And I don't want to hear nobody snickerin', neitha. 'Cause it's actually quite a good story. Josh called it "beautiful." Not just the story, but the perfume, lingering around it. And later I come to agree with him. I hope you do too.

Let me tell yuh.

There was a man, Simon, not me mind yuh. Simon Hanson. He's one of the many that'd been healed by Josh, n' he got a bunch of us at his apartment on Boynton Street in Bangor, for celebrating. We was all having a good old time, when this woman comes right in n' stops in front a Josh. She gets out a little bottle a something, breaks the top off it, n' commences to pour the whole thing on Josh. Soon as she got started we all knew what was going on. You could smell it all over the house.

She poured it on Josh's head, where it dripped down onto his shoulders. She bent over crying and got her tears on his feet. Then poured more perfume there n' wiped it with her hair.

With her hair!

People was some upset, let me tell yuh. So finally someone spoke up.

"Mary!" (That's who we figured out she was.) "What are you doin' to Josh? You got no business actin' like that!"

"You're embarrassing yourself," another added, "using your hair like that."

Then Judas come at her like he was gonna spit or something.

"I can't believe you just wasted what could have been sold for a small fortune," he said. "Just think what we could a done for the poor with all that money!"

The others joined in the attack on that one. "That's right," they said, as well as other things in various ways. "You should be 'shamed a

yourself,” they added.

“Leave her alone!” came a strong voice from the direction of all that perfume. It was Josh. He was still sitting with his eyes closed, as though he was trying *not* ta listen to all our talking.

When he opened his eyes, he looked first at Mary and spoke something to her kind a soft like. Then he looked at the rest of us. And he weren’t too pleased.

“Why are you badgering her? This woman has done a beautiful thing.”

He took the bottle, got up, and went on to explain that the poor would always be around, but that he would not. In fact, he said this woman was preparing him for his burial.

Mary looked up at that, fussed with her hair, wiped around her eyes and looked away.

“I’m tellin’ yuh the truth heuh,” Josh said, “wherever my Gospel Story is preached in this world”—he held up the bottle and used it to point ta Mary—“the story a what this woman’s done will go with it, in memory a her—and her perfume will be filling the place strong as ever.”

Josh then gave the bottle back to her and returned to his chair. He closed his eyes, and that pretty much was th’ end a the partyin’, let me tell yuh.

Judas said he was going outside to get some fresh air. The rest of us found some other things to do.

But I gotta tell yuh. Sometimes yuh just gotta do more than what’s normal, even more than what’s the right thing. Sometimes yuh gotta pour out a perfume of praise n’ thanksgiving, even if God’s th’ only one appreciating it.

And there’s more to this story than what took place in that room. Sure it got filled with perfume n’ all. And you could smell that stuff for days n’ days afterward. But mind yuh, it was days after that that Josh was arrested, beat up, and nailed to a utility pole, just outside the city a Bangor.

I heard say there was a strange mix of blood, sweat ... and perfume out there on the Hogan Road where Josh died.

Now you’d think something beautiful would be all delicate n’ frail and fade away at the first stiff wind a the world. But there is a beauty so strong that it overpowers everything around it—with a persistence that just won’t go away. No ... matter ... what.

In fact, I imagine if you thought about it just right, you could take a good whiff and know exactly what I’m talkin’ about right heuh.

’Hyuh. Perfume.

Perfume.

~ Bangor-Merribrothers Office Supply ~

On the big day a the holyday, when everyone was providing everyone with turkey n' lamb for Thankspassover, Josh was asked a most normal question from the crew.

"Where we gonna go for eatin' Thankspassover? There ain't room on the *Jonah* for everyone ta fit in the galley, let alone get around the table."

N' he answered it with one a the strangest set a directions yuh ever did heah. There was a reason for it, but we weren't privy to it at the time. We weren't supposed ta be. "Need ta know," yuh know. So I'll just let yuh think about it on your own.

Josh sent Andy n' me into the hat a Bangor.

"Go into the city to State Street," he said. "There you'll see a man carrying a live turkey somewhere between Broadway and Hammond Street. Follow him, and whatever place he enters, find the owner and tell him, 'Mr. Sunday asks if yuh got a upper room where he can find a table for Thankspassover with his Sunday School students.' He'll show yuh a large upper room complete with a table n' fancy furnishings. Get ready for us there."

We did exactly as he said. We went into Bangor and sure enough there was a guy walking up n' down the sidewalk along State Street with a turkey under his arm. Not one a them frozen ones neither. Live one. So we had no trouble followin' him right into the Bangor-Merribrothers Office Supply Co.. N' that's where we had everything set up for the Thankspassover dinner. The main floor was a regular office supply. In the back was a packaging room. In the basement was a lot a storage stuff, a furnace room and a back way to an alley that could handle a van (or bus) coming and going. But our interest for the present was the second floor showroom where there was a big ol' fancy conference table on display, with an assortment of fancy and not so fancy seats around it. A half a wall separated a small kitchenette. And there was more stairs to a third floor where the Office Supply had its own office.

Ends up that furniture showroom was gonna show a lot more than office furniture. And Thankspassover was gonna be a lot more than just turkey n' lamb.