

All that perfume!

There's only five minutes of sermon gone yet. I wonder if it will be a short one this morning? It's a different preacher today. She's come special for the Women's Sunday. I wonder what she smells like? She's a big lady, like the one they had last year. I can't remember before that. I wonder if they always have big ladies. When I said that to Dad at the beginning of the service, he said they want to be sure to get their money's worth! That's odd too. Dad coming today I mean. On the women's day. I think it's because Mum was singing on her own in the choir. She was good.

I've not been listening to the talk much this morning. I did for the first couple of minutes, but now I can't get smells out of my mind. Well out of my nose really. When I think about them I can really smell them in my nose. That's funny really. It was the reading from the Bible today that started it. It was all about Mary pouring perfumed ointment over Jesus' feet and then wiping it off with her long hair. It made me think of Mother's Day last week. I still don't feel quite right about that, though it worked out all right in the end.

I wanted to get Mum something very special for Mother's Day. Shaun was getting her flowers and I had this idea that I should get her some perfume. She said some time ago she needed some. She doesn't wear it very often. Wear it! Jesus was certainly wearing it! He must have been plastered in it! A whole half a litre! The story said that Judas complained that she'd gone over the top and wasted the stuff. I know Judas was not a very nice guy, but a bit of me thinks he was right. It was a lot. I expect it cost the earth. Like perfume does today. There must be some rich people in church. Not like Mrs. Rogers - Dad calls her the mothball lady. I think it's quite a nice smell.

Mr. Tony, who's always laughing and playing practical jokes, he smells lovely. Mum says he must have a different after-shave every week. We think he rubs it on his bald head. He wouldn't be able to wipe anyone's feet with his hair. Then there's

the new lady who wears pink shoes and has lipstick to match. I think she must use that *Spring Blossoms*. It's terribly expensive.

That's what I found out last week. I saw this perfume advertised in one of Mum's magazines. She'd left the page open and I thought it might be a hint that she wanted some. I put half my savings in my purse to go shopping. I went into Brownfield's and asked the lady there for *Spring Blossoms*. She started asking me if I wanted a big bottle or a spray, and showing me what they looked like. Then she told me how much they were! I nearly fell over! I felt such a fool telling the lady I couldn't afford it. She was kind though, and told me not to worry and said, *Why don't you take her the Spring Blossom soap? You could afford that.*

I said *No thank you*. I never like the idea of giving people soap. It's like saying, *I think you're dirty. I think you're smelly and need a wash!* But then I suppose they could think the same about perfume. I wonder if Jesus thought like that, especially when Mary poured it over his feet. She should be glad it wasn't Jason Carruthers. He sometimes sits at my table at school. He could do with a whole bucket-full of disinfectant over his feet! They're awful, especially after P E. I've always wanted to grow my hair long, like Mary's must have been, but if I did I wouldn't go anywhere near him with it.

Anyhow I looked everywhere trying to think of something to get Mum, and in the end I went back for the soap. I waited till there was a different lady serving. It cost all the money I had with me, even my bus fare and I had to walk all the way home. Shaun was just like Judas in the story. He told me I was stupid and said *Why didn't you buy a bunch of tulips like me. You would have had some money left then.* When I told him about walking home, he said *You really have gone mad!* He's the stupid one. What would Mum want with two bunches of tulips? He doesn't understand. I did it because I love Mum and I wanted to do something special for her, even if it cost me.

I wonder if that was why Mary went over the top with her perfume. It was a lot, but maybe she hadn't got anything smaller and there wasn't time to get to the shops before they closed. I heard the preacher lady say Mary loved Jesus so much and was so pleased to get her brother Lazarus back that she didn't care how much she gave, or what anyone said. If it had been me though I'd have flattened that Judas for what he said. Jesus did put him in his place though.

When Jesus did that I think Mary would have felt like I did last Sunday morning. When I gave Mum her present, she said, *Laura you shouldn't have. It's so expensive. You can't afford to spend all your money on me.* Then she gave me such a hug I knew I'd done the right thing, whatever Shaun said.

The preacher lady's just said, *And lastly*, and Dad's opened his eyes, so I think it's nearly over. I'm going to shake hands with her at the door and get as close as I can. I'm sure she'll smell good. There's a lot of her to get perfumed!