

"Spare Change"
A Monologue for Alabaster Jar

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Performance notes:

- *Pronouncing the German word **Liebesopfer**, which means Love Offering, does not need to be "perfect." Although it looks like a long or confusing word, it can be broken down and pronounced as follows:
 *Liebes (love) LEE—bus (General Lee rides a bus)
 Opfer (Offering) OHP—fur (Oprah wears a fur)
 LEE-bus-ohp-fur**
- *This monologue works best if memorized but it can also be projected on the back wall for the actress to be prompted.*
- *Take time, maybe 20 or 30 seconds, to hunt for the coins in the sofa. This is a very humorous moment and the audience members all identify with the character. Do not speak when they are laughing; wait for the laughter to subside. The more the audience identifies at the beginning, the more they will be impacted at the end.*

Scene: Sunday afternoon in a typical living room of any apartment or home.

Onstage: Sofa at Center Stage, with a purse, Bible, and Alabaster Jar box on it

Actress enters, stretching:

(Speaking) Sunday afternoon! My favorite time of the week. Come home after church and a quick bite to eat, and just relax. Guess that's why Sunday's called the day of rest!

(Starts to clear off sofa, picks up the box)

Oh, right. This missions box thing from my new church. Spare change for missions. This is SO much better than my old church—they had this folder and you put quarters in it every day in December for a Christmas offering. That was hard. I mean, those quarters really added up fast!

Let's see. I'm sure I've got some change in the bottom of my purse. (Picks up her purse, looks in) Good excuse to clean it out—later. (Sits and drops her purse on the floor in front of the sofa)

I could always check the sofa, there's bound to be some loose change in the cushions (searches)

Yup! Found something! A nickel. I know there's more..... let's see ... some pennies... what's that? Maybe a quarter, it feels pretty big ... wait, got it! (Pulls it out, looks at it, makes a face) A soda pop cap. Guess that won't do much good in deepest darkest Africa unless they take Coke Rewards there (tosses it) Probably not.

(Looks at the handful of coins) Guess I'd better put this money in the box while I've still got it.

(Curiously) Wonder where the money goes, anyway? Maybe it's printed on the box.

(Turns the box over as she reads) Alabaster Jar—whatever that means. A picture of a globe—something in Spanish—and I guess that's French—and—oh! (happily surprised) That's German! Liebesopfer! How about that! I recognize that word. (an aside) Being an Army brat has few advantages, but living abroad as a kid is one of them.

(Starts to settle down, takes off shoes, stretches, lays down, musing as she is getting ready to fall asleep)

What an interesting word that is. It sure brings back memories.

(Slowly) Liebesopfer. Liebes, that means "Love" or "Because of Love".

Opfer, though. How to translate that? I think it's got at least 3 meanings ... let's see. Liebesopfer. I guess the simple translation is 'Love Offering.' Hey, that works. (Proudly) My Love Offering for missions.

(yawns, tries to settle, then...) It also means sacrifice, though... like the sacrifice parents make to put their kids through college, or the sacrifices the people of Israel brought to the Temple, those perfect, unblemished lambs they were required to bring for Passover and the other holidays...

(Sits up) Perfect? Unblemished? I'm not sure that a handful of change from the depths of the couch is equivalent to perfect and unblemished.

(hits herself on the head) Of course it is. It's a missions offering. They don't expect much in these little boxes, after all. I'm reading WAY too much into this. I'd better get some sleep.

(lays back down, facing the other direction) In a way I guess this is exactly like those Old Testament people. We're supposed to march up during the service and put our little

box things right on the church altar. (eyes starting to close) I wonder how much change I've got in my purse. I don't want my box to be TOO empty next week...

(Almost asleep, nestles sleepily, then eyes pop open) Victim!

(Startled) That's the other meaning of Opfer—Victim. Liebesopfer, a victim of love.

(Sits up, shakes her head to clear the cobwebs) That's ridiculous. There's no such thing as a victim of love! Unless you count a broken heart, and I haven't had that since my first year of college, when that cute guy—what was his name?—asked my roommate out instead of me.

(Scratches head, pondering) You could say Jesus was a victim of love—he loved us so much he offered himself—(makes a face) that word again—to be a victim of sorts, of the Romans' brutality and the Jewish authorities.

I guess that's what missions is all about. Going out—or sending people out—to tell others about Jesus' love, sharing his love, loving others.

(Picks up the box, looks at it without really seeing it)

(almost angry—a defense mechanism, gets up and moves in a small pacing-line or small triangle near the end/side of the sofa) How am I supposed to do that? (a vague gesture out over the heads of the audience) I don't even know those people out there in the jungles, or the deserts or wherever those alabaster-jar missions people go! How could I possibly love them if I don't even know them?!

(change, softer) God knows them, though. And He loves them.

(even softer, sincere) I love God. His love and grace have saved me from so much.

(slowly, returning to the center of the stage directly in front of the sofa) I guess the real question about this—love offering—isn't how much do I love THEM. It's—how much do I love Jesus? Am I going to give him the spare change in my life? Or—am I willing—as a love offering, a love sacrifice—to give him something MORE?

(lights go down as she sits, thinking)

THE END