

Warm Up

1. What does it look like to show hospitality to a guest in your home?
2. Describe a time when you unintentionally offended someone. (It can be a funny one around food or a time misunderstanding, or a serious one if you feel comfortable to share.)
3. Can you describe what it feels like to be in financial debt; and the difference you feel when you make that final payment so the debt is paid off?

WORD

We will be looking into the context and some thoughts we can learn from a passage in Luke 7. The story begins in verse 36. With Jesus having been invited into a Pharisee's Simon's home to discuss various matters. Back in the 1st Century people would gather outside teacher's homes to over hear what they were discussing in hopes of learning how to better live their life to honour God and maintain an honourable standing for their family.

In this particular story, unexpectedly, an uninvited woman comes into the place where the gentlemen are having their discussion:

(She) stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. Luke 7:38 (NKJV)

- In ancient Israel, it is customary for the host to have their visitors wash their feet by their servants. Jesus did not receive this form of hospitality from Simon. Instead, His feet were washed by a 'sinful woman'. With her tears, she washed Jesus feet and wiped them with her hair, then anointed them with oil. Why? To show gratitude, thankfulness and reverence for the presence of God in the person of Jesus. Her act would have been considered improper, so it took courage to honour Jesus this way.
- **Note:** A fragrant oil was stored in a stone container called an alabaster box. This was an expensive product, which was worn by adult workers to attract their clients.

Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." So he said, "Teacher, say it." "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of

them will love him more?” Simon answered and said, “I suppose the one whom he forgave more.” And He said to him, “You have rightly judged.”. Read Luke 7:39-43 (NKJV)

- Simon questioned if Jesus was a prophet or not, because a true prophet would not allow such a sinful woman to touch him. Jesus responds with a scenario and question.
- To help with some perspective, five hundred denarii is equivalent to about 20 months of wages and fifty is equivalent to two months.
- Sin and financial debt are similar in that there is a price to be re-paid. The debtors had large sums of money to owe, but those debts were forgiven—not counted as being owed for repayment anymore.
- According to Romans 6:23, “The wages of sin is death.” That is the ultimate cost of sinning anyone who sins must bear. What is sin? Anything that is offensive to God, as well as not doing something you know is right (James 4:17 – “Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it.” NLT).

Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss,...

- A very normal greeting in that time.

...but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. Therefore, I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.” Then He said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” Luke 7:44-50 (NKJV).

- Simon’s response lead to the exposure of his lack of hospitality in bringing Jesus into his home. The woman washed Jesus’s feet, anointed Him with fragrant oil, and kissed His feet. The woman went out of her way, using the most expensive product (which was actually how she earned her money for living) to show her gratitude and awe of the presence of God. Simon did not show the same gratitude.
- The woman was expressing and displaying her repentance before those in the house and outside the house looking in. She would no longer need such a perfume since she would be turning away her previous form of work. She experienced forgiveness of her sins because her faith in Jesus to leave her profession, and out of that new found faith and turning towards God, she showed her love towards her Messiah.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Which character can you relate to most in this story, and why?
2. What did you learn from this passage of scripture?

3. How do you express your repentance when God invites you to turn away from something that is hindering your relationship with him (and possibly with others)?
4. 1 John 1:9 reads: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” How does this promise impact you? Is it inviting?

PRAYER

1. Pray a prayer of confession. *Set clear parameters about what is said in the group stays in the group. It needs to not be repeated; if it is, that would be the sin of gossip. It too would need to be confessed and apologies made to the person. God is holy. While humans see some sins as smaller and others more severe, before God it is all dirt and defilement which will prevent us from entering His Kingdom.*
2. Pray a prayer to receive forgiveness. Ps. 103:12 promises, “He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west.”
3. Pray a prayer of Thankfulness and gratitude, asking for the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth, and help remind us of the things Jesus has taught us through His words, life, substitutionary death, and resurrection, and how all of that helps us to live well with the Lord.
4. Pray for any other needs that arise within the group or community.