

#45 “A RELIGIOUS MAN VS. A PROSTITUTE”

Luke 7:36-8:3

In Jesus’ second tour of Galilee, He healed the centurion’s servant (Matt. 8:5-13), raised a young man from the dead (Lk. 7:11-17), assured John the Baptist that He was the Messiah (Luke 7:18-35), and now Jesus accepts an invitation to eat at Simon’s house, a Pharisee (Lk. 7:36-50). In context, this is an extremely important move by Jesus because He was just accused by the crowd for being a “glutton” and “drunkard” for associating with tax collectors (see Lk. 7:33-35); and now He is in the house of a religious leader.

1. JESUS IS INVITED TO A PHARISEE’S HOUSE TO EAT WITH HIM (LK. 7:36)

A. One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee’s house and reclined at table. (v. 36)— In Luke 7:34, Jesus lists the accusations the religious leaders made about Him—that He was a drunkard, a glutton, and a friend of sinners. Thus, this invitation by Simon may have been a ploy to entrap Jesus or figure out who He really is. We don’t know if Simon had some ulterior motives. However, to invite a traveling speaker to eat with you in your home was considered a virtuous act (and may have been offered after a synagogue service).

2. A SINNER WASHES JESUS’ FEET (LK. 7:37-38)

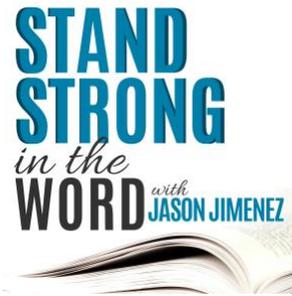
A. And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner (v. 37a)—This is not Mary Magdalene or Mary, the sister of Martha. This woman was probably a prostitute in Capernaum.

B. When she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee’s house (v. 37b)—This phrase *she learned* speaks to the fact the woman knew who Jesus was, and recognized her opportunity to meet Him.

1) The term **reclining** implies this was a banquet put on in honor of Jesus. It was customary in that day, especially at a banquet, for bystanders (or uninvited guests) to stand outside the banquet hall to watch important people and listen in on their conversations. Thus, the woman knew this was her chance to wash Jesus’ feet.

C. Alabaster flask of ointment (v. 37b)—A costly perfume vessel made of glass. (see Mk. 14:5; Jn. 12:3).

D. And standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. (v. 38)—It was customary to wash guests’ feet after traveling on dirty roads (something Simon didn’t offer to do for Jesus).



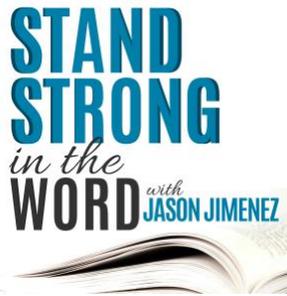
- 1) Jewish men, particularly rabbis and Pharisees, did not speak to women in public. However, this woman was a prostitute which brought on quite a stir and uneasiness for Simon and his guests.
- 2) This action from the harlot, indicates she is repented, and wanted to show her gratitude to Jesus. Therefore, pointing out that this woman recognized Jesus as the Messiah, and yet, Simon the Pharisee and his prominent guests rejected that truth.
- 3) **Standing behind Him at His feet**—Guests would lay on their side and rest on the pillows with their feet away from the table
- 4) **Wiped them with the hair of her head**—Not only was this woman a disgrace for the lifestyle she lived, but it was also a shameful thing for a woman to let down her hair in public. **Kissed (*katēphilei*)** in Greek is used as a continual action; an act of tenderness and appreciation. The same word is used when the father greeted and kissed the prodigal son when he returned (see Luke 15:20), and when Judas Iscariot kissed Jesus in the Garden upon betraying Him (see Matt. 26:49).

3. THE PHARISEE QUESTIONS JESUS' AUTHORITY (LK. 7:39)

- A. ***“If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner.”***—Simon uses this encounter with the woman to draw the conclusion that Jesus cannot be a prophet based on the way He allowed the woman to interact with Him.

4. JESUS CHALLENGES THE PHARISEE WITH A PARABLE ABOUT DEBT (LK. 7:40-43)

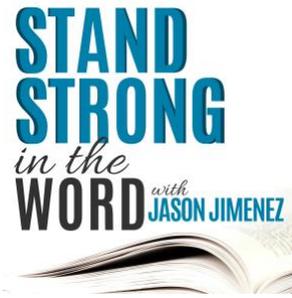
- A. ***Simon, I have something to say to you. (v. 40a)***—Jesus knows the thoughts and doubts of Simon. Which points to the reason Jesus accepted Simon's invitation.
- B. ***A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. (v. 41)***—A denarius coin equaled a day's wage. Thus, a 500 denarii debt is almost two years' worth of daily wages.
- C. ***When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more? (v. 42)***—Rather than answer for Himself, Jesus calls out Simon, and asks him to answer the parable. A great tactic to get to the heart (see Lk. 10:36-37).
- D. ***Simon answered, “The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt.” (v. 43a)***—Simon is indifferent to Jesus' parable, and responds proudly. In the Greek, it speaks to Simon being haughty and aggravated.



- E. **You have judged rightly. (v. 43b)**—Jesus finds common ground with Simon. Despite he’s haughtiness and mistreatment to Him, Jesus still engages Simon with grace.
5. **JESUS REBUKES THE PHARISEE FOR NOT EXTENDING FORGIVENESS (LK. 7:44-47)**
- A. **Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman?” (v. 44a)**—This action would send any religious leader and respectable Jew over the top. And yet, Jesus doesn’t let custom interfere with His calling to save those who are sick. Jesus looks at the women, and commands Simon to do likewise. Bold move!
- B. **I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. (v. 44)**—Jesus responds to Simon by confronting him with his lack of common courtesy. The act of the host preventing his lowly servants to wash a guest’s feet is beyond insulting. And yet, the sinful woman washed His feet with expensive oil.
- C. **You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. (v. 45)**—It was common courtesy to greet a male with a kiss. Simon didn’t even do that.
- D. **You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. (v. 46)**—A noble and respectable act to anoint one’s head with common oil. Yet, the woman poured expensive oil on Jesus’ feet.
- E. **Her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little. (v. 47)**—Once again, Jesus calls out the religious leaders for their lack of forgiveness. True worship is not Simon inviting Jesus over to dine with him. True worship is weeping and washing the feet of Jesus, and throwing away any earthly possession that might get in the way.
6. **JESUS HAS THE POWER TO FORGIVE SINS (LK. 7:48-50)**
- A. **Your sins are forgiven. (v. 48)**—Only God can forgive sins (Jn. 5:21).
- B. **Who is this, who even forgives sins? (v. 50a)**—Being the Messiah, Jesus has the authority and right to forgive people of their sins. Simon rejected that notion, and mistreated Jesus and the woman.
- C. **Your faith has saved you; go in peace. (v. 50b)**—An indication that this woman believed in Jesus as her Savior.

TRANSITION: LUKE 8:1–3

Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, ² and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had



gone out, ³ and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means.