

# JESUS AT THE HOME OF SIMON THE PHARISEE

Luke 7:36-50

## STRUCTURE

**Key-persons:** Jesus, Simon, and the woman

**Key-location:** Simon's house

### Key-repetitions:

- Woman's actions in favor of Jesus: brought expensive perfume; stood behind Jesus; wept on his feet; wiped his feet with her hair; kissed his feet; poured perfume on Jesus' feet (Lk 7:36-39).
- Jesus contrasted woman's actions against Simon's actions: Simon gave no water for Jesus' feet, while woman washed Jesus' feet with her tears and dried them with her hair; Simon didn't greet Jesus with a kiss, while woman didn't stop kissing Jesus' feet; Simon poured no oil on Jesus' head, while the woman poured perfume on Jesus feet; woman's many sins were forgiven, while Simon forgiven little; woman had great love for Jesus, while Simon had little love for Jesus (Lk 7:44-50).
- Sin: sinful woman—prostitute (Lk 7:37); Simon thought that if Jesus were a prophet, he would know that the woman touching him was a sinner (Lk 7:39); Jesus said woman's sins were forgiven (Lk 7:47, 48); Simon's guests questioned Jesus' ability to forgive sins (Lk 7:49).
- Debt: two people were in debt (Lk 7:41); one owed 500 silver coins (Lk 7:41); other owed 50 silver coins (Lk 7:41); neither could pay debt (Lk 7:42); moneylender canceled debt for both (Lk 7:42); the one forgiven the most would love the most (Lk 7:42-43).

### Key-attitudes:

- Simon's selfish pride.
- Simon's disrespect for Jesus.
- Sinful woman's love for Jesus.
- Simon's guests' disbelief that Jesus was able to forgive sins.

### Initial-situation:

John the Baptist had been imprisoned at the beginning of Jesus' second year of ministry. The multitudes that once followed John the Baptist began following Jesus. During the second year of Jesus' ministry, Jesus' popularity with the people grew; however, religious leaders began their opposition. Jesus selected twelve disciples to be with him. Jesus made his residency in the city of Capernaum, in Galilee. Jesus healed the centurion's servant from a distance, without entering the centurion's home. Jesus was entering the village of Nain and he met a funeral procession of a widow's only son. Jesus brought the young man back to life.

**Initial-problem:**

A prostitute learned that Jesus was eating at the home of Simon the Pharisee.

**Final-situation:**

Jesus told the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

**BIBLE STORY**

Simon the Pharisee invited Jesus to eat dinner with him. Jesus went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. *(It was the Jewish custom to recline on couches with heads near the table and their feet stretched out behind them. They propped themselves up on the left elbow, ate with their right hand.)*

A woman prostitute learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house. She brought an alabaster jar full of expensive perfume. She stood behind Jesus at his feet weeping. Her tears fell on his feet. She wiped his feet with her hair, kissed them, and poured perfume on them.

Simon the Pharisee saw this and said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he'd know that a sinful woman is touching him" (Lk 7:36-39).

Jesus said, "Simon, I have something to tell you."

Simon answered, "Tell me, teacher."

Jesus told a parable, "Two men owed money to a moneylender. One owed five hundred silver coins, and the other owed fifty. Neither had the money to pay the moneylender, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of the debtors will love him more?"

Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled."

Jesus said, "You judged correctly" (Lk 7:40-43).

Jesus faced the woman but spoke to Simon, "Look at this woman! I came into your house. You didn't give me water for my feet, but she washed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You didn't greet me with a kiss, but she hasn't stopped kissing my feet. You didn't pour oil on my head, but she poured perfume on my feet. Her many sins have been forgiven, and great is her love. But he who has been forgiven little, loves little."

Then Jesus told the woman, "Your sins are forgiven."

The other guests said among themselves, "Who does he think he is, forgiving sins!"

Jesus told the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace" (Lk 7:44-50).

**GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. What catches your attention in the story?                  | 5. How did the characters face their problems?                                       |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 6. How have you faced similar problems?  |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story?                  | 7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? |
| 4. What problems did the characters face?                     | 8. What does the story tell about God?   |

## SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who invited Jesus to dinner?
2. Who was the uninvited guest?
3. What did the uninvited guest do?
4. What is the point of the story Jesus told Simon?
5. What was Jesus' question to Simon?
6. How did the way the woman related to Jesus compare to the way Simon related to Jesus?
7. When should a Christian risk his reputation by sticking up for a person who is a social outcast?
8. How should Christians today imitate Jesus by risking their reputation in order to help social outcasts find forgiveness and salvation?

## LIFE-LESSONS

1. **Jesus has compassion for people who are society's outcasts.** Jesus accepted, forgave, and saved the woman who had become an outcast because of her life as a prostitute (Lk 7:36-50).
2. **People's outward appearances may be in sharp contrast to their inner character.** On the outside, Simon appeared good, respectable, dignified, and successful; while the prostitute appeared immoral, untrustworthy, worn, and abused. However, on the inside Simon was selfish, proud, arrogant, and prejudiced; while the prostitute was repentant, humble, grateful, selfless, loving, and faithful (Lk 7:36-50).
3. **Narrow-minded and legalistic religious people expect others to be as haughty and judgmental as themselves.** Simon the Pharisee would have reprimanded the prostitute for touching him., Simon judged Jesus for allowing the sinful woman to touch him, and concluded that Jesus could not have been a prophet (Lk 7:39).
4. **The more a person expresses sorrow for sin and love for Christ, the greater evidence he gives of having received forgiveness of sins.** The prostitute's tears showed her sorrow and pouring expensive perfume on his feet showed her love. Jesus declared that the woman's great love was a manifestation that her sins were forgiven (Lk 7:47-48).
5. **Faith in Jesus results in salvation and forgiveness of sins.** The sinful woman had faith in Jesus (Lk 7:50); therefore, her sins were forgiven (Lk 7:48) and she was saved (Lk 7:50).
6. **People can limit God's working in their lives by refusing to see God at work whenever he acts outside of their views about how he should work.** Simon and

some of his guests restricted their spiritual vision because they saw the prostitute as an untouchable who could not be forgiven. Therefore, they were blind to God's mercy that forgives repentant sinners (Lk 7:39, 49).

## LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. **Music:**

After telling the Bible story, play the CD of Randy Travis singing, "Three Wooden Crosses on the Right Side of the Road." After hearing the song, ask, "How does the song relate to the Bible story?"

2. **Twitter Prayers** (short, concise prayers):

Invite listeners to talk to God in prayer about the story in "twitter" length prayers. Tell God:

- How they feel about the story.
- How they are similar to or different from the sinful woman or Simon the Pharisee.
- Decisions they need to make as a result of hearing the story.