

INVESTIGATIVE BIBLE DISCUSSION

Luke 7:36-50

[36] Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. [37] When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, [38] and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

[39] When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is--that she is a sinner."

[40] Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you."

"Tell me, teacher," he said.

[41] "Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. [42] Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

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

"You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

[44] Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. [45] You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. [46] You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. [47] Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."

[48] Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

[49] The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

[50] Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Questions

1. Highlight the main and minor characters
2. Where or when does the story take place?
3. What are the key events, activities or ideas presented in this passage?
4. How did the characters respond to Jesus personally, to what he said, or to what they saw?
5. How is Jesus described (by himself or others, claims made, character traits displayed)?
6. What values were taught/demonstrated by Jesus?
7. What truths/principles, were taught or demonstrated by Jesus?
8. What conclusions or observations can you draw?

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BACKGROUND

People usually ate their meals in a reclining position on low couches around the table. Their heads would face the table and their feet extend backwards.

It was not unusual for uninvited guests to come to a dinner party and sit around the wall of the room.

The customary tokens of hospitality offered to an invited guest were: greeted by the host with a kiss, have their feet washed and be given oil for anointing of their heads. Simon's treatment of Jesus would have been considered cold and discourteous. Also it was not considered proper at this time for a woman to let her hair down in public.

KEY WORDS

Simon the Pharisee: He was not the same as Simon Peter the apostle.

Alabaster Jar: Vase of expensive, white perfume; a fine grained gypsum. It was often used as an offering of thanksgiving.

Denari: A days wage for a common laborer in Jesus' day.

Woman – a sinner: One with a bad reputation--could have been for a variety of reasons.