

**ADULT UNIT II: The Measure of Faith**  
**ADULT GENERAL LESSON TITLE: Faith of a Woman Who Loved Jesus**  
**ADULT TOPIC: How Much Do You Love Me?**

**LESSON 8**  
**DATE: April 21, 2024**

**DEVOTIONAL READING: Romans 8:1-16**  
**BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Luke 7:36-50**  
**PRINT PASSAGE: Luke 7:36-39, 44-50**

**Home Daily Bible Reading**

Apr. 15	M	Luke 7:11-18	<i>Jesus' Compassion for the Grieving</i>
Apr. 16	T	Psalm 92	<i>Sing Praises to God's Name</i>
Apr. 17	W	James 5:12-20	<i>Confession, Prayer, and Healing</i>
Apr. 18	Th	Micah 7:7-20	<i>God Pardons Iniquity and Transgression</i>
Apr. 19	F	Psalm 86:1-7, 11-17	<i>God Is Good and Forgiving</i>
Apr. 20	Sa	Romans 8:1-16	<i>No Condemnation in Christ</i>
Apr. 21	Su	Luke 7:36-50	<i>Jesus Forgives a Sinner</i>

**EXALT!**

**Invocation** – Teacher or Leaner

**Celebration** – “O How I Love Jesus” - #266 AME Zion Bicentennial Hymnal

**Declaration** – Luke 7:36-39, 44-50 (Read together by class, by a volunteer or responsively.)

**A Sinful Woman Forgiveness**

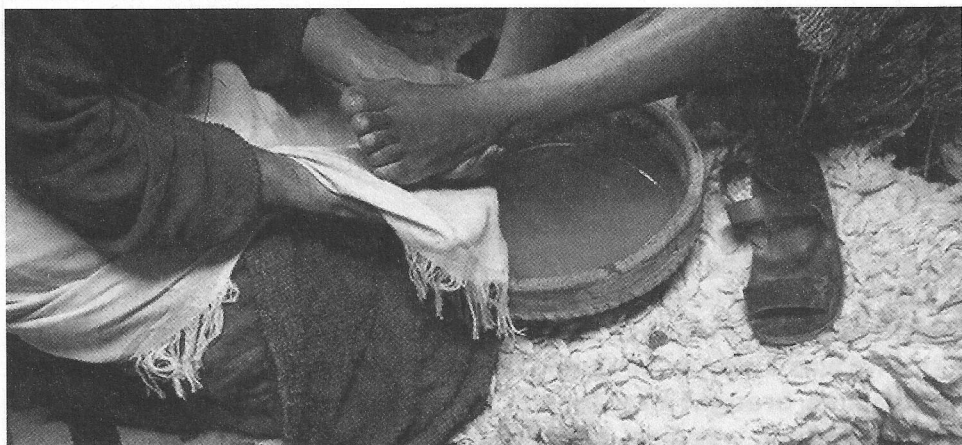
<sup>36</sup> One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and when he went into the Pharisee's house he reclined to dine. <sup>37</sup> And a woman in the city who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. <sup>38</sup> She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair, kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. <sup>39</sup> Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him, that she is a sinner.”

**44** Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. **45** You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. **46** You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. **47** Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven loves little." **48** Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." **49** But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" **50** But he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

**Affirmation** – We love the Lord and He has forgiven us. (*Spoken together by class and teacher.*)

**ENGAGE:** (5-10 min.)

The gospel of Luke is the only gospel noting that a Pharisee has invited Jesus to dine in his home. While there, a woman (unnamed), and apparently uninvited, appears. Without uttering a word, she performs an act that causes the host, Simon, discomfort. As Jesus is reclined at the table, she weeps at His feet, wipes His feet with her hair then anoints and kisses them.

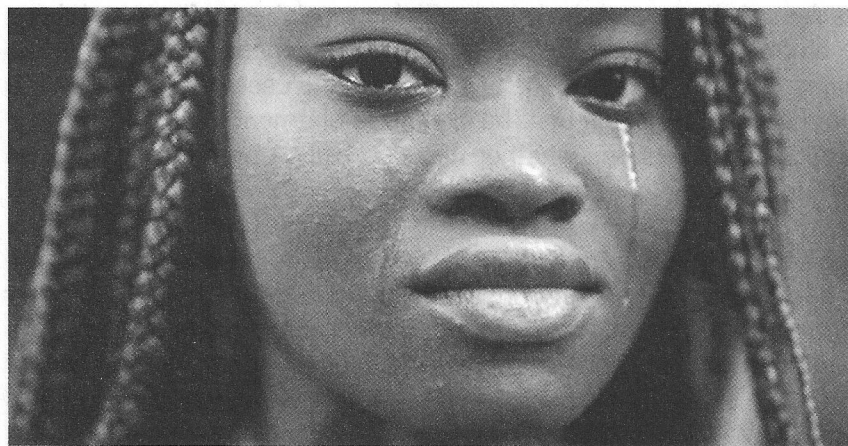


The question becomes, "How can Jesus be reclined at the table and have his feet washed from the behind?" In his article, "Reclining at Table at the Last Supper," Julian Spriggs explains. The Roman dining room would typically be adorned with couches. The guests would approach the table from behind those couches, reclining on their left side, while using their left elbow prop and to

support their head; leaving their right hand free to eat their food. Their feet would stretch out behind them, away from the table. Making it easier for Jesus to wash the disciples' feet without them having to move, and thus, how the woman in our passage today washed Jesus' feet with ointment as he reclined at the Pharisee's table. (www.JulianSpriggs.co.uk/pages/reclining, cited November 9, 2023)

There is a distinction between "oil" and "ointment" listed in 7:46. Olive oil was typically used to cleanse and refresh traveling guests, but in this passage, the woman brought a costlier and more valuable gift of ointment, likely scented with spices as an aromatic perfume.

Within the honor-shame culture of first-century Galilee, a spiritual leader like the Pharisee would have been highly honored; while a woman, particularly one known to sin sexually, would have been at the bottom of the ladder, deeply shamed and avoided.



Crossing the social boundaries was a taboo, particularly for one who was dishonored.

The courage shown by the woman must have been driven by deep conviction.

Even today, the woman's actions would be deeply uncomfortable (7:38) and considered inappropriate in a public environment, but Jesus ignores this social faux pas in favor of responding to (or accepting) the woman's sincere gratitude and love (7:47-48).

Break into small groups and discuss the following:

1. Adults suffer humiliation at the hands of those who regard themselves as superior. This woman was no exception. Recall a time when you were looked down upon by someone who thought you were inferior. Share your experience.

2. Adults honor those who accept them as they are. Now, recall a time when someone accepted you for who you are. How did that make you feel? Share your experience.

**EDUCATE:** (10-15 min.)

**An Uninvited Guest (Luke 7:36-39):** The invitation for Jesus to dine at the home of a Pharisee is quite perplexing, given the history between Him and that group. Nevertheless, Jesus was an invited guest, but there was another guest – one who was considered a “sinner” in the eyes of those around her. Why was she there? Had Jesus interacted with her prior to her arrival? Why did she come bearing such an expensive gift? There is a secular song by Anita Baker entitled, “Giving You the Best That I’ve Got.” In that song, there is a line which states, “Ain’t there something I can give you, in exchange for everything you give to me?” This song’s lyric resonates as the description of this unnamed, uninvited woman who appears at the home of Simon, the Pharisee. Some scholars believe she was Mary Magdalene, others do not know who she was. Nevertheless, she knows Jesus is there, and she brings with her an alabaster flask containing expensive ointment—an expensive container and an expensive ointment. She comes, giving Him the best that she has to offer. She uses her tears to wash His feet, her hair to dry His feet and the expensive ointment to anoint His feet. In his heart, Simon, questions whether Jesus is truly a prophet because He allows this “sinner” woman to touch Him.

**An Inhospitable Host (Luke 7:44-48):** Jesus reads his thoughts and exposes his heart to the people around. Jesus had two disciples and a brother named Simon, but this Simon was neither of them. Though being invited to the house of an honored member of society was in itself an honor, Simon’s lack of hospitality (also a cause for shame in the first-century world) suggests that his invitation may have been insincere or perhaps held some ulterior motive.

Jesus’ words shame Simon for his concern with status (7:44-46), but he welcomes and honors the woman’s service that comes from a place of humility and truth (7:47). During this day, the footwear worn was not able to protect the feet from dust and dirt. Therefore, it was customary for the host to provide a method for foot washing for their guests. Apparently, this was not extended to Jesus by Simon, upon His arrival. The kiss mentioned here, was more of a greeting offered by the host to the guest—one other courtesy that was not extended to Jesus by Simon. The oil Jesus refers to is not the expensive oil that the woman provides. He is merely referring to olive oil—one used for every day, common purposes. (Standard Lesson Commentary NIV, 2023-24, pgs. 292-293)



Because of the love she demonstrated for Jesus, this woman's sins were forgiven. Contrast her love with the Pharisee, whose un hospitable acts were not.

**An Unquestionable Authority (Luke 7:49-50):** Other guests who were present questioned Jesus' authority to forgive sins. But this was not the first time this authority was questioned (cf. Luke 5:20, Matthew 9:2). Here, Jesus acknowledges that the woman's faith has saved her. Furthermore, He tells her to go in peace. This is much like the woman who was caught in adultery (John 8:11) where Jesus exercises His authority—telling her to go and sin no more. (Standard Lesson Commentary NIV, 2023-24, pg. 294)

*\*cf— used only to suggest a comparison; means confer*

**ELEVATE:** (10 min.)

Discuss the following questions:

1) Consider what it cost the woman to approach Jesus. How did she even gain entrance to the Pharisee's house? Why did she seem unconcerned about the value of the ointment used? About the humiliation she risked by approaching a man in the company of others? 2) Ask class participants to think about the most humiliating circumstance(s) they have experienced. What or who enabled or compelled them to see beyond the humiliation? 3) Suggest that members of the group act out today's Scripture. Then encourage those who observed the drama to react to what they have seen.

**iTHINK:** (5–7 min.)

1. Adults, in the spirit of Christ, practice love and forgiveness toward all others. Recall a time when you practiced love and/or forgiveness towards someone else. Share with the group.
2. Adults seek to accept all people, ignoring the social stigma that such acceptance may incur. Share a time when you accepted someone, who was rejected by others. How were you perceived?
3. Adults who experience acceptance by others can rise above their rejection and shame. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

**KEY VERSE:** [Jesus] said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." Luke 7:50.