



Newcastle City Temple Connected

Reimagining Church - Let's Worship together

SUNDAY: 18th October 2020

Theme: Come Dine with Thee

Key Text: Luke 7:36-50 (see also Matthew 26:6-13)

Once a Pharisee named Simon invited Jesus to be a guest for a meal.

Picture this:

Just as Jesus enters the man's home and takes His place at the table, a woman from the city - notorious as a woman of ill repute - follows Him in. She has heard that Jesus will be at the Pharisee's home, so she comes in and approaches Him, carrying an alabaster flask of perfumed oil. Then she begins to cry, she kneels down so her tears fall on Jesus' feet, and she starts wiping His feet with her own hair. Then she actually kisses His feet, and she pours the perfumed oil on them.

Simon (thinking): Now I know this guy is a fraud. If He were a real prophet, He would have known this woman is a sinner and He would never let her get near Him, much less touch Him . . . or kiss Him!

Jesus (knowing what the Pharisee is thinking): Simon, I want to tell you a story.

Simon: Tell me, Teacher.

Jesus: ⁴¹ Two men owed a certain lender a lot of money. One owed 100 weeks' wages, and the other owed 10 weeks' wages. ⁴² Both men defaulted on their loans, but the lender forgave them both. Here's a question for you: which man will love the lender more?

Simon: ⁴³ Well, I guess it would be the one who was forgiven more.

Jesus: Good answer.

⁴⁴⁻⁴⁶ Now Jesus turns around so He's facing the woman, although He's still speaking to Simon.

Jesus: Do you see this woman here? It's kind of funny. I entered your home, and you didn't provide a basin of water so I could wash the road dust from My feet. You didn't give Me a customary kiss of greeting and welcome. You didn't offer Me the common courtesy of providing oil to brighten My face. But this woman has wet My feet with her own tears and washed them with her own hair. She hasn't stopped kissing My feet since I came in. And she has applied perfumed oil to My feet. ⁴⁷ This woman has been forgiven much, and she is showing much love. But the person who has shown little love shows how little forgiveness he has received.

⁴⁸ (to the woman) Your sins are forgiven.

Simon and Friends (muttering among themselves): ⁴⁹ Who does this guy think He is? He has the audacity to claim the authority to forgive sins?

Jesus (to the woman): ⁵⁰ Your faith has liberated you. Go in peace

Suggested Song: A needy sinner at thy feet (SASB 484)

A needy sinner at thy feet,
With broken heart I bow
For pardon at thy mercy seat;
O Jesus, save me now.

Refrain:

*O come to my heart, Lord Jesus,
There is room in my heart for thee.
O come to my heart, Lord Jesus,
There is room in my heart for thee.*

<https://youtu.be/JCjBGcDXWHO>



As we continue our theme of 'Come Dine with Thee' the scene opens in Simon the Leper's home in Bethany, which is about 2 miles outside of Jerusalem. It is Holy Week, the days leading up to Jesus' crucifixion.

Jesus is the honoured dinner guest. In attendance are several men and women, including the twelve Disciples.

As the guests are reclining at the dinner table, a woman of ill repute, having heard that Jesus was eating in the Pharisee's house, enters the home and proceeds to break open an expensive bottle of perfumed oil which she had brought along with her. The fragrance of the oil fills the room as she wets his feet with her tears, dries his feet with her hair and having kissed those feet - pours the perfumed oil over them. What an extravagance! What a waste— objected the disciples, as Simon muttered beneath his breath, *"If this man really were a prophet, he would know who this woman is who is touching him; he would know what kind of sinful life she lives"*(GNB)

The central feature in the story, as brought out in the parable of the two debtors, is the contrast between the love shown to Jesus by the woman and the lack of love shown to him by Simon the Pharisee.

Simon had been neglectful in his duties as the host, Jesus response to Simon indicates just how rude he had been - from the moment Jesus had entered his home. There had been a distinct absence of all courtesies and signs of respect;

"You did not welcome me at the door, you did not greet me with a kiss. You didn't bring a basin of water and wash my feet, or some oil to anoint my head.... But see what a beautiful thing this woman has done for me".

While Simon & the disciples had been quick to criticise and mention the cost and "wastefulness" of this act... Jesus used the extravagant act of worship as an opportunity to draw their attention to the matter at hand... his impending death and resurrection, and ultimately the forgiveness of all sin; and ironically the one who would normally have been barred at the door became the principal guest. She gave to Jesus something precious of herself. The tears she shed - rather than her unsavoury reputation, were proof of her real self. Extravagantly pouring out her love - to the one who extravagantly gives, the one who graciously and abundantly pours out forgiveness and healing from his overflowing heart.

Song: Take my life and let it be (SASAB 623) <https://youtu.be/UdVtv8cqaOM>

V1. Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise,

V6. Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure-store.
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee





It was on a Wednesday

(Reflection from 'Stages on the Way' Wild Goose Publications, Iona Community)

It was on the Wednesday
That they called him a waster.

The place smelt like the perfume department of a big store.

It was as if somebody had bumped their elbow against a bottle
and sent it crashing to the floor,
setting off the most expensive stink bomb on earth.

But it happened in a house, not a shop.

And the woman who broke the bottle was no casual afternoon shopper.
She was the penniless poorest of the poor, giving away the only precious thing she had.

And he sat still
while she poured the liquid all over his head...
as unnecessary as aftershave on a full crop of hair and a bearded chin.

And those who smelt it,
and those who saw it
and those who remembered
that he was against extravagance,
called him a waster.

They forgot
That he also was the poorest of the poor.

And they who had much
and who had given him nothing,
objected to a pauper giving him everything.

Jealousy was in the air
When a poor woman's generosity became an embarrassment to their tight-fistedness

That was on the Wednesday
When they called him a waster.

The meal at Simons House in Bethany was a meal of contrasts, through which an important and a stark lesson was learnt.

...her many sins have been forgiven - as her great love has shown. V47

The woman who anointed Jesus' head and feet with oil, worshipped Jesus in an extravagant way, and everyone present took notice. The disciples didn't worship Jesus this way. They were much more practical and reserved in their worship style. The Disciples spent time studying at his feet and serving alongside Jesus throughout their travels. They didn't understand this type of extravagant worship, to them the woman's worship seemed wasteful and frivolous. They didn't hold back in the criticism and they were so caught in up their own ill judgement of her that they failed to recognise the significance of what she was doing.



Continued...

Jesus had spoken about how he would be crucified on the cross. He had been clear with the Disciples on at least three occasions prior to this meal, how he would soon die and not be present with them on earth for very much longer; but even if the Disciples didn't understand, or didn't want to believe it, this woman seemed to take him at his word and didn't waste the time she had left in Jesus' presence .
Matthews Gospel confirms that in pouring perfume on his body, this woman was also preparing Jesus for his impending death and burial. (Matt. 26:12).

This woman held nothing back from Jesus – despite what the others thought of her; and she is remembered throughout the world as an example of how to worship. Through her example, those around her learned how to worship Jesus well, and thousands of years later, we are reading about her and are being challenged to worship as she did.

**Truly I tell you, this gospel is preached throughout the world,
what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.**

Matthew 26:13

This woman's actions begs this question of each one of us today; *"How extravagant is your worship?"*

To what lengths are we prepared to go to make the most of every moment in the Lord's presence? To what extent do we show our love for him?

Do we ever hold back? Do we ever concern ourselves with what others may think? Or how others might judge us?

In worshipping Jesus in the way that she did– this woman demonstrated how extravagant worship cares not about what others may think, but focuses purely on Jesus - the One who is worthy of our Worship; and know that *'Worship is not a climate we create, a methodology we employ, a program we implement, a song-set we schedule, or a service we plan. Worship is a fixed gaze upon the Lord and a humble realization of the marvellous grace such an opportunity represents'*

And so...

When we see
the body of Christ
still broken in this world,
may we meet it
with lavish grace
and pour ourselves out
with extravagant love.

J.L. Richardson (paintedprayerbook.com)

Song: I will offer up my life in spirit and truth (SASB 371) <https://youtu.be/XWdpgXEWNx4>

Song: If crosses come (I'll not turn back) (SASB 649) <https://youtu.be/M8dqWHKdn3I>

Prayer: Teach Us (St Ignatius of Loyola)

Teach us Good Lord;
To serve you as you deserve;
To give and not to count the cost;
To fight and not to heed the wounds;
To toil and not to seek for rest;
To labour and to ask for no reward,
Save that of knowing we do your will. AMEN

With every blessing

Major Liz