



One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. (Luke 7:36)

But this Pharisee, whose name we'll see in a moment is Simon, isn't the only significant character in this episode from Luke's Gospel.

And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, 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. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "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." And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "Say it, Teacher."
(7:37-40)

When he wanted to get a powerful point across, especially if his hearers' hearts weren't what they ought to be, Jesus would often share a parable. And so...

"A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly."

But what is the *point* of Jesus' parable? How did it relate to this awkward situation?

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 wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little." And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." (7:41-50)

"Who is this?" That question really matters when anyone crosses paths with Jesus...



For Class & Family Discussion:

1. Why do you think this “woman of the city, who was a sinner,” did what she did when she learned that Jesus was reclining at table in the Pharisee’s house?
2. What do we learn about Jesus from Luke 7:39-40, and why should that make a big impression on us, even today?
3. In your own words, what was the Pharisee saying about the woman in 7:39? If we’re not careful, can we be guilty of saying the same sorts of things about people today? If so, how, and why is that really, really dangerous?
4. Why do you think Jesus responded to Simon with a parable?
5. What point was Jesus making in 7:44-46?
6. Jesus’ statement in 7:47-48 prompted an immediate reaction from the people in the room (7:49). Why?
7. So what about us? We want not only to “cross paths” with Jesus, but to walk with him as his disciples. So what should we carry away with us from this episode with Simon and the “woman of the city”?