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**BIBLE STUDY**

**Refuge Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, Inc.**

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**“MY ALABASTER BOX”**

**Luke 7:36-50**

***Luke 7:36 "And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat."***

A Pharisee named Simon had invited Jesus over for a dinner party. Jesus had been generating a lot of curiosity, so the man apparently wanted a closer look at this controversial rabbi. Jesus was known for His association with sinners. But He also extends Himself to the well-to-do, who stand in the same need of salvation. Some people called the Pharisees the "separatists". These Pharisees were the truly strict scribes. It is unusual for this Pharisee to ask Jesus who ate with publicans and sinners to eat with him. Perhaps, this Pharisee had been there along with the 2 disciples John the Baptist had sent, and perhaps he had seen the miracles that Jesus did along with them. Jesus was known to be a Hebrew by birth so there would be no problem with eating with Him from that standpoint. In Jesus’ day, rabbis and other spiritual leaders enjoyed widespread respect and were held in high esteem in Jewish society. Almost everyone looked up to the Pharisees. In their vaulted position, they avoided those whom they deemed “sinners” those who did not follow their system of rules. Soon after calling Matthew, His first “white collar” disciple to follow Him, Jesus ate a meal with “many tax collectors, publicans and sinners” in Matthew’s house. A vital part of Jesus’ evangelism ministry was reaching all types of people including the social aristocrats and outcasts of society. Jesus showed us that we shouldn’t let cultural norms dictate whom we evangelize.

***Mark 2:15-17***

***15 And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.***

***16 And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?***

***17 When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.***

***Luke 7:37 "And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that [Jesus] sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,"***

It is understood that all people are sinners (Romans 3:23). To call a particular woman a sinner was to say something about her lifestyle. Jesus was a friend to sinners. Previously, He had stopped the crowd from stoning another woman caught in the act of adultery (John 8:1-11). Jesus was in the home of a very strict Pharisee. This woman entering this house would have been unwelcome had not Jesus been there. Sinner probably means “prostitute”; even to enter the company where Jesus was eating was a bold act. She must have felt a tremendous sense of gratitude, mingled with profound unworthiness. This alabaster box of ointment was of great monetary value. Ointment of this type kept in alabaster boxes was very expensive. We are not told where the woman got it, only that she had it and brought it to Jesus. This shows that when we come to Jesus, we should give Him our best, regardless of the cost or price.

***Matthew 19:16-24***

***16 And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?***

***17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.***

***18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,***

***19 Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.***

***20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?***

***21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.***

***22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.***

***23 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.***

***24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.***

***Luke 7:38 "And stood at his feet behind [him] weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe [them] with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed [them] with the ointment."***

All four gospels present an account of Jesus being anointed by a woman with a costly jar of perfume (Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; Luke 7:36-50; John 12:1-8). In John the woman is identified as Mary of Bethany ([John 11:2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2011.2)), sister to Martha and Lazarus. Matthew and Mark relate a similar event but do not give the woman’s name. Here, Luke tells of a different woman, also anonymous. Things really became awkward when she took out an alabaster jar of perfume, anointed Jesus’s feet, wept on his feet, kissed his feet, and wiped his feet with her hair. Normally the head, not the feet, were anointed. The woman’s weeping, and the fact that she let down her hair in public (forbidden in that society) suggest that she may have been quite overcome with feeling. Her tears of repentance and love are so great that she washes His feet with them. The ultimate sign of her repentance and love is wiping His feet with her hair. This expensive ointment was a type of perfume. The Lord had compassion on her. It is an act of humbleness. In each Gospel account, a woman (not a man) anoints Jesus by pouring out a precious and costly perfume in an extravagant act of worship. The three women who anointed Jesus recognized Christ’s unequaled value and expressed their gratitude with unreserved love and devotion. Two anointings of Jesus happen during the week of Passover and are linked with His imminent death and burial. The earlier anointing, in Luke’s account, is in the middle of Jesus’ ministry in Galilee and draws a different lesson on forgiveness and love. In each case, the woman’s actions signal more than she knows. But, although she may not fully comprehend the messianic significance of her anointing, each woman had come to appreciate Christ’s worth more than anyone else at the table. Jesus Christ is God’s anointed [Messiah](https://www.gotquestions.org/what-does-Messiah-mean.html).

***Luke 7:39 "Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw [it], he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman [this is] that toucheth him: for she is a sinner."***

When the Pharisee who was hosting the meal saw what had transpired, he was more disgusted with Jesus than with the woman. He didn’t speak out loud but thought to himself that if Jesus were a prophet, he would know the truth about the woman. If he were all he was cracked up to be, he would have told her, “Please don’t touch me. I can’t be associated with you.” We see, here, in this Pharisee a self-righteous man. Perhaps he had been touched by the miracles and the miraculous preaching Jesus had done. Something prompted him to invite Jesus to be his guest. It might have been to learn more of Jesus' teaching since it was so different from what he had been taught. He saw this woman with eyes which see fact and not faith. He was aware of her sins and not of her repentant heart.

***Luke 7:40 "And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on."***

Jesus interrupts Simon’s thoughts. In verse 39 Simon had doubted in his mind that Jesus could have even been a prophet. Now he calls Jesus, Master. Simon is a hypocrite. He believes one thing and says another. Luke tells us that Jesus replied to his thoughts. Don’t miss that. The Pharisee hadn’t spoken to Jesus. He had been talking to himself. He should have known all our deepest beliefs, feelings, and judgments are an open book before Jesus. You can’t have a private reflection without Jesus knowing about it. Jesus had a question for Simon, but it was a setup. He was going to have Simon dig a hole and then watch him fall into it.

***Psalm 139:1-2***

***1 O lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.***

***2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.***

***Luke 7:41 "There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty."***

***Luke 7:42 "And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?"***

***Luke 7:43 "Simon answered and said, I suppose that [he], to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged."***

Jesus is speaking a parable to Simon. He will deal with Simon in this parable and will not directly come out and reprimand him. In the parable, Jesus has set the stage of 2 different debtors: one owes 500 pence and the other 50 pence. A pence was a unit of money (a denarius) equal to a laborer’s daily wage. There is only one possible solution to this parable. When Simon answers it. he will have scolded himself for not realizing this woman's sins (which were many) were forgiven; and she loved Jesus much, because Jesus had forgiven her of much. Simon had not committed sins like hers. He didn't have much to be forgiven for, so he loved little. You see, Jesus put the responsibility for judging this woman to Simon. He gave Simon a parable which proved Jesus' lesson here for Simon. Simon trapped himself; and in a word, understood what Jesus was saying here.

***Luke 7:44 "And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped [them] with the hairs of her head."***

In response to Do you see this woman? Simon probably thought, “How could I miss her?” But Jesus wasn’t questioning the Pharisee’s natural eyesight. He was questioning his spiritual insight. In those days of walking through dusty streets in sandals, feet would become filthy. It was a custom when a guest came in to have a pan of water that he might cool his feet off and wipe them and then go in. To provide a guest with water to wash his feet was common hospitality.

***Luke 7:45 "Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet."***

***Luke 7:46 "My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment."***

It was a custom in the land to greet the brethren with a holy kiss. Moreover, greeting a guest with a kiss and oil for his head were signs of warmth and friendliness. Simon hadn’t shown any of these courtesies to Jesus. But the woman had washed his dirty feet with her tears and hair. She had kissed his feet and anointed them with perfume. The ultimate in humility is to kiss another's feet. This woman had done this repeatedly. It took an uninvited, sinful woman to show hospitality to Jesus (an invited guest) in this Pharisee’s home. A very honored guest might have been anointed on the head. The desert sun was hot and could really dry the skin. This Simon, in fact, had not even acted as if Jesus were a special guest. This woman greatly honored Jesus. She did not feel worthy to anoint His head but anointed His feet. Jesus is saying to Simon: You didn't even show me common courtesy, but this woman has washed my feet with her tears and used her hair for a towel to dry them. Simon must not have thought as highly of Jesus as he did his other Pharisee brethren. Simon must have been squirming in his seat.

***Luke 7:47 "Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, [the same] loveth little."***

Jesus knew all along that this was a sinful woman. He also knew that she had a repentant heart. She loved Jesus more than she feared what might happen to her for pushing her way into the Pharisee's house. Whatever it took, she was coming to Jesus. Jesus freely forgave her, because she was truly sorry, and because she truly loved Him and wanted to follow Him. Lovelessness in the Christian life may sometimes stem from a lack of honest awareness of one’s own sins, and thus a corresponding lack of appreciation for what Christ has done in working forgiveness. This Pharisee figured he didn't have much to be forgiven for. Take a look at what Jesus told him: that he loved very little. Simon was self-righteous. He saw little in his life that needed to be forgiven. He assumed he had it all together, and as a result he felt no need for the grace of God that Jesus was proclaiming.

***Luke 7:48 "And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven."***

Your sins are forgiven is a glorious thing to hear your Savior say. If you are putting your faith in Christ as your substitutionary sacrifice, then he says those same words to you. The greatest gift anyone can receive is to have their sins forgiven. Jesus wants to forgive every single person upon the earth. to be forgiven. We must humble ourselves before Him and ask Him to forgive us, and He will.

***Luke 7:49 "And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?"***

Those who heard him questioned how he could do such a thing, and the answer is that he can’t unless he is more than a mere man. They were talking to themselves. They did not recognize Jesus for who He was, just as many of the church people today do not recognize who He was and is. No mere man can forgive sins. Only God can forgive sins. they were in the presence of God (Emmanuel), God with us, and did not realize who He was. They thought He was the teacher. How wrong they were.

***Luke 7:50 "And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."***

Then the Son of God commended the woman for her faith and sent her away in peace. Jesus knows their thoughts but said it any way. This woman believed Jesus would forgive her, and He did. Her faith (like Abraham's faith) saved her. When you know you are saved, there is a peace that comes over you that you cannot explain. The sting of death has been taken away because you know eternal life awaits you.

**Questions**

1. What did the Pharisee desire Jesus to do?
2. What was another name the Pharisees were known by?
3. What kind of a woman came to Jesus in the Pharisee's house?
4. What did she bring with her?
5. Who was Jesus a friend to?
6. What did she use to wash Jesus' feet?
7. What did she dry them with?
8. Why was it the custom to furnish water for a guest to wash his feet?
9. Did Jesus know what kind of woman she was?
10. How would you describe this Pharisee?
11. This man could see the woman's sins but could not see what?
12. What did the Pharisee call Jesus that made the Pharisee a Hypocrite?
13. What is the parable Jesus tells the Pharisee?
14. Who loved the most in this parable?
15. What 3 things that Simon neglected to do showed that Simon did not have great respect for Jesus?
16. What is the ultimate act of humility that this woman did?
17. Why did Jesus say her sins were forgiven in verse 47?
18. What is the greatest gift anyone can receive?
19. What were those that sat with Him at meat questioning Jesus' right to do?
20. In verse 50, Jesus told the woman her \_\_\_\_\_ hath saved her and to go in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.