

## Reflection Questions: The Woman who Anoints Jesus' Feet (Luke 7)

This woman is known about the town as a 'sinner.' Over the years, many people have interpreted her sin as sexual sin, probably prostitution. And, while this is a possibility, this is only one possibility. She may have had a job which required contact with Gentiles, or worked with unclean materials (such as dyeing); or she might have been ill or disabled.\* Interestingly, in Luke 5, Peter exclaims: "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" And yet, we don't spend much time debating how Peter was sinful.

Simon thinks that if Jesus were truly a prophet, he would have known what kind of woman was touching him. But Jesus asks Simon: "Do you see this woman?" This seems to be the crux of the passage.

- 1) What did Simon see when he looked at this woman? What did Jesus see?
- 2) Have you ever had the experience of people looking past you or through you? Have you ever felt that people didn't truly see you as a person? How does that feel?

The following is a quote from Shakespeare's *Othello*:

"Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;  
'twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;  
But he that filches from me my good name  
Robs me of that which not enriches him,  
And makes me poor indeed."

- 3) Have you ever felt like your reputation was ruined? How do you come back from that? Do you think that Jesus sees something different than our reputations?

The woman was making an extravagant, over-the-top, even mushy display of her feelings toward Jesus. Unbridled emotion such as this tends to make us uncomfortable. In fact, we are often told that faith is intellectual, not emotional. And yet Jesus holds up what she has done as an act of faith.

- 3) What does this woman's act teach us about faith?
- 4) Is there anything about this woman that resonates with your story? What can you learn from her act of faith?

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\*Reid, Barbara E. "'Do You See This Woman?' Luke 7:36-50 as a Paradigm for Feminist Hermeneutics." *Biblical Research* 40 (1995): 37.

## Putting it together

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Choose a bead to represent the story of the Woman who anoints Jesus' feet.

What about this bead represents this woman's story for you?

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