# Jesus met a Prostitute

# Luke 7:36-50 # 37

There lived a Jewish woman at the time of Jesus who practiced the most ancient of trades – prostitution. Everyone knew her and some men of the town employed her services by night. She hated herself for doing this work. It made her feel used and unclean. It gave her a social stigma especially among respectable people. She felt trapped. No one cared about how she felt, about her pain – they just judged her and looked down on her and knew her only for what they could get out of her. They didn’t even know her name.

One of her most condemning critics was a Pharisee called Simon. He was a leading religious priest, very respectable, fine clothes, looking important. She felt sick at the sight of him. If he looked at her, it was to judge her, and to heap shame on her.

Jesus of Nazareth had come to town. She’d heard stories how He healed bodies but also set people free from bondage to devils. Those He touched came away with a skip in their step and joy on their faces. She was curious. She had known so many men but all for what they could get from her. No one cared about her –the real, hurting, empty, used, dirty, unloved her. She had to see this Jesus. But how? She met with men in private – Jesus met in public places. He was important, she was despised. Then she heard He had accepted an invitation to none other than the house of Simon himself, the last place she would be welcome. But tomorrow Jesus may move on. She had to be bold.

She grabbed the best thing she knew to prepare herself to meet men – her jar of fragrant oil. She walked towards Simons’ house. Was Jesus really so different from other men? Would He also judge her and condemn her? Would He understand? She kept walking … hoping. Simon will be there, and he will shame her and send her away, humiliated. No, she must meet Jesus. She is desperate to be clean.

A crowd is gathered around Simon’s house. They provide cover. Veil on, head down, she sneaks forward, gets near the door and looks in. There he is. Simon and his posh friends reclining on their couches holding respectable, conversation with Jesus. She feels sick at the sight. She can’t burst in on this scene. His servants would throw her out. She is so close.

Then she sees Him. Her heart leaps. She is just meters away from Jesus’ precious feet pointing towards her. They still have street dust. Her heart takes over. She lunges forward towards those feet. A flood of tears rains down, heart breaks open with longing and pain. Then her bottle of fragrant oil – little dabs don’t seem enough. She turns that bottle upside down and pours it all over those feet. The tears the dust the oil massaged into those precious feet. Hair joins in, drying off, adoring, cleaning – all pouring out of her broken heart, trusting, loving, longing, kissing His precious feet. Then His toes twitch – He is receiving her treatment. He is receiving her. Like it’s just Him and her loving each other.

Simon doesn’t know what to do. He is looking for a signal of disapproval from Jesus, so that he can order his servants to remove her. But he gets none. Simon has a problem. Her emotional outburst doesn’t fit with his respectable conversation. He can’t toss her out; it might not be good for appearances!

Simon does what comes natural to him - Judgements**. ‘If this man were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman is touching Him, a sinner’**. Now it seems she’s got Jesus caught in Simon’s judgements. Somehow, she knows Jesus doesn’t mind. She keeps her head down. She can read His attitude from His feet. Jesus could easily withdraw those feet and save His reputation. But He keeps them there, identifying Himself with her, shielding her from the judgement of the crowd and of His host, receiving her love and preserving her dignity.

As she continues to pour over His feet. Jesus says to Simon**, “Simon, I have something to tell you”.**

“**Tell me teacher”,** he says.

The woman is relieved Jesus’ attention is back on Simon.

 **“Two men owed money to a certain money lender. One owed him $5,000 and the other $500. Neither of them had the cash to pay him back so he cancelled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?”**

Simon is concerned. If he answers the question his status will drop down to the role of a student. He doesn’t know the intention of Jesus’ little story. The public are starting to enjoy a little sport at Simon’s expense. First her antics and now a story about owing money. He tries the safe answer, figuring he doesn’t owe anyone money. **“I suppose the one who had the biggest debt cancelled would love the money lender more”.**

“**You have judged correctly”,** Jesus said.

 Simon is sensing trouble. She is relieved Jesus has taken attention off her. But, then Jesus turned to the woman and said to Simon.
 **“Do you see this woman?”**

Simon goes bright red. He’s been pretending not to notice. He doesn’t know what to say, but his face betrays what he is thinking. He doesn’t see her as a person. He sees a prostitute looking for business in his house. But that isn’t what she is doing. She knows it and Jesus knows it and that’s all that seems to matter right now.

Jesus continues looking straight at Simon**. “I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet her feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.”** To that woman Jesus has spoken straight into her heart. He makes His verdict on her in public. “Beautiful, clean”. All her condemners are there. Jesus stands between them and her, sheltered by Him.

He continues talking to Simon, but he speaks right into her heart…

 **“You did not give me a kiss, but this woman from the time she entered has not stopped kissing my feet.”** The very deed she did so often that made her unclean, Jesus announces publicly, that on His feet her kiss is clean. Now her heart begins to have this washed, pure feeling right through it. She begins to feel clean inside.

 Jesus continues talking to Simon. **“You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you her many sins have been forgiven for she loved much”.** These words penetrate her guilty soul**, “her many sins have been forgiven”.** He is talking about her sins. Her shameful lifestyle forgiven.

But for Simon those same words had a very different meaning. Jesus looked at Simon with sadness**. “But he who has been forgiven little loves little”.** Poor Simon. He is exposed. His party is ruined. He invited Jesus to advance his social standing. Now his guest is claiming to forgive sins – that makes Him God, to whom he has shown no love – not even standard courtesy for guests, no love for God in his heart, none at all.

His other guests start murmuring. **“Who is this who even forgives sins?”**

Then Jesus turns to the woman, looks deep into her eyes and says, **“Your sins are forgiven”.** Shefinds herself able to look back at Him with no feeling of shame. This pure man accepting, forgiving, and loving her! Never has she known such a look. With Simon and his self-righteous friends, she has always felt judgements and shame. But Jesus smiles at her, understanding her, and loving her. Then He speaks to her again**, “Your faith has saved you, go in peace”.**

“Saved”, not condemned, not judged, not guilty. This is a brand-new identity. How does she know? It’s confirmed by peace in her heart.

She came into that house bowed low in shame. She leaves standing tall, head held high, loved, forgiven, accepted and at peace with God. She steps outside, empowered to begin a new clean life.

**Jesus met a Prostitute**  “Get real” questions

1.

1. What was the woman’s ‘trade’?

2. What was Simon’s religious sect?

3. What was Jesus’ home town?

4. What tool of trade did the woman grab?

5. Where did she apply this on Jesus?

6. What attitude came natural to Simon?

7. What was Simon desperate to protect?

8. What did Jesus use to expose Simon?

9. What did Jesus promise the woman?

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|  | **Questions of the story** | **Personal questions** |
| 2. | What was the status of the woman’s occupation? | What is the status of your occupation? |
| 3. | How was her heart hurting? | How is your heart hurting? |
| 4. | What did she hope would happen by meeting Jesus? | What do you hope that Jesus might do for you? |
| 5. | Why did Jesus approve of her unconventional approach to Him? | How do you approach Jesus? |
| 6. | What was wrong with Simon’s judgements? | What is the place of judgements? |
| 7. | What was the state of Simon’s heart? | What is the state of your heart? |
| 8. | Why did the woman qualify to have her sins forgiven? | What do you need to do to get your sins forgiven? |
| 9. | What happened to the woman’s shame? | What needs to happen to your shame? |
| 10. | What new heart condition did the woman take into her new life? | What new kind of life does Jesus have for you? |

 10.What had saved the woman?

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Perfume Pharisees Prostitution Reputation Story