

Learning More with
Stories of the Master

Web – www.StoriesoftheMaster.com email – Info@WGSministries.org

~ **The Woman Who Wept at the Feet of Jesus** ~

You can learn much more about this story by doing these three things:

1. Read the story in Luke 7:36-50.
2. Discover key cultural and historical insights.
3. Answer the reflective questions.

1. Read the text of the story from the New American Standard Bible and from the Easy Read Version

New American Standard Bible (NASB) Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by [The Lockman Foundation](http://TheLockmanFoundation.com)
New Living Translation (NLT) Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation.

Luke 7:36-50 - NASB	Luke 7:36-50 – New Living Translation
<p>³⁶ Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee’s house and reclined <i>at the table</i>. ³⁷ And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining <i>at the table</i> in the Pharisee’s house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, ³⁸ and standing behind <i>Him</i> at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume. ³⁹ Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner.”</p> <p>⁴⁰ And Jesus answered him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” And he replied, “Say it, Teacher.” ⁴¹ “A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which of them will love him more?” ⁴³ Simon answered and said, “I suppose the one whom he forgave more.” And He said to him, “You have judged correctly.” ⁴⁴ 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. ⁴⁵ You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. ⁴⁶ You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. ⁴⁷ For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.” ⁴⁸ Then He said to her, “Your sins have been forgiven.” ⁴⁹ Those who were reclining <i>at the table</i> with Him began to say to themselves, “Who is this <i>man</i> who even forgives</p>	<p>³⁶ One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to have dinner with him, so Jesus went to his home and sat down to eat. ³⁷ When a certain immoral woman from that city heard he was eating there, she brought a beautiful alabaster jar filled with expensive perfume. ³⁸ Then she knelt behind him at his feet, weeping. Her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing his feet and putting perfume on them.</p> <p>³⁹ When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman is touching him. She’s a sinner!”</p> <p>⁴⁰ Then Jesus answered his thoughts. “Simon,” he said to the Pharisee, “I have something to say to you.”</p> <p>“Go ahead, Teacher,” Simon replied.</p> <p>⁴¹ Then Jesus told him this story: “A man loaned money to two people—500 pieces of silver to one and 50 pieces to the other. ⁴² But neither of them could repay him, so he kindly forgave them both, canceling their debts. Who do you suppose loved him more after that?”</p> <p>⁴³ Simon answered, “I suppose the one for whom he canceled the larger debt.”</p> <p>“That’s right,” Jesus said. ⁴⁴ Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, “Look at this woman kneeling here. When I entered your home, you didn’t offer me water to wash the dust from my feet, but she has washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You didn’t greet me with a kiss, but from the time I first came in, she has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶ You neglected the</p>

Learning More with
Stories of the Master

Web – www.StoriesoftheMaster.com email – Info@WGSministries.org

<p>sins?”⁵⁰ And He said to the woman, Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”</p>	<p>courtesy of olive oil to anoint my head, but she has anointed my feet with rare perfume.</p> <p>⁴⁷ “I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love.”⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to the woman, “Your sins are forgiven.”</p> <p>⁴⁹ The men at the table said among themselves, “Who is this man, that he goes around forgiving sins?”</p> <p>⁵⁰ And Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”</p>
--	--

2. Discover key cultural and historical insights.

- It was common for groups of people to gather for meals to discuss religious subjects, sometimes late into the night. These were called *haberim*. Sometimes a teacher would be present to present his message.
- Because they reclined, it was a banquet. People were seated by rank and feet would be washed. Villagers not invited to the meal, could still come to observe and listen.
- Every guest should have his feet washed and should be kissed. This deliberate oversight would have electrified the audience.
- If someone were insulted in such a way, it would be customary to reply and withdraw.
- A woman letting down her hair was to be done only in the presence of a husband. It was a public shame to do this in public. This public shame was equal to exposing her breasts
- Noblemen were anointed with oil. Simon the Pharisee tried to show Jesus to be of inferior rank by refusing to anoint Jesus.
- Simon’s response about the woman washing, anointing and kissing Jesus’ feet shows that he still has not accepted her and that she is not accepted into the community. Jesus’ response is not only to free her from personal sin but also to bring her back into the community.
- Jesus accepts her love even though it is misunderstood by all.
- In the Middle East, the guest would never say anything bad about the hospitality offered him, yet Jesus did this.
- “I came under your roof” – in other words, I came under your hospitality but you gave me no water. Jesus did not say, “You failed to wash my feet” because that would have implied that Simon would have had to take the role of a servant. He simply says, “you didn’t give me water so that I could wash my own feet.” Yet this woman washed my feet with her tears.
- You gave me no kiss – Since Simon called him Rabbi he should have kissed his hand. Students, children, servants kiss the hand of teachers, parents, and masters. Equals kiss on the cheek. But Jesus does not say “you did not kiss me on the hand”, just that a kiss was not offered. Again, we see his gentleness. By contrast the woman covered his feet with kisses.
- Olive oil was commonly used for anointing the head. It was plentiful and cheap. None was provided, but she provided perfume for his feet. She would not presume to carry out these actions on his hands or face but only on his feet. She is humble before him.

Learning More with
Stories of the Master

Web – www.StoriesoftheMaster.com email – Info@WGSministries.org

- Her sins have been forgiven – perfect tense. Does this mean they were already forgiven? Perhaps Jesus had already pronounced forgiveness in his teaching?
- Simon brought Jesus in to test him and Jesus passed the test. Jesus showed himself to be a prophet because he knew the heart of the woman and the heart of Simon. Both were exposed, a heart of forgiveness and a heart of hypocrisy. But Jesus is more than a prophet. He is the One who forgives.
- The story finishes without being finished. We are not told Simon’s response. She is sent away in peace. Others are still offended because he forgives. But we are not left with Simon’s response.

(Note: these cultural insights are from *Poet and Peasant* by Kenneth Bailey)

3. Answer these reflective questions.

When the woman went to the home of Simon, her heart had already been touched by the love of God. What do you think she heard that made such a difference in her life and that caused her to want to anoint Jesus?

Why do you think Simon the Pharisee insulted Jesus? Do you believe it was on purpose?

The woman’s weeping was so intense that she had enough tears to wash the feet of Jesus. What do you think were some of the reasons for her crying?

Learning More with
Stories of the Master

Web – www.StoriesoftheMaster.com email – Info@WGSministries.org

It was obvious that this woman had been deeply touched by Jesus and was truly repentant, yet the Pharisees did not grasp that. What causes people to have such hard hearts that they miss the work of God?

Have you ever wept in the presence of God over your sins and over the joy of his forgiveness in your life?
