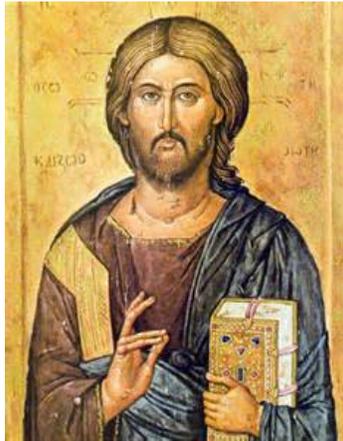


Dining in the Kingdom:



A look at meals and Communion in Luke's Gospel.

WEEK TWO: Luke 7:36-50 (Dinner at Simon's house.)

Luke 7:36-50

A Sinful Woman Forgiven

36 One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. ³⁷ And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. ³⁸ She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. ³⁹ Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner.' ⁴⁰ Jesus spoke up and said to him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' 'Teacher,' he replied, 'speak.' ⁴¹ 'A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² When they could not pay, he cancelled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?' ⁴³ Simon answered, 'I suppose the one for whom he cancelled

the greater debt.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘You have judged rightly.’ ⁴⁴ Then turning towards 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 bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair.’ ⁴⁵ You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶ You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷ Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.’ ⁴⁸ Then he said to her, ‘Your sins are forgiven.’ ⁴⁹ But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, ‘Who is this who even forgives sins?’ ⁵⁰ And he said to the woman, ‘Your faith has saved you; go in peace.’

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Background:

This scene is the opposite of the scene at the home of a tax collector/outsider/sinner. This Simon is a religious authority, rule follower, rule teacher. The woman who came in is a rule breaker.

Again, we see the problem of who can actually forgive sins.

The gathering:

The tradition was for the table to be down low, and the diners stretched out on the ground—no chair. That’s how she got to his feet “from behind.”

This is a small gathering, personal conversation, not a huge banquet.

The meal:

This meal is a forgiving event, in the same way that last week’s meal was a healing and converting event.

Teaching:

Jesus knew what Simon was thinking—we will see this over and over in the Gospel narratives.

The pharisee loved little and the woman loved much. Luke quite often shines a light on the faithfulness of women.

Her forgiveness was before, during, and after the meal.

Questions to think about:

1. How does this meal point toward a Communion service?
2. What do you think the woman looked like?
3. Look up “alabaster jar of ointment” on the internet—it is a fabulous image of extravagance and fragrance!
4. When have you done something really extravagant out of pure joy?