

**No 2 That was awkward Luke 7 v 36 to 50**

Having spent time with the rogues of the time (tax collectors and Levi), Jesus now accepts an invitation from a member of the group most opposed to him and his ministry. It would be interesting to speculate why this Pharisee asked Jesus to dinner but, going on previous form, his purpose was probably to do something to devalue or even derail Jesus’ ministry. It was also possible this host had a similar enquiry to Nicodemus in John 3 but unlikely.

1. Jesus accepts the invitation knowing that it would not be a comfortable evening?

Do we need to be bolder about who we eat with, whether that be in our homes or at Starbucks?

Are our meals too cosy?

The narrative is a stark contrast between two people’s response to Jesus. The woman illustrates the gratitude, boldness and humility of faith. The Pharisee pictures separatism confronted by Jesus. Since Jesus is a public figure, the door to this meal likely remains open so that interested people can enter and sit on the edge of the room.

The image of ‘reclining’ (v36) is typical of how meals would be taken. It was called a triclinium where people would lean in towards a central table to eat. That is almost certainly how Jesus’ last supper was taken rather than the classical view of a table.



1. The character of the woman is made clear. She had lived a sinful life. The woman says nothing but simply anoints Jesus with a mixture of expensive perfume and her tears.

How do we do something similar?

How do we ‘adore’ Jesus as this woman did?

Whatever else happens this provokes conversation. She is rebuked by the Pharisee, not because she has come to the meal but because she came near to Jesus who is a guest in his house. This woman’s sin is not identified but it appears to be public knowledge. Anointing signifies she regards Jesus as an important person in her life. Her humility is striking – she would have anticipated the Pharisee’s reaction.

1. The Pharisee is shocked to the point where he questions Jesus’ credibility as a serious teacher.

Have we ‘shut Jesus in’ because we want him to stay with respectable people like us?

Does his teaching impact people like this woman today who, more than likely, was a sex worker?

How can his teaching get out there?

Jesus’ addresses the Pharisee’s objection with a parable. The story pictures two debtors – one with a two month debt and one with a twenty month debt. The debt collector discovers that neither can pay. Rather than pressurising his debtors, he forgives them and wipes the slate clean. Jesus asks who would love the collector more and there really is only one answer. Jesus is reminding the Pharisee that all he can see is the woman’s past record rather than the potential she has in the future. The Pharisee can also witness the huge gratitude expressed by the woman.

1. How do we view people?

If we know their past, do we tend to remember that?

Are we good at giving people fresh starts?

Jesus points out that the woman has cared for him in the way his host has not. He mentions her foot washing and the greeting she gave in kissing his feet and the anointing of his feet with perfume. None of these actions were ***required*** by the host but they show the ‘extras’ that this woman wanted to do to show her love and devotion to Jesus

1. Are we reluctant to ‘lavish’ Jesus with our love and devotion?

How would we do this?

Are we too reserved?

Jesus’ words of forgiveness are significant. Here he is forgiving sins, an act limited to God as the Pharisees well know (v49). Jesus is raising himself to the ultimate level of authority in contrast to the Pharisees’ definition of him – a prophet (v39). Jesus tells her that her faith has saved her and it is clearly her faith in the person of Jesus that is the key factor in her salvation.

1. Jesus is setting himself up here as the person who can change lives by the power God has given to him.

Should we emphasise God’s ability to forgive sin more than we do?

Do we over-emphasise the friendship of Jesus (which is real)?

Should we use language like ‘Jesus came to save lost people’?

**Think about the conversations you have had with friends who are not yet Christians.**

**What should be the next thing we say to them?**

**Pray that God will give you both courage and wisdom in helping your friends understand what it means to be a Christian**

**How can we do that?**