

“The Baddest Girl in Town”

(Luke 7:36-50)

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I. Introduction

A. My dad and the prostitutes

1. Riding together and talking
2. Down the hill on Alexander Street
 - a. His mother and the other Dutch moms
3. If asked “who’s the worst sinner on Alexander Street?”

B. Who’s the worst sinner in Hudsonville & Jenison?

1. And how do we determine?
2. Today, the worst sinner in town
3. But, before we look at this special woman in Luke 7
 - a. Some other very special women
 - b. Just a passing mention in the opening of Luke 8

C. Women played a huge role in Jesus’ ministry

1. The women of Luke 8:1-3
2. What we know about them
 - a. There were many that followed Jesus
 - b. They had been cured of evil spirits and diseases
 - c. They helped to support the others financially
 - d. The names of three of them

3. The setting (Luke 8:1)

(1) After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him,

- a. After the episode we're about to look at

4. The three women (v. 2-3)

a. Mary Magdalene

(2) and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; (Luke 8:2)

1. Lots of women named Mary in the Bible

- a. Mary and Miriam were the same
- b. A fourth of all women in that area had that name

2. This Mary is not:

- a. Mary the mother of Jesus
- b. Mary the sister of Martha
- c. The woman with the alabaster jar
- d. A former prostitute
- e. The wife of Jesus
- f. The one next to Jesus in the Last Supper by da Vinci

3. She was Miriam/Mary from Magdala

- a. Magdala was a small Galilean town on the West shore of the Sea of Galilee, between Tiberius and Capernaum.
- b. Jesus threw 7 demons out of her.
- c. She appeared to be the leader of the women
- d. She alone encountered the resurrected Jesus at the garden of the tomb

- e. Church tradition labels her a reformed prostitute.
 - 1. This is at best a mistake and at worst a slander.
 - 2. Initiated by Pope Gregory in the 700's AD
- f. The topic of "The DaVinci Code"
 - 1. All kinds of spurious speculation

b. Joanna

(3) Joanna the wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod's household;

- 1. Cuza was a man of wealth and prestige
- 2. Herod's household was in Tiberius
 - a. Tiberius built on a cemetery
 - b. Not cleansed until the mid 2nd century
- 3. Not far from Magdala
- 4. She is one of the women with Mary Magdalene who discovered the empty tomb after the Resurrection

c. Susanna

(3) Joanna the wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others.

- 1. All we know about Susanna is what Luke tells us here.
- 2. She was a woman of some means who, in some way, had been cured of evil spirits and diseases
- 3. She had committed herself to a life of discipleship to Jesus

d. *And many others*

- 1. The unnamed women today that make Chapel Pointe work
- 2. Often unseen
- 5. One more thing they did

(Luke 8:3) and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

- a. Wow!
- b. They were financially supporting Jesus and his disciples

D. But today....a fourth woman back in Luke 7

- 1. The “baddest girl in town”

II. Text...Luke 7:36-50

A. The Special Dinner (v. 36)

(36) Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table.

- 1. Why did the Pharisee have Jesus over for dinner?
 - a. He had likely spoken at their synagogue
 - b. Like inviting a traveling preacher over after sermon
 - 1. My days at Master’s College
 - c. May have been an attempt to build a case against Jesus
- 2. Why did Jesus agree to go to the dinner?
 - a. Knew the Pharisee was a hypocrite
 - b. Wanted to show him the way of salvation
- 3. The “dinner”
 - a. No fast food or quick dinners
 - 1. Could go for hours
 - b. The “reclining” at the table
 - c. The place of the feet

- d. The problem with dirty feet
- 4. Why they reclined
 - a. Comfort for a long meal
 - b. Sanitation and smell
- 5. The crowds came into the house
 - a. The doors kept open
 - b. Many would come to see the celebrity
 - 1. Or to listen to the discussion
 - c. The crowds stood around to listen...but didn't eat
 - d. The poor would come
 - 1. To get left over food scraps

B. The Shocking Guest (v. 37)

(37) When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume,

- 1. *"And behold" (NKJV)*
 - a. In the original Greek
 - b. *"idou"*
 - c. Something surprising or shocking is taking place
- 2. A prostitute had just entered the house of a Pharisee!
 - a. She was apparently well known
 - b. Not proper for her to enter the house of a Pharisee
- 3. The lady is probably not Mary Magdalene
 - a. She's introduced in Luke 8:2
- 3. It's possible that she snuck in unnoticed at first

- a. Fairly dark
- b. Stood against the wall by the feet of Jesus
- 4. She had heard that Jesus would be there
- 5. She brought an alabaster jar of perfume
 - a. Jewish woman wore small jars of perfume around their necks
 - 1. The deodorant problem
 - b. Alabaster
 - 1. Expensive
 - 2. Fine marble
 - c. She must have been a successful prostitute
 - d. Her goal may have been to pour the perfume on the head of Jesus
 - 1. A sign of affection and respect

C. The Sign of Affection (v. 38)

(38) and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

- 1. She begins to weep
 - a. Overcome with emotions for Jesus
 - b. May have already accepted Christ
 - c. Luther called her tears “Heart water”
 - 1. Greek word is “brecho” which means “to rain or wash”
- 2. Why she washed his feet?
 - a. She noticed they were dirty
 - b. The common decency in their culture was to wash the feet of a house guest

- c. The Pharisee had not extended that courtesy to Jesus
- 3. She used her hair for a towel
 - a. Women didn't let down their hair in public
 - 1. Unless they were wicked women
 - 2. A sign of shame
 - b. All she had were tears and hair
- 4. She kissed...embraced...his feet
- 5. And then she poured the perfume on them
- 6. The reaction of the Pharisee.....v. 39

(39) When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

- 7. The Pharisee figured:
 - a. Jesus had expressed that he was God and knew everything
 - b. If that is the case, he should have known this woman was a prostitute and not let her wash his feet
 - c. Therefore, he can't be a prophet of God
 - d. He didn't say it...he thought it
- 8. Jesus answered what had not been asked aloud

D. The Story of Forgiveness.....v.40-42

(40) Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher,"

- 1. This is a different story than the one in Matthew, Mark 14, and John 12
 - a. Both have hosts named Simon
 - b. Both have a woman with an alabaster jar of perfume
 - c. The differences in this story...

1. She anoints the feet and not the head of Jesus
2. Simon is a Pharisee and not a leper
3. In Galilee and not in Judea (Bethany)
4. Early in Jesus' ministry not right before the cross
5. Simon was a very common name

2. The Story...v. 41-42

Jesus said. (41) "Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. (42) Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

- a. Comparison
 1. 500 days wages
 2. 50 days wages
- b. Neither could pay
- c. He forgave the debt
- d. The debt always has to be paid by someone
 1. By the one who does the forgiving
 2. Picture of the forgiveness of sin
 3. The debt is transferred to forgiver

3. His smug reply (v. 43)

(43) Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled."

E. The Saving Faith (v. 43-50)

"You have judged correctly," Jesus said. (44) Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. (45) You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. (46) You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. (47) Therefore, I tell you,

her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.”

1. The Pharisee should have at least done his feet
 - a. Even if he used cheap olive oil
2. Great love comes from great forgiveness
3. Look at what she did
4. Her sins “have been forgiven”
 - a. Perfect tense.....something that happened in the past with continuing effect.
 - b. She had already been forgiven and was expressing her gratitude
5. She was a 500 denarii debtor who couldn’t pay her debt

Application

1. “Lavish Love comes from Lavish Forgiveness”

- a. God delights in saving the worst of sinners
- b. They know how good it is to be free!

2. We often mistake the worst sinners in town

- a. Who is the worst possible sinner?

The most unredeemable of all is the one who thinks he’s not a sinner and doesn’t need redemption, who thinks that God is pleased with him the way he is.

- b. The worst kind of sin is the sin of self-righteousness,

The assumption that you on your own by your own religious activities and moral merit can somehow earn a place in the Kingdom of God

3. We are to be the “Church of the Open Door”

- a. Chasing the geese away
 1. Only ones not welcome

- b. Church in downtown Los Angeles
- c. All are precious in his sight...all are welcome
- d. No matter what your background is
 - 1. This is a hospital for sinners

4. *None is too dirty for Jesus*

5. *This is how it feels to be free*

- a. Your forgiveness is complete
- b. No shame for past sins
- c. She had no fear
- d. This is how it feels to be free!

(48) Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” (49) The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?” (50) Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

- 1. Saved by faith...Ephesians 2:8-9
- 2. Expressed by her actions

III. Summary

A. The feeling of “Freedom!”

- 1. The setting free of a slave
- 2. The Emancipation Proclamation
- 3. Stepping out of a prison
- 4. Pardoned

B. Your debt has been paid in full

- 1. If we were able to truly understand how much each of us has been forgiven,
- 2. We would all carry on in the same as the weeping woman.

3. Would worship him with “*tears, hair and kisses*”

C. Those with the greater burden of past sins