

Published based on [The Perfect Gift](#)

The Perfect Gift

From my heart's perspective, one of the most beautiful stories recorded in scripture is the story of the woman in Luke 7. We Christians are familiar with it and often read over the depth of the story. Can we pause today and look in a new way?

Jesus is at a Pharisee's house where he has gone to eat dinner. The Pharisees were very religious – self-righteously so. Jesus sits down to eat and a woman “who was a sinner” came. Now we understand that in Bible times, women were devalued, sort of sub-important people. So here comes a woman into a men's gathering (picture the men's monthly meeting at your church). She is “an especially wicked sinner” according to the Amplified Version of the Bible. Other versions say she was “a woman of the town”; “a harlot”; “a notorious sinner; a social outcast, devoted to sin.”

This would probably offend most of us. It certainly offended the Pharisee who concluded that Jesus must not be a prophet as he had previously thought, for if Jesus were a prophet, he'd know this woman was a slut.

This woman brought in an expensive alabaster flask of perfumed oil and standing BEHIND him WEEPING, she began to wash his feet with her tears, and wiped his feet with the hair of her head; she kissed his feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. What a scene!

You can be pretty sure that the oil she used was purchased by money she made as a harlot.

Then Jesus says, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” Simon probably thought, “Alright! Jesus is about to say something to me because I am a righteous important man.” He says, “Say it, Teacher.”

Then Jesus tells the story which illustrates how those who are forgiven great debts love and appreciate it more than those who are forgiven small debts. Simon thinks he “gets” the story.

Jesus turns to the woman yet speaks to Simon. He looks at this woman. He turns around – she is behind him because of her shame – unwilling to look at his face but he is willing to look at hers. Then Jesus said, “Do you see this woman?” (Of course, Simon did. How could he not see her? What a spectacle she was making!) But Jesus SAW her – the essence of her heart.

Then Jesus says some difficult things to his host. “You didn't give me water for my feet (a custom of the day). She washed my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You didn't kiss me (custom); she has continually kissed my feet (the feet which had not been washed; dusty feet. Ever kissed anyone's feet? Takes some humility!)

Jesus continues. Imagine how humiliated Simon was feeling in front of his guests. Jesus continued to intentionally validate this woman. “You have not anointed my head with oil” (the custom was to anoint a guest's head with inexpensive oil –much less humbling than anointing feet). This woman has anointed my feet with expensive oil.” Then get this!!! He tells Simon first – “Her sins, and yes, they are many, are forgiven, because of her great love.”

Perhaps Simon thought, “What does she know about love? She is just a harlot.”

Can you imagine what is going on in this woman's heart and head? “Did Jesus just say I was forgiven?” Her heart must have been doing backflips!

Then Jesus says it to her. “Your sins are forgiven.”

And he tells her that her faith in him has saved her and how she had longed to be saved from this life! No woman wants to be a slave of immorality.

Then he said, “Go in peace.” The greatest needs of her life are met – forgiveness, freedom, love, acceptance, validation, and peace.

A few minutes with Jesus touches her heart. I believe the reason she was there in the first place was because she had found a man who she knew cared for more than her body. She was overwhelmed by Jesus.

And she gave him her heart. It had probably been many years since she had allowed a man to touch her heart. They had touched her body, but not her heart. The experience led her to weep enough to use the tears to wash his feet. His touching her heart led her to give him an expensive gift and to risk being shamed by a roomful of men, perhaps some of whom had been with her before.

How long has it been since you and I have been overwhelmed by a look at Jesus? By being in his presence? By his words? By his unmerited love?

How long has it been since Jesus has experienced our overwhelming love for him? Our extravagant expressions of thanksgiving?

Simon invited Jesus into his home, but the woman invited Jesus into her heart.

She gave Jesus the perfect gift – the gift of her heart.

For another one of Mikki's blogs on the woman in Luke 7, read the August 27 entry on Embracing Brokenness.

You can also find this article published on [The Perfect Gift](#), and on the tag pages [alabaster flask](#), [anointing oil](#), [forgiveness](#), [gift](#), [love](#), [Luke 7](#), [peace](#), [Simon the Pharisee](#), [women](#).