

PARABLES, “THROUGH PEASANTS EYES!”

Study 6, The Parable of The Two Debtors, Part II. Luke 7:36-50

1. There are 7 scenes;
 - a. Introduction
 - b. Outpouring of woman’s love. (in action)
 - c. Dialogue. Simon judges wrongly.
 - d. A parable.
 - e. A Dialogue. Simon judges rightly.
 - f. The outpouring of the woman’s love (in retrospect).
 - g. Conclusion. The woman/Jesus/Pharisees).
2. This is classical inversion principal, themes repeat themselves and the p occurs in the climatic center.

INTRODUCTION: Scene 1

1. We know that people freely enter and leave at such banquets. When this woman heard of Jesus location, she enters the house. We know from the verb that the woman entered with Jesus or before Him, we know this from the wording, “From the time I came in.” The story enables us to know that she knew where Jesus was to be entertained. She bears gifts proceeding w/Him or before Him as she knows Jesus is dining at the Pharisees’ house.
2. Her gifts are an expression of devotion in a sacrament of thanksgiving. The anointing of the feet is intentional. She has come prepared. The washing of the feet is not planned as she has nothing to dry them with so she uses her hair. When we accept that she was present at the time of Jesus arrival, it’s easy to reconstruct what has triggered her startling action. Jesus is accepted by the community as “Rabbi.” Simon addresses him as teacher, which is Luke’s word for Rabbi. All guests are treated with great deference in the ME and have always been. We need only to recall the hospitality given by Abraham to the three visitors. Levison, a Hebrew Christian Palestinian describes the meaning;

“One has to ask in the way Simon treated Jesus, What was his motive to do so? When any guest is invited, they expect the same amenities of hospitality. When the guest is a Rabbi, the duty of offering hospitality in its very best manner is easily recognized. But Simon invited Jesus and broke every rule of hospitality. In the East when a person is invited they’re given a kiss. In the case of a Rabbi, all the male members wait and kiss their hands. In the house, the first thing given attention is the washing of the guest’s feet. None of these civilities were given to Jesus.”

3. Jesus love and grace for her which she had previously heard triggered a grateful response. Edersheim, a Hebrew Christian explains; ointment can be perfume flask which a woman hangs around her neck, this flask was to sweeten the breath and perfume the person. This flask would be very important for the prostitute. She will pour it on Jesus feet as she needs it no longer. To pour it on His head would be unlawful, only a prophet can anoint a rabbi. Samuel did it for David and Saul.
4. She has a very moving gesture then witnesses the harsh insult that Jesus receives as He enters into Simon’s house without a kiss or foot washing. The insult to Jesus is intentional and electrifies the guests. War is declared and all want to see Jesus’ response. He is expected to withdraw or give a few tight lipped remarks, but this foreshadows what is to come. “He opened not his mouth.” Remember the lack of foot-washing=inferior. The woman is overcome, she pays no attention to the hostility of men against her presence. For her to kiss Jesus would be totally misunderstood. She can kiss His feet! Then breaking down she washes His feet with her hair. She smothers Jesus feet with affection in front of calloused company. To Marshall, she is compensating for the insult Jesus is receiving. Letting down her hair is an intimate act and for a peasant woman only done for her husband. The Talmud states that a woman can be divorced for letting her hair down for another man according to scholars; Tosefta, and Sotah and Gittin. In conservative areas of the Islamic world male hair dressers can’t work on a woman’s hair for the same reasons.
5. The Talmud speaks of stoning an immoral woman as she may be stimulating unchaste thoughts in the minds of the officiating priests. The Talmud views loosening the hair and uncovering the bosom as the same action. The concern is to protect the officiating acts from unchaste thoughts, these 2 acts alone are mentioned. This shows the immoral act of the woman in the ME world. We can now understand how the woman’s

act with her hair electrified and shocked this room when the immoral woman loosened her hair before Simon and his guests. This provocative gesture is clear and not lost on Simon as we will see.

6. These two actions are spontaneous to what she saw happening before her. She did come prepared to anoint his feet with perfume. In 1821, a French traveler, Lamartine passed through the ME viewed as a European Prince. In the mountains of Lebanon he was anointed with oil on his head. Ibn al-Tayyib, an Arabic commentator and doctor in the 11th century shares it was custom for noble men to be anointed with oil on their head in the houses of priests and kings. For her to anoint his head would be presumptuous, but as a servant can anoint his feet. While Simon treats him as inferior, her actions bestow on Him the honor of a nobleman in a king's house.
7. Her kissing the feet compensates Simon's refusal, and is a public gesture of humility and devotion. Jeremias shares a Talmudic illustration of a man accused of murder who kisses the feet of a lawyer who got him acquitted and saved his life.
8. Seeing the hostility toward Jesus, she gives a series of three dramatic gestures. Others mock The One who she is showing the deepest gestures. *With her tears she washes the feet and in an intimate gesture, and lets down her hair to wipe them. *Unworthy to kiss His hands, she kissed His feet. *A costly perfume to make her attractive (To her customers) is poured on Jesus' feet. This sounds like giving tribute to a noble guest in a King's house. This dramatic expression is w/o words, language is useless in the presence of such costly and tender expressions of gratitude. The drama then shifts automatically to the response of Sim, the host.
9. The calculated snub is not proceeding according to plan. His deliberate refusal to offer the expected hostility triggered an unprecedented act of devotion. A sensitive man could only humbly apologize to the guest and thank the woman for compensation for this rudeness, but this is not the case, the drama moves on!

A DIAGOGUE SIMON JUDGES WRONGLY: (Scene 3)

10. Scene 1 characters are introduced; The Pharisees, Jesus and the woman. The drama is shown in the same order. The Pharisee, he is not a humble host, but a spiritual critic of the validity of the young's rabbi prophetic claim and the woman's moving drama of thankfulness, have passed him by.

11. All He sees is an immoral woman who has let her hair down and who is by her touch, defiling one of her guests and a guest not perceptive enough to know it. The next scene is telling, Shakespeare would see it an 'aside', indeed it is a 'soliloquy, and very revealing, we can see his real intent. He refers to Jesus as "this," and the key word is "touching," or "to light a fire." The Bible uses this terminology for sexual intercourse. (See Genesis 20:6, Proverbs 9:29, and 1 Cor. 7:1). Obvious this is not intended here, but there are clear sexual overtones. Simon indicates that if Jesus truly were a prophet, He would refuse her attention.
12. Simon has completely misjudged what is happening before him, Jesus does know this woman, they are not the caress of an immoral woman, but the outpouring of love from a repentant woman. Simon does not rejoice at this the evidence of her repentance and feels no remorse as she compensates his deficiencies and failures. Simon also knows who she is! Jesus' knowledge of her is more evident than the story assumes at the initial contact between them takes place. Simon sees her only as an immoral woman. This is not necessarily immoral on his part, in a ME, Oriental village, immoral women are known and identified by all in the community. This scene is about SIMON'S INDIFFERENCE TOWARD HER RESTITUTION!
13. Ibn-al-Tayyib makes this observation that Jesus accepts Simon's invitation as He hoped Simon would be accepting of her repentance. Ibn-al Tayyib also states that she has had previous contact with Jesus and is showing gratitude for the gift of repentance. He suggests that this woman has talked to the woman of Samaria, recorded in John 4. The woman is making a dramatic turn in her life's orientation as Ibn-al Tayyib makes his point. The story shows us the AUTHENTICITY of her repentance. We hear that she is a resident of the same city as Simon and Simon is familiar with her. If Simon and his religious friends do not accept her repentance, she cannot be restored to the community. Hence, the LOST SHEEP is brought back to the fold and the PRODIGAL SON is returned to his family! Zacchaeus is "also a son of Abraham," and according to Luke 19:9, can no longer be seen as an outsider. Simon needs to see the authenticity of her repentance so she can be RESTORED fellowship in the community. Ibn-al-Tayyib's point may not be true for the first part of this scene, but is spot on here!
Next class; Simon's injustice of still calling her a sinner!