

2026-10-03: 4th Sunday of Thooout - She Loved Much

Introduction

The Gospel today is the same Gospel we pray every night in the 2nd Watch of the Midnight Hour, about the Sinful Woman. And one of the very interesting things in this parable is that we call her the Sinful Woman. The Gospel says "A woman in the city, who was a sinner" and in most English Bibles the title of this story is "Sinful Woman Forgiven." But that's not the name that the Lord Jesus gave her...

The Lord called her "The woman who loved much"

So what is the relationship between forgiveness and love? The Lord explains it in a parable

The Parable

There's a creditor with two debtors - one owes 500, and the other owes 50. When they couldn't afford to pay, he forgave both of them. Freely. He took away their debt. He just cancelled it.

Then the Lord asks - which of the two debtors will love him more? The one who owed 500? Or the one who owed 50? Who will love him more?

Simon said - the 500! He was forgiven for more, so he will love him more.

And the Lord tells him that he has rightly judged.

Then the Lord says: "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much, but to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."

She loved much - she loved the Lord Christ BECAUSE of the forgiveness. Her sins are many, and they were forgiven. So she loved much. She is the debtor who owed 500. And all 500 were forgiven.

But Simon is the debtor who owed 50. So he didn't love as much.

All of the things she did out of love, were things HE was supposed to do for his guest, but he didn't because he didn't love the Lord. And he didn't love the Lord because he was not forgiven much. And he was not forgiven much because he did not see himself as a sinner or needing forgiveness.

When you believe that the Lord forgave you, you will love Him more. The more you realize your own sins and see what the Lord forgives you for, the more you will love the Lord.

Any of us, if we ask will say "I love the Lord" but how do we express our love? And how does this love bring forth repentance?

We can take lessons from what she did. How did she express this love to the Lord?

Steps of Repentance

"Stood at His feet behind *Him* weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped *them* with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed *them* with the fragrant oil."
(Luke 7:38)

From this action, she actually did about 8 different things that we can learn from and take their spiritual message.

1 - She went to him

- "When she knew that Jesus sat to eat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment"
- Here she does something very difficult - she walks into a Pharisee's house. Knowing who she is and what she does, she walks into the house of someone who will judge her. She walks to her shame. Of course, she met Christ who offered her forgiveness instead of judgment.
- Sometimes when we sin, we run away from God. We are ashamed. We stop praying. We avoid confession. We don't want to come to church.
- We even justify - "How can I go before God after what I did?"
- Let me acknowledge my own sin and shortcoming and my need for Him
- "The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out." (John 6:37)

2 - She stood at his feet behind him

- Feeling of unworthiness; humility
- She doesn't walk in making demands or justifying herself or trying to explain, or comparing herself with others
- Many people when they come to confession
 - "I did xyz but he started it"
 - "I said this word but it was because what she said to me first"
 - "I sinned but everyone does it"
 - "At least I did better than this other person"
- Or Abouna gives guidance
 - This guidance doesn't match what I want
 - This guidance is different from what I expected
- Look at the Tax-Collector in the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector
 - "And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'" (Luke 18:13)

3 - She wept

- **"Godly sorrow** produces repentance leading to salvation" (2 Corinthians 7:10)
- "A broken and humble heart, God will not despise" (Psalm 51:17 - Psalm 50 in the Agpeya)
- Why is she crying?
 - Tears of Repentance
 - She's not crying out of fear of punishment
 - She's crying because "How could I sin against the One who loves me?"
 - She's crying because "How could I deserve this forgiveness?"
- "Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" (Romans 2:4)

4 - She washed His feet

- "Godly sorrow produces **repentance** leading to salvation" (2 Corinthians 7:10)
- The tears are not shed for no reason, but they produce repentance
- It's not enough to shed tears
 - Judas felt bad about betraying the Lord - he shed tears. He even regretted what he had done... but repentance is a step beyond that.
- St John the Baptist was preaching to the people "Bear fruits worthy of repentance" - repentance involves an action.
- Examples
 - If I steal... it's not enough to weep because I felt bad about stealing, but I must return what I took.
 - If I hurt someone... it's not enough to weep because I felt guilty, but I must apologize and restore the person
- "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold." (Luke 19 - Zaccheaus)

5 - She exposed her hair

- Exposing our sins in confession
- In those days and the Jewish culture, it was considered immodest for a woman to uncover her hair, but here she is exposing her hair before the Lord. Exposing her immodesty.
- When I sin, my natural instinct is to hide...
 - Adam and Eve in the garden "hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God" (Genesis 3:8)
- Repentance does the opposite - expose it before Christ in confession.
 - The devil will tell me "if this is exposed, you will be shamed and humiliated."
 - Christ says "Bring it to me so I can heal it"
- Imagine if someone went to the hospital and was too embarrassed to tell them his symptoms or how he was feeling... he will not find healing!
- "He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy." (Proverbs 28:13)
- "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." (1 John 1:9)

6 - She dried His feet with her hair

- St Paul says that a woman's hair is her glory... so now, when we see the image of this woman who is drying the Lord's feet with her hair, we see that she is letting go of her glory. Putting it instead at the feet of Christ. Using her glory to serve Him.
 - Maybe my glory is in my career
 - Maybe my glory is in my intelligence or my degrees or my achievements
 - Maybe my glory is in my reputation or in my fame
 - Maybe my glory is in my money
 - Maybe my glory is even in my seeming spirituality - I fast, I know the Bible, I know the hymns
- It's easy to put my sins at the feet of Christ, because I know sin is weakness and it needs healing.
- But how about to put my glory? How about to say that "anything good that I DO HAVE is from You, Lord. But anything bad that is because of my own weakness"
- "But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Galatians 6:14)
- It doesn't mean that I ignore my talents or my intelligence or my career - but I use them to serve Him. To glorify Him.

7 - She kissed His feet

- Returning to love and reconciliation with God - communion
- This brings us back to the beginning - why is she doing all this? Because she loved much.
- Sometimes we are very focused on "is it a sin" or "I need to confess this sin" or "What if I forget a sin" - that's good. But there's a better way to see my spiritual life.
- I have a relationship with God. Anything that comes in between that relationship, needs healing. I come to Him for healing and then our relationship is restored. Our communion is restored. I can abide in Him and He in me. I love You, Lord and I don't want anything to separate me from You.

8 - She poured perfume on His feet

- Finally, she poured the fragrant oil that she had walked in with, on His feet
- Many commentators see this oil as one of two things:
 - The perfume that was used to seduce or lure others into sinful life
 - The perfume purchased with the wages of sin
- In both cases, it is the object of her sin... and the last step in repentance is to forsake the object of my sin, that I may not return to it.
- If she had done all of this, but kept the fragrant oil as a reminder, or as a "just in case" - then her repentance would not be complete. But now, she has forsook the life of sin and left it behind. There is no more remnant.
- Sometimes
 - We come to confession with a relationship that we don't want to end
 - We confess about a show that we will continue to watch
 - We confess about anger, but we're holding on to grudges
 - We confess about pride, but not willing to apologize
- It's time to let go of the perfume. Time to leave it at the feet of the Lord.

- "He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy." (Proverbs 28:13)
- Christ will transform the object of our sin
 - The mouth that used to curse, will be used to praise Him
 - The time that was wasted, will be offered to God
 - The money that was squandered, will be offered to the needy
 - The hands that sinned, will be used to serve Him and His House

Conclusion

If we look at Simon, we can imagine someone who goes to sit for confession, doesn't really have much to say, even the little bit that he says, he starts by justifying all his actions, blaming and judging others, he comes with the same stories every time, never any change, never any action, full of pride. This is Simon.

But the Woman Who Loved Much gives us a complete picture of repentance. In this one verse and this one action, we learn so much: "She stood at His feet behind *Him* weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped *them* with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed *them* with the fragrant oil." (Luke 7:38)

That I acknowledge my sin, go to Christ in Humility, shed tears of repentance, expose my sin in Confession, let go of my own glory, be reconciled with God, and put away what belongs to my old life.

May the Lord grant us to examine ourselves and see if we are a little more like Simon, and strive to be like this wonderful woman, so that we may hear the voice of the Lord say to us: "Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

Revision #1

Created 2026-10-03 21:17:42 UTC by Fr.Maximus Wahba

Updated 2026-10-04 07:10:52 UTC by Fr.Maximus Wahba