

WHEN LOVE COMES TO TOWN

HOMEGROUPS@WEST

SESSION 8

Jesus anointed by a sinful woman

Love is a funny old thing.

Take time to tell your stories of love.....

e.g. How did you propose? Or who you first fell in love with, or what is the most memorable expression of love you have experienced.



Now read Luke 7:36-50

The scene now before us is another of Luke's great 'paintings', that describe the heart of God for people on the outside. The story of Jesus at the house of Simon the Pharisee is as full of meaning, of gospel, as any story in the New Testament. But it's also full of sheer artistry that brings the gospel up in three-dimensional, vivid reality.

The balance of the scene is superb, with Jesus keeping his poise between the outrageous adoration of the woman and the equally outrageous rudeness of his host – and yet coming up with something fresh, something which, to the onlookers, was just as outrageous as the behaviour of the other two. The story sweeps to and fro between the three of them with passion and power.

- 1. Think about Simon, why do you think he has invited Jesus into his home and as you read the passage, who does he think Jesus really is?**
- 2. What is Simon's heart response to Jesus and what has shaped this response?**

The woman is an uninvited guest. What we think of as 'private life' in the modern West was largely unknown in Jesus' world: doors would often remain open, allowing beggars, extra friends, or simply curious passers-by to wander in. The woman intends, it seems, to anoint Jesus.

- 3. Luke doesn't record for us the 'back story' of this lady's outrageous display of love for Jesus, what do you think has happened before this close encounter at Simon's party that day?**

4. How do her actions make you feel and what is her motivation, is she embarrassed?

Now look at this painting through the eyes of the artist, describing his world – in other words, for Luke, showing what happens when God’s love in the gospel comes to town and impacts on a human situation. Luke has shown us how Jesus, in Nazareth and then in the great sermon, stands on its head the normal expectation of what would happen when God brought in his kingdom. It would be a time of exuberant generosity, surprising grace, and at the same time fierce opposition, which would meet God’s judgment. Now we see, in a single incident, what this looks like in practice. Social convention is thrown out of the window; forgiveness and love set new standards and raise new expectations; human beings appear, not as society has ‘constructed’ them, but as God sees them.



- 5. When you really grapple with the power of this story it draws us to Jesus. Why do you think he allows this lady to ‘embarrass’ herself in this way?**
- 6. Is it ok for us to worship in an unrestrained way when we feel overwhelmed by the love of God?**
- 7. When we think about our ‘back story’ with Jesus does it shape; our giving, our praying, our praising, our humility, our vision.... our lives? Are we typically more like the lady or more like Simon?**

RESPOND TO GOD

Take time to reflect on your own life and the new life and new hope that have been lavished on you in Jesus. *See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!*
1John3:1

How are you going to approach your worship differently in response to this passage?



Take time to quietly enjoy being with Jesus- let your posture reflect your welcome. Now take time to worship.