



THE NONCONFORMIST

THE **PUZZLING** STORIES
OF JESUS

3



YES, NO + MAYBE

1. I think the people sitting closest to me are hiding more dark secrets than me.
2. I get embarrassed when I'm at a restaurant and the people in my party do something uncouth.
3. The more perfect you are, the harder it is for you to forgive others.
4. Saints love God more than sinners.
5. If you act lovingly to others, God is more likely to forgive your sins.

DIG DEEPER

● **READ Luke 7:36-50** (NLT)

36 One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to have dinner with him, so Jesus went to his home and sat down to eat. 37 When a certain immoral woman from that city heard he was eating there, she brought a beautiful alabaster jar filled with expensive perfume. 38 Then she knelt behind him at his feet, weeping. Her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing his feet and putting perfume on them.

39 When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman is touching him. She's a sinner!"

40 Then Jesus answered his thoughts. "Simon," he said to the Pharisee, "I have something to say to you."
"Go ahead, Teacher," Simon replied.

41 Then Jesus told him this story: "A man loaned money to two people—500 pieces of silver to one and 50 pieces to the other. 42 But neither of them could repay him, so he kindly forgave them both, canceling their debts. Who do you suppose loved him more after that?"

43 Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the larger debt."

"That's right," Jesus said. 44 Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Look at this woman kneeling here. When I entered your home, you didn't offer me water to wash the dust from my feet, but she has washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You didn't greet me with a kiss, but from the time I first came in, she has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You neglected the courtesy of olive oil to anoint my head, but she has anointed my feet with rare perfume.

47 "I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love." 48 Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven."

49 The men at the table said among themselves, "Who is this man, that he goes around forgiving sins?"

50 And Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

✦ **36-38 The repentant woman** - It was customary in that day for outsiders to hover around during banquets so they could watch the "important people" and hear the conversation. Since everything was open, they could even enter the banquet hall and speak to a guest. This explains how this woman had access to Jesus. He was not behind locked doors. In that day women were not invited to banquets.

Jewish rabbis did not speak to women in public, nor did they eat with them in public. A woman of this type would not be welcomed in the house of Simon the Pharisee. Her sins are not named, but we get the impression she was a woman of the streets with a bad reputation. If you check a

DIG DEEPER...CONTINUED

harmony of the Gospels, you will discover that just before this event, Jesus had given the gracious invitation, “Come unto Me ... and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28–30). Perhaps that was when the woman turned from her sin and trusted the Savior. Her tears, her humble attitude, and her expensive gift all spoke of a changed heart.

+ 38 Behind him at his feet - The guest removed his sandals before the meal and he reclined on the left side with the feet outward. The body of the guest rested on the couch; the feet were turned from the table toward the walls, and the left elbow rested on the table.

+ 38 Wiped them off with her hair - Letting down one’s hair in public was shameful and even a ground for divorce, but in her deep gratitude toward Jesus the woman forgot social propriety and used what was available to wipe Jesus’ feet—her hair.

- What does it tell you about God that He responds this way to the outcasts of society?

+ 39-43 The critical host - Simon was embarrassed, both for himself and for his guests. People had been saying that Jesus was a great Prophet (Luke 7:16), but He certainly was not exhibiting much prophetic discernment if He allowed a sinful woman to anoint His feet! He must be a fraud. Simon’s real problem was blindness: he could not see himself, the woman, or the Lord Jesus. It was easy for him to say, “She is a sinner!” but impossible for him to say, “I am also a sinner!” (see Luke 18:9–14) **Jesus proved that He was indeed a prophet by reading Simon’s thoughts** and revealing his needs. The parable does not deal with the amount of sin in a person’s life but the awareness of that sin in his heart. How much sin must a person commit to be a sinner? Simon and the woman were both sinners. Simon was guilty of sins of the spirit, especially pride, while the woman was guilty of sins of the flesh (see 2 Cor. 7:1). Her sins were known, while Simon’s sins were hidden to everyone except God. And both of them were bankrupt and could not pay their debt to God. Simon was just as spiritually bankrupt as the woman, only he did not realize it.

- Why do you think it is so difficult for us to see our own level of sin?

+ 42 Who loved him more? - Since there is no specific word for to show gratitude or to thank in Hebrew or Aramaic, such words as love, praise, bless, glorify were used to express thanks or gratitude. Thus “love him more” probably means was more grateful/thankful. 500 denarii would be approximately one and a half years’ wages. Fifty denarii would be about two months’ wages.

- What do you think Jesus was trying to say about God’s willingness to forgive on both extremes?

+ 45 She has not stopped - Ceased (diélipen/διέλιπεν). Only here in New Testament. Common in medical language, meaning to be intermittent, and to discontinue giving remedies for a time.

+ 44-46 You didn’t offer - Respected Simon had no fear of comparison with the woman. Then Jesus raised a new standard of comparison. In the flurry of party preparations, the host had forgotten the obvious act of politeness to his honored guest. He had not even had his dusty feet washed and dried. Nor had Simon greeted Jesus at the door with the common kiss on the cheek. Such acts were not mandatory for a host, but were quite frequently observed, especially for a guest of Jesus’ stature.

- How do our natural actions display our thoughts regarding God’s true character?

+ 44-50 The forgiving Savior - The woman was guilty of sins of commission, but Simon was guilty of sins of omission.

- What does this tell you about God’s character that He has forgiveness for both the sins of commission and of omission?



MY PRAYER...

1. How am I turning a blind eye to my own spiritual faults and shortcomings?
2. What am I currently doing to display my gratefulness for Jesus’ salvation?
3. What new aspect of God’s character does He want me to know?