

Luke 7-Woman Washes Jesus' Feet

Luke 7:36-50

Based on the NLT (2004)

Luke 7:36-38

One of the *religious leaders** asked Jesus to have dinner with him, so Jesus went to his home and sat down to eat. When a certain immoral woman from that city heard he was eating there, she brought a beautiful...jar filled with expensive perfume. Then she knelt behind him at his feet, weeping *in gratitude*. 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 *to show her respect*.

Luke 7:39

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

Luke 7:40-43

Then Jesus *said to the religious leader*, "I have something to say to you."
"Go ahead, Teacher," *he* replied.
Then Jesus told him this story: "A man loaned money to two people— *1 ½ years wages* to one and *2 months wages* to the other. 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?"

The religious leader answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the larger debt."

"That's right," Jesus said.

Luke 7:44-46

Then *Jesus* turned to the woman and said to *the religious leader*, "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. You didn't greet me *with the appropriate courtesy*, but from

the time I first came in, she has not stopped kissing my feet. You neglected the courtesy of...oil to *place on* my head, but she has *put rare perfume on my feet*.

Luke 7:47-50

"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." Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven."

The men at the table said among themselves, "*What kind of person is this, that he goes around forgiving sins?*" But Jesus...*turned* to the woman and said, "*God has saved you from the punishment for your sins because you have believed* in me. Go in peace.*"

Why This Story?

This story is a wonderful hook story for women who are not at peace, who feel depressed, unworthy, or betrayed. It seems to be a good ice-breaker for women who have not heard much about Jesus before.

Story Crafting

The men were asking themselves what kind of person Jesus was because God himself was the only one with the authority to forgive sins.

If you need to shorten the story, you may omit Jesus' story told to the religious leader about the two men who owed money.

Words/Phrases to

Consider

Please see the master glossary for a full explanation of these words.

Religious leaders*

Both Pharisees and Sadducees were Jewish religious parties at that time. Many scribes and priests were members of one of these sects. If possible, it is best to keep these sect names as generic as possible—‘religious leaders.’ If you use a term for ‘religious leaders’ used in a major religion here, be sure that those names do not refer ONLY to a member of that specific religion.

Spokesman*

Choose a term for ‘prophet’ that adequately describes the prophet’s function. A prophet:

1. receives a call from God;
2. takes God’s message to men because he had been given it by God himself;
3. has as his only priority bringing the Word of God to men.

We chose ‘spokesman’ because, in English, it can convey these three meanings but doesn’t carry the unwanted connotation of a fortuneteller. If you use a religious term, be sure that it has meaning that the average hearer will understand.

Sin*

Sin refers to an act of disobedience to God. Be sure that the word you use here does not mean that someone has failed to perform a religious act (i.e. alms, ritual prayer, following religious dietary rules, etc.). If necessary, you can use ‘disobedience.’

Forgive*

Some languages don’t have an adequate word for ‘forgive.’ If that’s the case, understanding what ‘forgiveness’ means is imperative to translating it correctly.

Forgiveness involves two people, one of whom has done something wrong to the other and offended him. The one who was offended sets aside his rights and does not punish the other as he deserves. He does not seek revenge. If the other repents of his behavior and accepts the forgiveness, the relationship between the two is restored and the guilt is removed. With God, forgiveness is available to all and dependent on a penitent heart in that the person stops his actions and turns towards God with an attitude of faith and repentance. This results in a restored relationship between God and man.

Here are some idioms used in the New Testament to describe “forgiveness.”

Your language may have a similar idiom, and if so, you may use that to create a word picture for your audience.

to wipe away the sins of someone

to lift up the sins of someone

to loose, release

to throw away

to cover over

to pass by

to take away

to turn one’s back on

Belief*

This describes man’s response to God’s promise. It probably implies more than mental agreement, but putting one’s faith/confidence in God.

Worldview

Weeping in gratitude and putting perfume on them to show her respect were added to show the reasons for her actions. Some cultures may not understand what she was doing, and these actions may have a negative connotation.

Feet were considered very dirty in biblical culture, so it should be understood by your audience that the woman was humbling herself.

Washing feet, anointing heads with oil, and greeting with a kiss were all forms of courteous greeting in these times. Jesus is showing the contrast between what the woman did to greet him and what the religious leader did not do.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words for **religious leaders, spokesman, sin, forgive, belief** that you have been using in previous stories.

Story Set Themes

Peace

Honor/shame

Forgiveness

God loves the outcast