

Unrestrained worship

3 Characters in the story

1. The Pharisee

At first sight a generous gesture.

The customary greeting was a - simply a polite acknowledgement of the guest's arrival.

The washing of feet was mandatory before a meal. If the guest was of high status, the host would perform this duty himself.

Jesus arrived at the Pharisees' home and receives nothing.

- The Pharisee offers only measured generosity towards Jesus

He refuses even basic hospitality to Jesus. Why? Because he has an internal pecking order and Jesus, doesn't come anywhere near top.

The Pharisees would compare themselves to others and then find themselves superior or inferior to others. They would treat them accordingly.

Surely we wouldn't do that though would we?

Comparison to others is Pharisaical thinking.

2Cor. 10:12 Not that we dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who care commending themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding.

How do you handle the success of others?

How do you handle the failure of others?

The solution: "Run in your own lane."

2. The woman

In the social order she was bottom of the pile.

As a woman in that culture she had few rights, she had no say in society.

Not only that but she's a sinful woman.

She's not like the Pharisee- she's got nothing going for her.

And yet she's drawn to Jesus.

It's this glorious, unscripted, irreligious, lavish, socially unacceptable act of unrestrained worship.

What is she teaching us?

i) She teaches us about sacrifice. **What cost her more- the perfume or the humility?**

Bill Johnson once asked 'if God asked you would you exchange your dignity for his presence?'

ii) She teaches us about intimacy. Who gets closer to Jesus- the self-made religious man or the broken hearted prostitute?

Repentance is the route to intimacy. Ps 51 he writes "against you and you only have I sinned"

One of the Hebrew words for worship = "face down".

iii) She teaches us about liberty. The Pharisee is trapped- by his reputation.

Her desperation to meet Jesus gets her free from what others think.

"The only way to get free from living on people's opinions is to live for him. To exchange the fear of man for the fear of God."

Its teaching us about unrestrained worship- about how change happens in our lives.

3. JESUS

Jesus knows exactly who she is. He knows what she's done. And he doesn't turn her away.

Jesus knows exactly who you are. He sees. He knows you better than you know yourself. And he won't turn you away.

Forgiveness is a power shower for the soul. And only Jesus can grant it.

He doesn't ask her to **do** anything.

She exchanges dirty spiritual garments for clean ones.

Isaiah 64:6 "We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment."

Is. 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;

The spiritual exchange

She washes his feet- he cleanses her soul.

And the net result is that she can go in peace. Ps 50 Sin gives us a restless soul, forgiveness brings us peace.