

Luke 7:36-50 (New International Version
NIV)

Jesus Anointed by a Sinful Woman

³⁶ When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. ³⁷ A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. ³⁸ As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured 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 who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner." ⁴⁰ Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you. "Tell me, teacher," he said.

⁴¹ "Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii,^[a] and the other fifty. ⁴² Neither

of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

⁴³ Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven. "You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

⁴⁴ Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You did not give me a kiss. but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶ You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. ⁴⁷ Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little."

⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

⁴⁹ The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" ⁵⁰ Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace "

Dear brothers and sisters, dear friends.

Sermon

Do you like stories? Some like television series that they watch and they look forward to every new episode. There is plenty of different series and stories and they can influence us significantly. But to what do they lead us? To the good, to peace? Unfortunately, it is often quite the opposite.

Yet the stories that we read in the Bible, in Gospels, the stories told by Jesus, and the life stories of those who met Him bring out the good in us. They lead us to penance. Through them God's love reaches our hearts and gives us strength and hope.

This also applies to the story of Mary Magdalene.

She may not have experienced much love and acceptance in her life and chose a path of evil for herself which only resulted in strengthening her pain and abandonment.

In her desperation she comes to Jesus with the desire for true love and acceptance. She realizes that she has nothing to impress him with - she merely has a ruined life, plethora of sins, and a broken heart, that from its bottom yearns for acceptance.

How does Jesus react? He does not point her to the door with disdain, he does not reject her... He accepts her unconditionally with no regard for her past! Brothers and sisters, this is how the God's love acts.

When you cry before him, when you open your heart to him, when you barely survive just like this woman - having nothing, being nothing - only Jesus is there to help. He will never send you away, he will never turn his back to you, he will never reproach you or make you pay for your mistakes. On the contrary, his heart rejoices and forgives you, his face brightens up with a smile, and his hands embrace you gently.

Come, my child, nest yourself in my heart. You are safe here and you will always be loved and accepted. And no one and nothing can ever change that.

"Take a good look, the hands that embrace you were pierced. My heart beating for you was hurt. I know pain, rejection, betrayal. I know the weight of the cross that you carry on your shoulders. I have been where you are and carried your pain and your sin."

There is a painting in one of the Slovakian Benedictine Monasteries that depicts Mary Magdalene kneeling by the feet of Jesus Christ, head bowed down, and tears running down her cheeks. She is raising her arm shyly and handing something over to Jesus. What she holds in her hand is a black, dirty piece of coal. The painter chose coal to symbolize sin and pain that she passes over to Jesus. That's the only thing that she can offer him. And it is beautiful to see at the painting that Jesus - with unimaginable understanding and mercy - takes the piece of coal into his hands. And through

him, the God's love transforms the coal into diamonds. The diamonds that Jesus gives her in return with his other hand.

This is what God does! And he wants to do that in your life as well! It is not enough just to know about that but it is also needed to actively come to him, as Mary Magdalene did.

That is why you are here today. Take your sins that are crushing you to him. Give him all the rejection that you suffered and that hurts you so deeply. You are irreplaceable to him! He loves you and accepts you because he is your loving Father and you are his beloved child! His love can heal your wounds too. And all the coal in your life can be turned into beautiful diamonds. Give him a fair chance to convince you of that!

For the conclusion - a single question: Do you know who was the first person on Earth that Jesus Christ reveals himself to after his resurrection?

Mary Magdalene!

How is that possible? How is it possible that Jesus reveals himself to this former prostitute? People, that have nothing in common with the Holy Spirit have their verdicts, some make movies about it that are borderline perverse. But what Jesus meant to display by this is **what is God's love!** He makes this person the witness of his love! **Because God's love never betrays, it gives. It gives all and is above everything! And you can experience it in your life!** Amen.

Prayer:

Our lord and saviour Jesus Christ, we confess that many times we have come to believe the lies of the wicked, that whisper to us that we are unloved and rejected. Who always reminds us of the wrongs that we have done in our life. All that is in our heart we give to you, just as Mary Magdalene did - all our pain, wounds, rejections, all that's unforgiven, all our sins, and our pride. Please, take it all and transform it with your love and glory into something extraordinary. We do believe that you have the power. Please, have mercy upon us, enter our lives with your love, and make us into witnesses of your love for all days to come. Amen.