

Luke: Jesus and the Outsiders, Outcasts, and Outlaws

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Chapter 2 Discussion

Simon, Do you See This Woman? (pgs. 19-36)

Biblical Foundations Luke 7-17

Opening Prayer

Loving God, who created women and men in your image: Your Son Jesus welcomed all who sought him and showed your mercy without distinction. As we who are one in him study the scripture, may your Spirit help us learn more clearly to see all people as your children, that we may show them the kindness and compassion we have received from you. Amen.

Meeting Women in Luke's Gospel

Read Luke 8:1-3

- What does this scripture tell us about women as some of Jesus's first followers?
- What can we infer from it about some women's ability to acquire and manage "resources" (verse 3) in Jesus's day?
- What does the place of these women among Jesus's first followers mean for the place and role of women in today's church?
- Does either your congregation or denomination, or both, encourage and accept women in leadership roles? How?
- How would you respond to someone who believes this scripture means women belong in service and support roles in ministry, but not leadership roles?
- How are these women role models for all Jesus's followers today, regardless of gender?

Visiting Martha and Mary

Read Luke 10:38-42

- Why is Martha upset with Mary?
 - When was a time you felt like Martha?
 - How did you handle those feelings?
- The Bible often emphasizes hospitality's importance (examples are in Genesis 18:1-6, Hebrews 13:2).
 - What does Jesus emphasize in this situation, and why?
 - How do you imagine Martha reacted to Jesus's response?

- “It was assumed in this time,” Hamilton writes, “that women’s place was in the kitchen,” while men “sat with the wise teachers” (Luke, pg. 29).
 - How does this context influence your view of Mary?
 - How does it affect your understanding of how Jesus views Mary?
- Suggesting Mary represents contemplative study and prayer (*ora*, Latin for “Labor”), Hamilton states, “We need to be both Mary and Martha” (Luke pg. 31).
 - Do you tend to identify more with Martha or with Mary?
 - Why?
 - How will you bring the spirit of the sister with whom you tend not to *identify* more into your faith?
- Would you characterize your congregation as more like a Martha or a Mary?
 - Why?
 - How does it – or how could it better—balance both sisters’ spirits?

Seeing and Caring for Sinners

Read Luke 7:36-48

- Through the word *Pharisee* often carries negative connotations today. Pharisees were, as Hamilton states, deeply devout and well respected for their piety. Their definition of holiness or living a life pleasing to God was found in obeying the law.
 - How does this background influence your understanding of this story?
- Jesus often interpreted the law differently from the Pharisees, and as Hamilton writes, he “nearly always put people before rules” (Luke pg. 32).
 - Have you ever known churches to put rules before people?
 - What happened?
 - How can church know whether their rules are aids or obstacles to faithfully serving God and people?
- Hamilton says Simon’s failure to show “common hospitality” to Jesus was a “subtle way... to put Jesus in his place” (Luke pg. 32.)
 - How else does Simon reveal his attitude toward Jesus?
 - What subtle way or not-to-subtle ways do Christians, including you, use to try and put or keep Jesus “in his place” today?
- Although Hamilton suggests some reasons this woman could have been known to be a sinner. Luke doesn’t specify her sins.

- Why not?
- When is knowing someone's sins important?
- When is it not?
- Simon doesn't see the woman at the banquet as a human being—only as “a sinner” (verse 39).
 - When are you most tempted to look down on others?
 - What labels make it easiest for you to feel superior to and dismiss other people?
 - How do we increase our ability to see others first as our fellow humans and as children of God?
- Hamilton writes about the courage and determination the woman must have had to interrupt Simon's dinner party to see Jesus.
 - What courageous and determined women are role models of faith for you?
 - When has your faith in Jesus led you to act with courage and determination?
 - What happened?
- What is the most extravagant thing you've seen someone do to show gratitude for God's mercy?
- What's the most extravagant thing you have done?

Closing Prayer

For the world where all people know safety, are treated with respect, are encouraged to use and develop their gifts, and are seen with the dignity you bestow upon all people, we pray, O God, asking your Spirit's strength to help us make that world a great reality; in Jesus Name. Amen.