

For Further Study



Read and meditate on the passage below:

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.
(Luke 7:36-38)

The above passage comes from the gospel according to Luke. Although similar in theme, the event described has numerous differences from the one in Mark that we studied this week. The location is in the home of a Pharisee (not a leper) and is likely in Galilee (not Bethany in Judea). The woman is described as having lived a sinful life (perhaps as a prostitute), weeping (perhaps over her sinful life), and using her tears to wash Jesus' feet before putting the perfume on them.

When we read the gospels literally, we tend to try to fit all of the stories and events into a chronological sequence. At times, this gets really messy. Here, for example, we have to try to identify whether this is a totally separate story, there are some aspects that overlap, some aspects are wrong, etc. To read the gospels literarily (not literally) is not an attempt to skirt these questions. Rather, it is a shift in focus to the meaning of these stories. As in Mark, Luke's story of a woman anointing Jesus is about the shared worthiness of Jesus (as king/priest) and the woman, who comes to Jesus just as she is with honesty, openness, and transparency. We should do the same.



REFLECTION:
Consider a unique way that you can recognize Jesus as your king/priest this week.

PRACTICE:
Read another Bible story and ask yourself, "What is the theme of this story?"