

LOOKING AT LUKE
LESSON IN BROKENNESS

Friday, August 21

Reading: Luke 7

Luke 7:44 *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."*

The nursery rhyme character Humpty Dumpty, though first recorded centuries ago, is still popular in today's culture. This character is best known for falling off a wall and being broken in pieces - pieces which "all the king's horsemen and all the king's men" could not put back together again.

We don't like broken things and we especially don't like being broken ourselves. However, the truth is that before we can come to Christ, we must first be broken. The sinful woman in today's passage clearly illustrates this truth.

We find Jesus dining, not with tax collectors and sinners, but in the home of a Pharisee. The attitude of this religious leader toward Jesus is obvious from his lack of hospitality. When a visitor entered your home, a good Jewish host would provide for the dust to be washed from his feet (usually by a servant). A host would also give the customary kiss of greeting (a ritual still observed in many parts of the Middle East today) and anoint them with oil. None of these things were done for Jesus. Simon was a poor host. Perhaps he only invited Jesus as another way to observe and find fault in His ministry.

However, the sinful woman shows Jesus the proper respect and worship. She anoints His feet with expensive perfume, her tears of repentance wash His feet, and she dries them with her hair, all the while kissing Jesus' feet.¹ Everyone in town knew this woman's reputation and Simon the Pharisee inwardly condemns her and Jesus for allowing her to lavish this attention on him.

Jesus' rebuke is swift. This woman had done everything for Jesus that the Pharisee had not. Jesus knew exactly who she was and that her sins were many. But her love for Christ was so great and her faith so apparent that Jesus assures her that she has been forgiven. It was not her actions that saved her; it was her faith. She was broken and open before the Savior. Something Simon would not do. Simon showed no love because he believed he did not need forgiveness. The woman loved much and was forgiven much.

To come to Christ we must be broken. We must realize that we can't "fix" ourselves but need the Savior. When we have a humble faith Jesus can put us back together again.

¹ Though the details seem similar at first, this woman is NOT to be confused with the woman who anoints Jesus' feet in Bethany at the end of His ministry (Matt. 26; Mark 14; John 12). Nor is she to be associated with Mary Magdalene whom Scripture NEVER calls a prostitute (see Luke 8:1-3).