



Jesus is Anointed/Forgiveness

12th Confirmation Class Lesson

Supplies Needed: Notebooks; Handout; 1 Paper grocery bag for each student; two 3x5 notecards per student; 1 pair of scissors per student; *Optional:* a camera to take a picture of the class with the bags over their heads.

Opening Activity -- Christian Strip

- [Pass out a paper grocery bag to every person.]
- We're going to do an activity called, "Christian Strip.
- So, take the bag I gave you and put it over your head so that you can't see.
- [wait for them to do this – don't do it yourself]
- Very good. Now, I want you to think about one thing that you have on you, be it clothing or an accessory, that you absolutely do not need.
- Once you have that item in mind, take that one item off of you and put it on the floor next to you.
- [Wait for them to do it. If they start to ask a question, cut them off (politely as possible) and tell them to trust their own judgment and follow what you've said as best as possible.]
- Well done. Now, I want you to think about another thing that you have on you, be it clothing or an accessory, that you absolutely do not need.
- Once you have THAT one item in mind, take that one item off.
- [Wait for them to take their one item off.]
- [Repeat this pattern four or five times. The idea is that at some point, the students would take the paper bag off of their heads. They often don't which is why the activity shouldn't really go past 4 or 5 rounds. If one student does take the bag off, but the others do not, keep going, but motion to the no-longer-bagged students to keep quiet]

ASK/TELL

- Why didn't some of you think to take the bag off your head right away?
- Today, one of the things we'll be talking about is how we hold on to certain things that we don't have to hold on to, but because we DO hold on to those things, we experience a...disadvantage or obstacle in relationship with God and with each other.

OPENING PRAYER

CHALLENGE OF THE WEEK REVIEW

- What song did you listen to very carefully?
- Did you hear something differently?
- Did the meaning of the song change for you?

REVIEW

- Concepts we've talked about recently in class:
 - Repent – Means to “turn around.” So when you sin/miss the mark, once you recognize/name that missing, then the next thing one would do if they chose to do so, would be to turn around, to do a “U-turn” or “recalculate” one’s direction (like the GPS in the car tells you to do).
 - The word “devil” parallels the Greek word diabolis, which means “divider.” It is often used in scripture interchangeably with “Satan.” Satan means “adversary.”
 - The word “temptation” is interchangeable in scripture with the word “test.” A helpful way to think of temptation is to think of it as motivation(s) that makes the choice to not choose God seem attractive.
 - Transfiguration – when we follow Jesus, we see the divide removed between the “every day” and the divine. All heaven breaks loose.
 - Christ means “anointed.” To be anointed was a symbol action for the Israelite people that represented a person’s ears being protected from the wrong things entering it.

READ Luke 7:36 - 50

36 Simon, a Pharisee, asked Jesus to eat with him, and so Jesus went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. 37 And a woman in the city, who was known as a sinner (someone who did not live by the Jewish laws), having learned that Jesus was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. 38 She stood behind Jesus at his feet, crying very hard, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and dried his feet with her hair. Then she kissed Jesus' feet and anointed them with the ointment.

39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited Jesus to eat saw what was happening, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner."

40 Jesus spoke up and said to him, "Simon, I have a story to tell you." "Teacher," Simon replied, "speak." 41 Jesus said, "A certain banker had two customers who had borrowed money from him; one borrowed fifty thousand dollars, and the other borrowed five hundred dollars. 42 Then the banker discovered that neither customer could pay back what they had borrowed. So the banker said to both of them, "You don't have to pay me back." Now which of the customers will love the banker more?" 43 Simon answered, "I suppose the one who didn't have to pay back the \$50,000 because that's much more than \$500." And Jesus said to him, "You have judged rightly."

44 Then turning toward the woman, Jesus said to Simon the Pharisee, "Do you see this woman? I've come to your house and you gave me no water for my feet, but she has washed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. 45 You gave me no greeting, but from the time I came in she has not stopped paying attention to me. 46 You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. 47 She does this, I tell you, because her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; this is why she has shown great love. But because you think you do not sin, then no forgiveness can be offered to you and so you have very little love to give." 48 Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are

forgiven." 49 But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" 50 And Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

TELL

- Some cultural things of note about this story (taken from <http://www.bible-history.com/court-of-women/women.html>). In Jesus' time...
 - In public, women did not touch men.
 - A wife had to walk six paces behind her husband.
 - Uncovered hair by a woman in public was a sign that she was a harlot.
 - When Simon characterizes the woman as a sinner, that's code for "a divorced (and therefore adulterous) woman" or "a prostitute."
 - Having a prostitute touch Jesus was considered even worse than if just a "regular" woman was touching him.
 - It was customary to welcome your guests by washing their feet. To not wash Jesus' feet was a slight by Simon against Jesus.
- Most scholars believe that Jesus and this woman had had a previous interaction before this story, most likely a healing. If you incorporate this idea into your reading of the story, then the intimacy between Jesus and the woman makes more sense.

MORE NOTES (mostly for the teachers): The dusty roads of Palestine and other eastern lands make a much greater care of the feet necessary than we are accustomed to bestow upon them. The absence of socks or stockings, the use of sandals and low shoes rather than boots and, to an even greater degree, the frequent habit of walking barefoot make it necessary to wash the feet repeatedly every day. This was always done when entering the house, especially the better upper rooms which are usually carpeted. It is a common dictate of good manners to perform this duty to a visitor, either personally or through a servant; at least water for washing has to be presented (Gen 18:4; Lk 7:44). This has therefore become almost synonymous with the bestowal of hospitality (1 Tim 5:10). At an early date this service was considered one of the lowest tasks of servants (1 Sam 25:41), probably because the youngest and least trained servants were charged with the task, or because of the idea of defilement connected with the foot. It was, for the same reason, if rendered voluntarily, a service which betokened complete devotion. Orr, James, M.A., D.D. General Editor. "Definition for 'FOOT'". "International Standard Bible Encyclopedia". [bible-history.com](http://www.bible-history.com) - ISBE; 1915.

ASK

- What are some elements in the story that you recognize from previous stories? (there's a Pharisee; Jesus is forgiving sins again, like with the paralytic; like with the paralytic, there are those there who think Jesus isn't supposed to forgive sin; Jesus is anointed, though it is not on the head. There is abundance/extravagance in the anointing).
- In our last class, we talked about Jesus being the Christ, or, the Anointed. Today, we have the story where Jesus is actually anointed with ointment (you could count Jesus' baptism as being anointed, but the traditional act of anointing used oil). But there are two things that are pretty different about Jesus' anointing. Who does it? (a woman who is breaking many rules) and where is Jesus anointed? (on his feet, not on his head). That's pretty opposite of what the Israelites would expect.
- NOTE: We can add Jesus anointing to the list of things about Jesus' "royalty" (i.e. Prince of Peace) that is opposite of what we see from usual royalty: His birth story, his upbringing (son of a carpenter

in backwater Nazareth), being a rabbi with mediocre disciples, rejection by the established teachers and scribes; riding on a donkey instead of a stallion when entering Jerusalem, dying on a cross (like a criminal).

- In verse 44, what do we learn Simon hasn't done for Jesus? (wash Jesus' feet)
- In verse 45, does it seem like Simon the Pharisee has been a hospitable guest to Jesus? (no, not at all)
- In verse 38, what is the woman doing? (Crying, anointing Jesus feet with oil, drying his feet with her hair)
- So, who, would you say, loves Jesus more, Simone the Pharisee or the woman?
- According to the parable Jesus tells, why does the woman love Jesus more? (because she's been forgiven more)
- As a Pharisee, Simon is part of a profession that would tell the people how they were to live and how they weren't doing enough to follow the Law (aka the Torah, the laws of Moses, or what we know as the first 5 books of the Bible). As someone who tells others how to live the law, do you think Simon thinks he needs to be forgiven much? (seems unlikely)

TELL

- In the Christian Strip activity, even though you literally had the bag right in front of your face, were you able to see, right away, what the thing was that you had to let go of and get rid of? (yes for some, no for most)
- For the Pharisees, they had a hard time actually seeking God because they were so busy enforcing the "rules" that they believed would help everyone else seek God. Telling others about how to live God's way became this bag over their head that they couldn't see was in the way for them. They couldn't see how they, also, weren't following the "rules."
- This is often why the word "Pharisee" is associated with the label of "hypocrite." They did not do what they told others to do.
- And so, incorrectly, the Pharisees thought they were blameless. And the blameless do not need much forgiveness, do they? And so, they loved God less because they are receiving less from God.
- We're now going to do and talk a little bit about forgiveness, but first...

SNACK

TELL

- In the story we read today, Jesus tells the woman that her sins are forgiven. Jesus also tells a parable that highlights forgiveness as a removal of debt.
- A few classes ago, we talked about the definition of sin. The original meaning of sin meant "to miss the mark" or to "go off the path." So to sin would mean to go to a different destination – to miss the target/destination of God.
- We then talked about how the voice of the devil/temptation makes other destinations look more attractive than the destination of God.
- So, when we listen to those voices of temptation, then the separation grows between God and us.
- We also talked about repentance (which means to turn around, get back on the path, head in the right direction)
- But, when we're not seeking God first, when we are separate from God, we will hurt ourselves and others.

- To just turn around/repent, does not address this pain and hurt and shame that we are carrying from our actions based in separation.
- So forgiveness becomes this important part of turning to God.
- Asking for and receiving forgiveness frees us from the resentment and shame we feel about past decisions and restores our relationship with God.
- So, to demonstrate how repentance without forgiveness compares to repentance with forgiveness, we're going to do an activity now:

EXPLAIN and DO DEMONSTRATION

- [Pass out a 3 x 5 index card]
 - Pretend that this card represents a person after having lived in separation from God.
 - Using the scissors made available to you, cut as large a hole as you can into the card as a symbol of that person repenting, but without receiving forgiveness.
 - [Give the students 1 minute, tops, to complete this task (most students will most likely fold the card in half and cut a half-moon out of the card)].
 - Everyone hold up your cards.
 - Not so bad, right? The person is much more opened to God than before repenting, right?
 - But when we ask God for forgiveness after we repent, then our being opened to God is going to be much greater.
 - So, to have an example of what receiving God's forgiveness looks like, let's take another 3 x 5 index card, and this time, following my instructions, let's cut a much larger hole in the middle of the card.
 - [**Note for teachers:** See picture at end of lesson plan if written instructions don't fully make sense. Also, you might want to try this yourself before teaching it.]
- 1) Fold the index card in half length-wise (like a hotdog bun, not a hamburger bun) and make 13 partial cuts, alternating where the cut begins [as demonstrated in the picture].
 - 2) Make your first cut starting from the folded side, very near to the end of the card.
 - 3) Then turn the card around and cut toward the fold.
 - 4) Keep repeating the process. (Cut to within a quarter inch (half centimeter) of the edges of the card – the closer the better.)
 - 5) Very carefully open the card (the cut paper will stick to itself) and prepare to cut lengthwise along the fold. When you start cutting, though, **DO NOT** cut the two very end sections. Slide your scissors into the first "gash" made by your previous cuts. Then cut along the fold almost to the very edge of the card, but **STOP** so that you do not cut the very last connected "column" of paper.
 - 6) Now, stretch open your card and show it to the class. You can even put it around your head, the hole is so big!

TELL

- This demonstration helps us to see how much greater we can be open to receiving God's love when we ask for and receive God's forgiveness.
- In today's story, we see how emotional, thankful and extravagant the woman feels in her restoration and forgiveness.

- But sometimes, we're not always sure of the different ways in which we are living separated from God.
- But, we can also invite God into this naming and identifying process.
- We can do this by simply asking. We can pray something along these lines, "God help me to see how I am living without you and how that hurts me and others."

CHALLENGE OF THE WEEK

Sit down by yourself with a pen(cil) and paper. Either write down the words or say out loud a request to God to help you name and identify ways that you may be living without God and how that might hurt you and/or others. Give yourself and God 10 minutes after you ask. Write down whatever comes to mind. If what you see is something you want to let go of – then admit what you've done and ask God for forgiveness. God will forgive you. Try this at least twice during the week.

CLOSING PRAYER – ask for prayer requests and give time during prayer for students to pray.

