

Surprised by Grace: Dinner Interrupted

Luke 7:36-50

Interruption. Surprise. Shock. The woman enters the room. Her tears fall on Jesus. She then wipes away her tears with her hair. Why is she doing this? There is a reference to forgiveness, but the discussion reveals that the motivation is love, and the text seems to emphasize that we are not witnessing forgiveness that is a result of love, but love that is a result of forgiveness.

The challenge to us in the modern world is clear. The need to be forgiven and the need to forgive is essential to community. In the ancient context, “sinner” is an exclusionary term that describes someone undeserving of, or removed from, community. We may not use the word in the same way today, but we exclude others for many reasons. Sometimes we think of our own values or morality as superior to others, but this text challenges us to rethink our assumptions. Apparent differences in political and theological views can lead to people being pushed to the periphery of their community, with little hope of restored relationships. We all need forgiveness and restoration. And we all need to participate in the process of forgiving others.

Questions for reflection:

- How do you feel about being interrupted while speaking or in the middle of a task or meal? What distinguishes a good interruption from a bad one?
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- How can interruptions be an opportunity? How might you prepare yourself to look for the opportunity in the next interruption you experience?

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