

The Sinful Woman In the House of the Pharisee

It happened that a sinful woman met the Lord Jesus Christ in the house of a Pharisee (Luke 7) in an encounter filled with mystery. When we look closely at this encounter, we can note the important language used by the Lord Jesus Christ. And, all the while, the woman did not speak a word, but expressed herself through her tears, kisses, and fragrant oil.

In this encounter, several important concepts come up, such as: debt, love, faith, forgiveness, salvation, and peace. Each word calls for us to stop and meditate on it.

The woman seems like someone coming to the Lord Jesus Christ as a patient in pain, suffering and captive to a cursed sickness, asking for healing, rest, freedom, and peace. Indeed, sin is a grave illness that enslaves a person and ruins him inside and out. It consumes a person's emotions and will gradually cause him to deteriorate until he completely tumbles down. This woman realized that she was in a situation that required change. For this reason, she held on to the feet of the Lord, and her internal tongue cried with Jacob the patriarch saying, **"I will not leave You unless You bless me"** (Gen. 32:26).

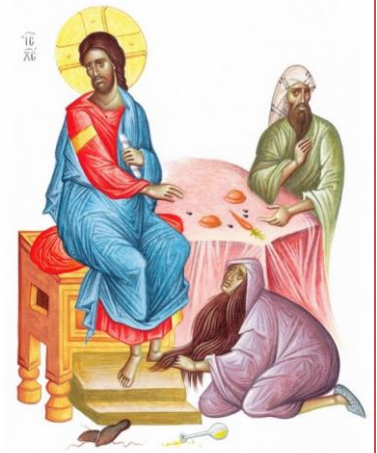
I believe **this woman's repentance started at a time before this incident and appeared in its fullness in this encounter.** This corresponds to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ on debt. This woman enjoyed the love and care of The Lord for her and her freedom from the enslavement of sin. When He broke the authority of Satan over her, she started to be captivated by His love, and she came confessing His goodness. Christ has paid her debts, or, rather, He forgave her for what she owed Him. So, she became indebted to His love, and His love ruled over her being. Her tears began to overflow at His feet, which freed her from slavery, and her mouth did not stop kissing His feet, for this was the language of thanksgiving and glorification that she used to express her emotions that were overcome by His love.

Her feeling of the great debt that Christ granted her was a source of motivation so that she came by faith asking for forgiveness and mercy with overflowing tears and unceasing kisses, so that the heart of her creditor was touched. Therefore, she received forgiveness, salvation, and peace. This is, in a general sense, repentance. It is present at the feet of Christ, its form is with reverence, tears, and kisses, and its fruits are forgiveness, peace, and joy.

The law does not know the forgiveness of sin, but the church of the New Testament does. And this is what the church gives us in every liturgical prayer we attend with repentance and reverence, when the church prays the absolution at the end of every service for the forgiveness of our sins and the purification of our lives so that they may be filled with the divine blessings.

The actions of this woman are unique because of **her great humility.** Without it, she would be unable to do what she did. Humility is a friend of and support for repentance. It is contrary to pride, which continually hinders repentance and stands before it as a stumbling block. Furthermore, we notice that **the woman was in a state of great focus on Christ,** who is her beloved Bridegroom, and the only Physician capable of healing her wounds. For this reason, I do not think she lifted her eyes at all to see the other people present in the house. Finally, **she offered the most valuable things that she had,** her precious tears, her invaluable kisses, and her expensive, fragrant oil. Even her hair, which was the crown of her beauty, she used to wipe the feet of Christ!

Contact with the feet of Christ during true repentance allows our hearts to be touched by His love, as **"We love Him for He first loved us"** (1 John 4:19). Thus, in our repentance, we pray every night as the church teaches us in the midnight prayer: **"Give me, O Lord, many fountains of tears as you gave, in the past, the sinful woman. Make me worthy to wash Your feet, which liberated me from the path of straying, and to offer You a precious fragrant oil, and gain, through repentance, a pure life, so that I may hear that voice full of joy: "Your faith has saved you."**



Fr. Yohanna Naseef

fryohanna@hotmail.com