

Sermon-Based Small Group Bible Study

Encounters with Jesus: Jesus and the Sinful Woman (Luke 7:36–50)

Open

Select one of these “ice breakers” to get the conversation going toward the study.

- What do you enjoy most about gathering with other people for a meal?
- Have you ever felt like the person who doesn’t fit in at a gathering? How do you deal with that?
- Tell us about a time when you received a gift that made you feel especially grateful.

Dig

After reading Luke 7:36–50 together, discuss these questions.

1. A Pharisee invites Jesus to dine in his home. We think of Pharisees as the “bad guys,” but in Jesus’ time they were widely respected. How do you think people would have understood the Pharisee’s invitation to Jesus? An honor? A trap? A goodwill gesture? A publicity stunt?
2. Look at the description of the woman and what she does in verses 37–38. How do you think people would have understood her actions? Offensive? Brash? Humble? Wasteful? Rude?
3. To interpret the woman’s actions, Jesus tells a story about two people who are forgiven. What point do you hear him making about the woman? About the Pharisee?
4. Jesus speaks about some who are forgiven much and some who are forgiven little. Why do you think the Pharisee is one who is forgiven little? Fewer sins? Not admitting his need for forgiveness? Not accepting the source of forgiveness? Other reasons?
5. Jesus pronounces the woman forgiven and says that her faith has saved her (verses 48–50). How do people react to that statement? What is Jesus claiming about himself as he does this?

Reflect

Use any of these prompts to encourage group members to apply the text to their own experiences.

- Pastor Bryan quoted Augustine in his *Confessions*: “For You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.” The woman found her rest. Where are you in that search? Settled? Still restless? Back and forth?
- What helps you think of yourself as someone who has been forgiven much? What makes you struggle to remember that?
- Being fully known and fully forgiven fills us with love for Jesus and for others. Who is welcome at our banquet table? Who might we be excluding?

Pray

Invite the group to pray together using any of these suggestions.

- How would you express your gratitude for a Lord who neither condones nor condemns but offers repentance and forgiveness?
- What can we ask God to help us with as we express the love we have from being fully known and fully forgiven?
- What needs have you heard from others in the group that we can pray about?