

Sermon Outline - Sun, May 2, 2021

Overview: This month we are weaving together our celebration of Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month and Pentecost. As we prepare for Pride in June we will also lean into themes on gender and patriarchy and the way that all of these themes are in conversation with each other. Drawing from the work of theologian Kwok Pui Lan - today we begin with the tale of the woman of Luke 7. Often called the woman with the Alabaster box (Catholic tradition – Mary Magdalene – but I am suspicious of that.)

Story Exegesis

The Woman

- **This woman loved Jesus because even without the use of his eyes –he saw her.** The good news had spread that Jesus was breaking the rules calling for healing, compassion and justice to be at the center of the tradition – seeing how the rules were being used not for compassion but for judgement.
- **She showed her love by attending to his material needs.** Feet did get dirty back then and she gave in the way that many women have over time.
- **She put her whole self into her love in embodying faith** – Her willingness to use her hair, her own self is a reflection of embodied faith. This kind of giving is often denigrated but Jesus sees it as the outpouring that it is holy.

The Pharisee

- **The Pharisee saw her only for her condition of “sin” and status not her humanity.** He was worried about “what kind of person” she is.
- **He judges Jesus realness because he is willing to hang out with her.**
- **He is completely oblivious to the systems that constrict her options.** The very system that Jesus came to change

Jesus

- **Jesus elevates an economy of grace over a system of debt** - Throughout his ministry he critiques the usury system and is constantly calling for an economy of grace. This is really good news for folks who are on the bottom and missed by those who are not drowning in debt..
- **Jesus calls out the ways that privilege prevents folks from truly building a relationship with God.** (Maybe because the privileged imagine they are God or close to it.)He calls out the Pharisee for his lack of attention to his needs even when it would probably have cost him nothing.
- **Jesus**

This story is not so distant. The habits of the Pharisee have found its way solidly into Christian theology and is usually directed most harshly against women and particularly women of color. Robert Aaron Long thought it was acceptable to work out his own sexual temptation by judging women that he too saw as sinful. His was the most extreme, but how do these patterns of judgement play out in our own understandings of faith, gender and sexuality.

Core Questions –

1. In what ways have theologies of “sin” been projected onto individuals rather than systems. How have you found yourself complicit in that way of thinking? How have you reimagined your theology imagine a different way of looking at sin?
2. Where in your life has privilege prevented you from seeing opportunities to go deeper into an economy of grace?
3. How do you feel called to lean more deeply into more embodied faith? Like this woman, being willing to put your body on the line for what you believe? Or like Jesus being willing to touch and lean into relationship with folks who find themselves on the wrong side of society’s favor?