



Theme: Radical Women

“Do you see this woman?”

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Weekly Memory Verse: ⁴⁴ [Jesus] said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? ... I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love.” –Luke 7: 44a and 47a (NSRV)

Spiritual Formation Ideas for the Week:

1. Try a foot washing at home! Get out a tub for your feet, some sweet smelling soap and give the feet of a loved one a bath. As you bathe their feet consider how that person is sacred and holy, a beloved child of God. Try to really see the beauty of their spirit.
2. Thank you notes. Try to emulate the gratitude of the anointing woman by writing God a “thank you note”. Use these categories to write a personal prayer. Gratitude for God’s love; Gratitude for God’s goodness, Gratitude for God’s power; Gratitude for God’s forgiveness, Gratitude for God’s grace.
3. Massage your own feet with lotion. Consider that you are created in God’s image and that you are very good. Give God thanks for your feet, they carry you around wherever you go! Use your feet to walk in the way of Jesus.

Monday, June 28 – Read Luke 7:36-50. How would you describe Jesus after reading this passage?

 This week we will discover more about the compassionate nature of Jesus through His encounter with a woman who never uttered a word to him yet performed one of the most beautiful expressions of humble gratitude found in the Gospels. We’ll see that her silent actions were as expressive as a thousand thank-yous. As we explore their encounter, we will discover the power of grace and forgiveness and the importance of worship that that sets us apart as grateful people of faith.

Reread Luke 7:37-38 and answer the following: Was this woman an invited guest? What did she bring? What did she do for Jesus? What feelings do you imagine the crying woman felt as she anointed Jesus?

 While Simon criticizes the anointing, Jesus accepts the woman who is described as a sinner. Jesus forgives her, to the amazement of the other dinner guests. Jesus left Simon the Pharisee’s home smelling of the woman’s costly perfume. He wasn’t ashamed to associate himself with a woman like her. No shameful past, act or thought separated her from the love of God made plain in Jesus. Have you ever felt your sin was too great for the love and grace of Jesus to forgive? Read Romans 8:35-39. What will separate you from God’s love?

 Nothing. Nothing can separate you from God’s love. Jesus sees the goodness in us. We are God’s beloved. When our hearts suffer from rejection, God is the one Who can help us. The triune God offers

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presence when we offer our vulnerability. God meets us in our tender and broken places. God forgives and restores.

Prayer: *God, give me the courage to bring the tender and hurting places of my heart to you. I long for the forgiveness and healing that only you can bring. Amen.*

Tuesday, June 29 – Read Matthew 26:6-9, Mark 14: 3-5, Luke 7:36-39 and John 12:1-5. What is the common reaction in each story to the woman’s worship of Jesus?

 It is interesting to note that in each of the four Gospels, we read an account of a woman who anointed Jesus, and in each account a man or a group of men objected to her actions. For centuries scholars have argued that perhaps there is one, two or even three women who anointed Jesus-based on differences in the accounts such as when and where the encounter happened, whether she anointed His head or His feet, and other details. While there may have been different women, they all had similar reactions from the men in the room. In each account, either a Pharisee or a disciple judged or shamed the woman for her act of worship. These women who anointed Jesus did not follow the religious rules of the day. In fact, their public displays of affection disrespected the laws that forbade a woman from touching a man. Their passion and love for Jesus overrode their tact and expected role in society. Talk about an audacious woman of faith! Can you recall a time when you refused to allow the opinions of others to overshadow your passion for God?

Prayer: *God, through the power of your love, help me let go of any shame that keeps me from accepting and embracing your grace. Amen.*

Wednesday, June 30 – Reread Luke 7:48. What did the woman do as she anointed Jesus’ feet and why do you think she did this?

 At some point the woman heard Jesus preach His message of salvation and grace to the crowds. Perhaps the good news He spoke of was what her heart desperately needed and she believed the lifesaving message could save even her. Her adoration for Jesus resulted in her interrupting a dinner party and kissing His feet-all because she believed He was who he said he was. While Simon the Pharisee was fixated on her outer identity, Jesus focused on the identity of her heart.

 Read 1 Samuel 16:7. Write the verse out in your own words. How does this verse speak into your life today?

Prayer: *God, I am so grateful that you do not define me by the roles I play in society. Thank you for seeing the deeper identity of my heart which you created in your own image. Amen*

Thursday, July 1 – Read Isaiah 61:1-3. What connection do you find between the story of the women who anointed Jesus in the gospels with Isaiah’s prophecy made four hundred years before Jesus was born?

 The woman’s act of anointing Jesus was both ordinary and sacred. The act was ordinary because it was common in that time to wash the feet of your guests upon arrival. At the same time, her act was sacred. She, a sinful woman without a prestigious position, performed a sacred ritual fit for priests.

 In the ancient East, priests who were set apart for the work of God held the principal position of ceremonially anointing the Jewish kings. Because of their esteemed role in the inauguration of their kings, the meaning of the word *king* eventually became synonymous with “the Lord’s anointed.” So, in a sense, the unnamed woman took on the role of honorary priest as she anointed the King of kings, the Messiah, which means “anointed one”.

Prayer: *Holy One, open my eyes and let me see you in the ordinary. I don’t want to miss You anymore. Amen.*

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Friday, July 2 – Read Mark 14:3-9 (See also Matthew 26:6-13) and John 12:1-8.

🏔 Notice that in these three gospels, the story of the anointing woman is during the passion of Jesus, what we often think of as Holy Week events. Amy-Jill Levine, author of the book Entering the Passion of Jesus, likes to call the gathering with a meal and an anointing woman “the first supper”. In each of the gospels the woman anoints Jesus at a home while Jesus was visiting for a meal. In the “first supper” Jesus gets his feet washed by the woman. During the “Last Supper,” Jesus washes the feet of the disciples before he is crucified. Making a connection from the “first supper” to the Last Supper deepens the meaning of each event. Perhaps next year for Holy Week we could have a service to remember the anointing of Jesus and remember more of the people who were part of the passion narrative.

Prayer: *Spirit of Christ, help me see you in the unlikely people I meet with today. Amen.*

Saturday, July 3 – Read Mark 14:3-9 (see also Matthew 26:6-13).

🏔 According to Jesus, the woman anoints him for burial. But did she think that was what she was doing? Only our imagination can answer that question. Jesus says, “Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.” (Mark 14:9) This is an opening for us not to talk about only this one unnamed woman, but of all those women in the gospels whose stories are not remembered and not told.

🏔 Spend some time imagining the story of the anointing woman in your mind. If you were to write this story out in your own words, how would it go? If you were to draw or choose an image from the computer for this story, what would it be? If you wanted to emulate the actions of the anointing woman, what would that look like? What other unnamed women in the gospels do you notice? How will you tell their story?

Prayer: *Loving God, I want the stories of the bible, your stories, to live in my heart and imagination so that I might honor and live out the story of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

This week’s Meditation Moments are adapted by Tami Bradshaw from Week 4 of Tiffany Bluhm’s study Never Alone and chapter 4 of Amy Jill Levine’s Entering the Passion of Jesus. Both books are published by Abingdon and are available through Cokesbury.com.