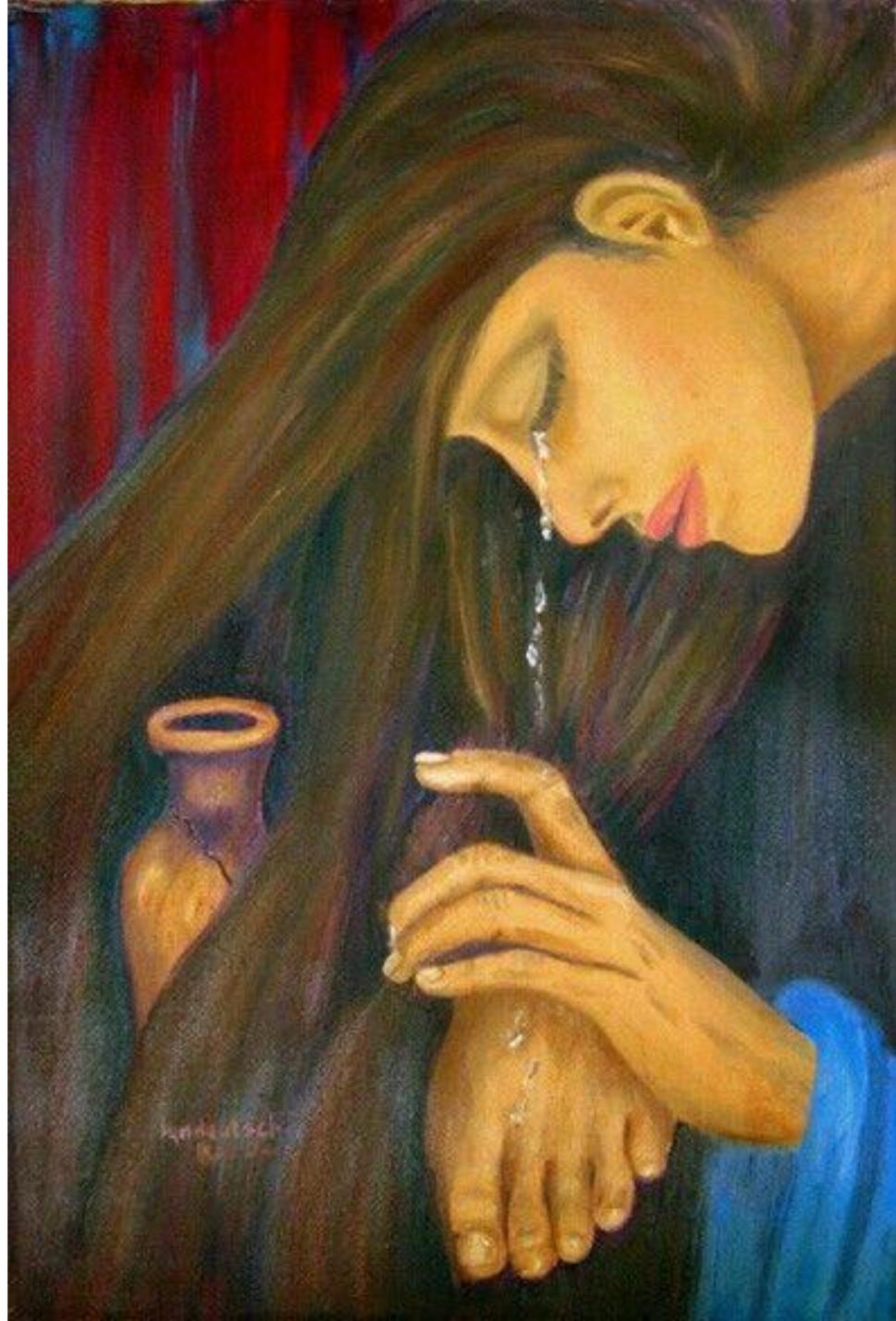


Luke 7:36-50



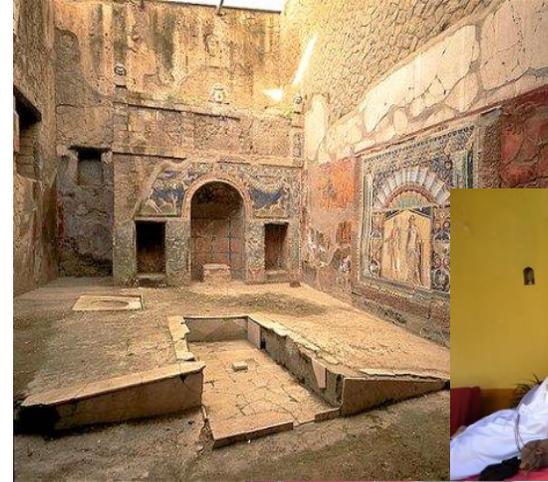
... her sins,
which were
many, have
been forgiven;
hence she has
shown great
love ...

³⁶ One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. ³⁷ And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. ³⁸ She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. ³⁹ Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner." ⁴⁰ Jesus spoke up and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Teacher," he replied, "speak." ⁴¹ "A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² When they could not pay, he cancelled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?" ⁴³ Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he cancelled the greater debt." And Jesus said to him, "You have judged rightly." ⁴⁴ Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶ You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷ Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little." ⁴⁸ Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." ⁴⁹ But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" ⁵⁰ And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Jews in the first century typically adopted the Roman practice of the triclinium (three sided dining in a reclining position).

The guests would lay on their left side facing the inside, leaving their right hand free to eat the meal. This would mean that each guest could lean on the bosom of the person to their left. Their legs would be towards the outside, allowing a servant to wash their feet as they ate the feast.

Source: <http://www.redeemerofisrael.org/2012/04/setting-of-last-supper-triclinium.html>



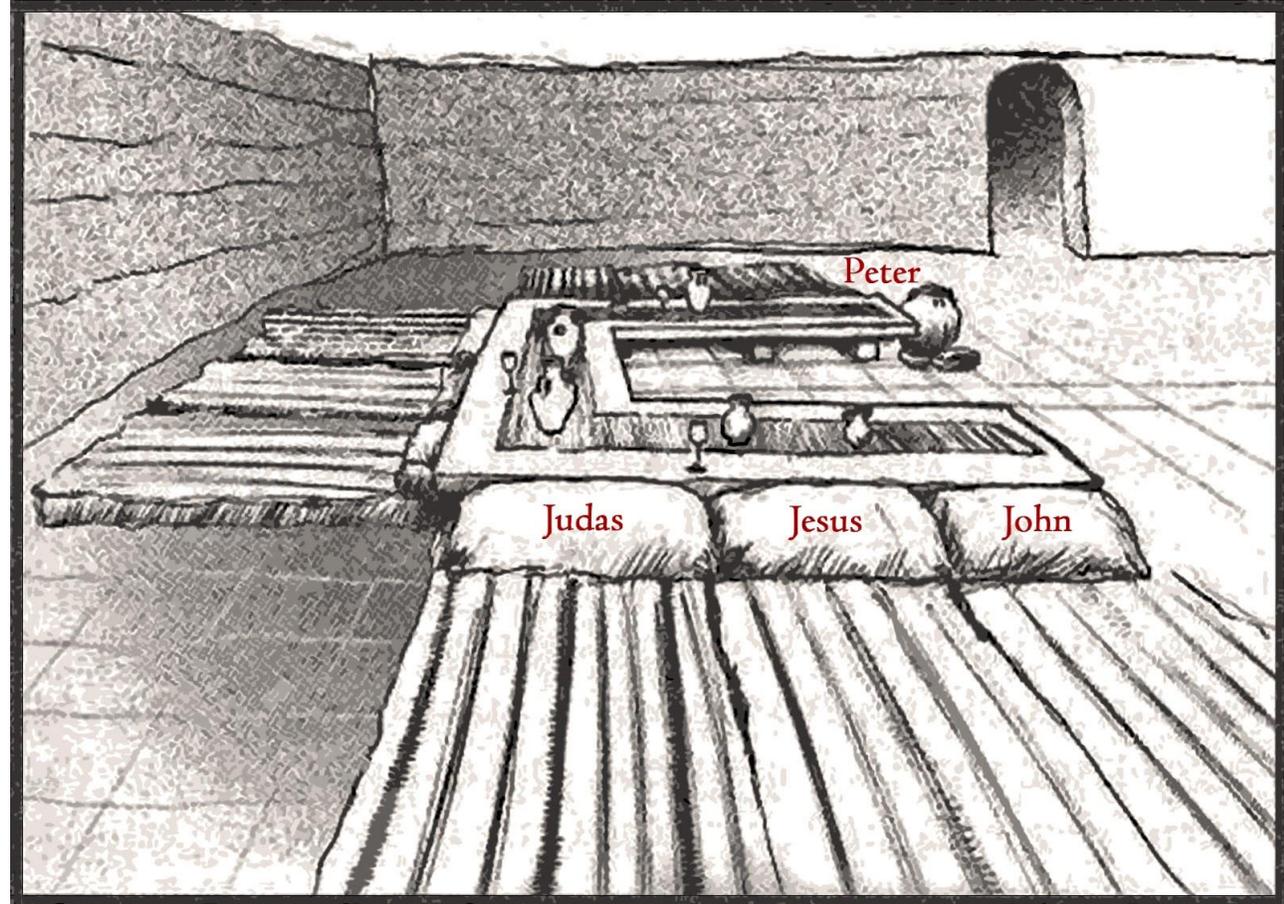
³⁶ One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table ...



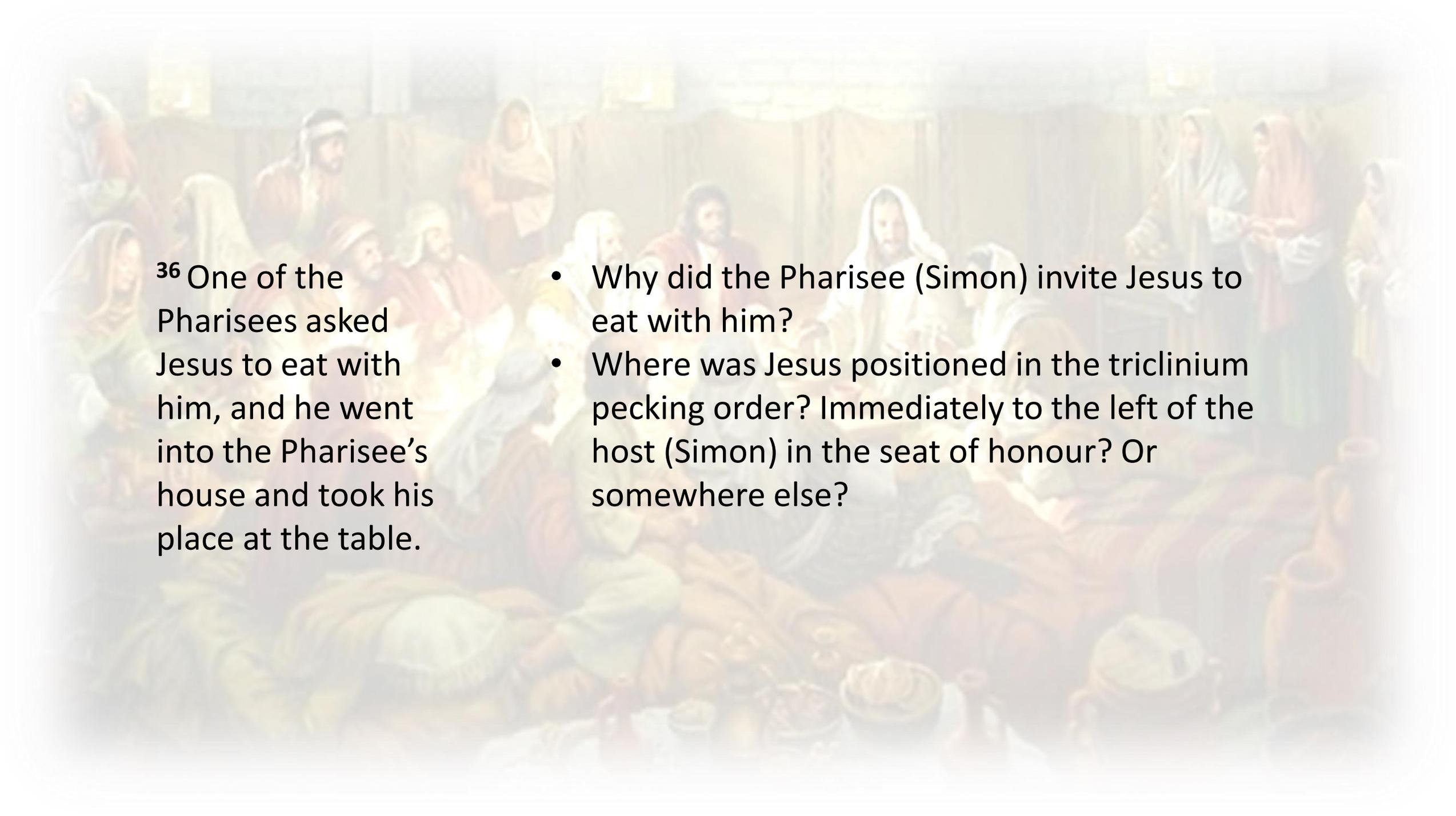
The host of the feast would not sit in the middle, as is often depicted in artwork of the Last Supper (e.g. Leonardo da Vinci's painting made famous in Dan Brown's "The da Vinci Code").

Instead, the host would sit second to the left, with the guest of honour on his left, and a trusted friend to his right. The seating then continued around the triclinium, the most important guests seated on the left, then going around the table, with the least important sitting on the far right. The servant, if seated at the table, would occupy the last position, closest to the door, so they could go and obtain more food as the evening progressed.

<https://youtu.be/IL29tfxfzI0>

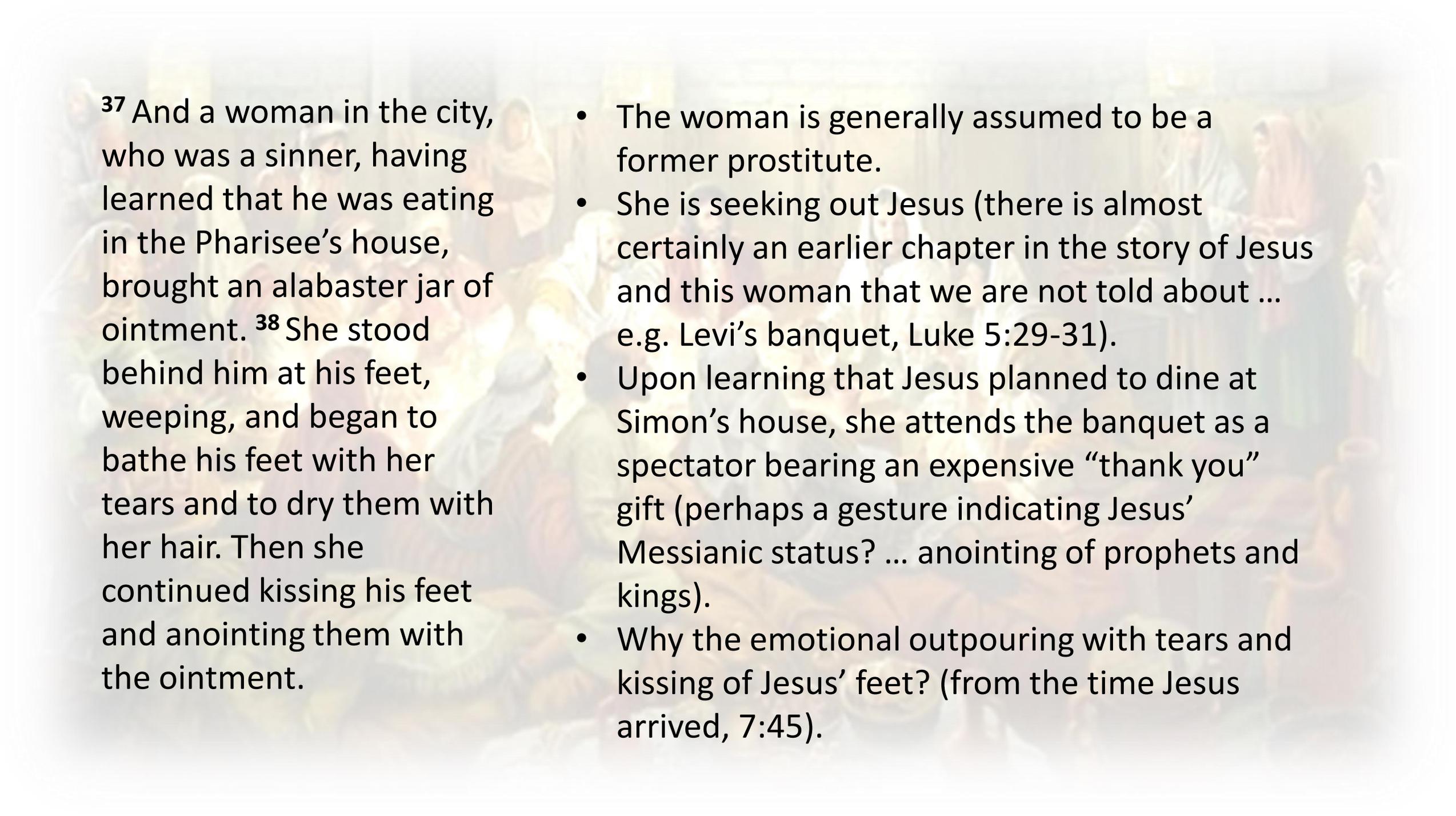






³⁶ One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table.

- Why did the Pharisee (Simon) invite Jesus to eat with him?
- Where was Jesus positioned in the triclinium pecking order? Immediately to the left of the host (Simon) in the seat of honour? Or somewhere else?

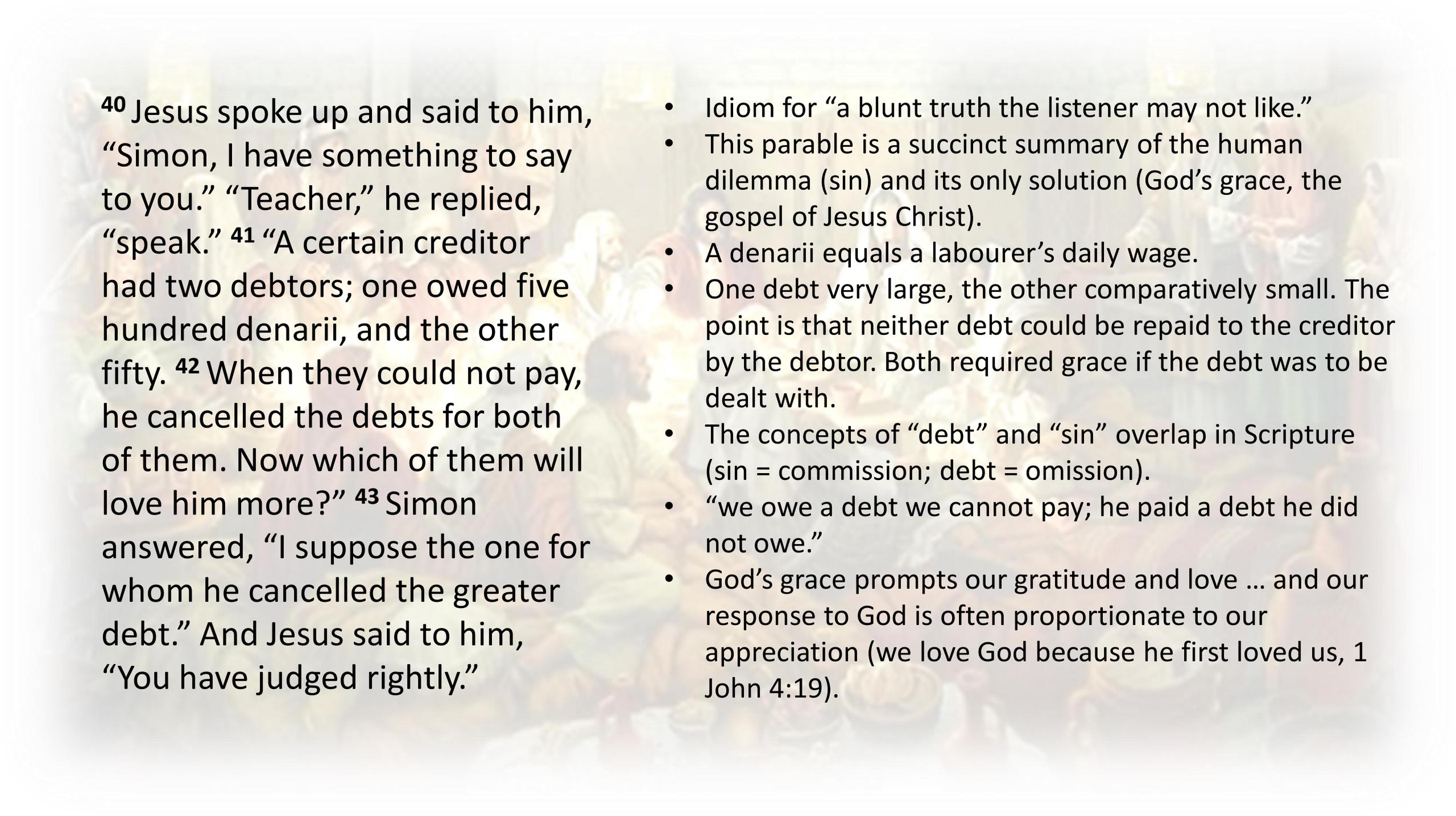


³⁷ And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. ³⁸ She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment.

- The woman is generally assumed to be a former prostitute.
- She is seeking out Jesus (there is almost certainly an earlier chapter in the story of Jesus and this woman that we are not told about ... e.g. Levi's banquet, Luke 5:29-31).
- Upon learning that Jesus planned to dine at Simon's house, she attends the banquet as a spectator bearing an expensive "thank you" gift (perhaps a gesture indicating Jesus' Messianic status? ... anointing of prophets and kings).
- Why the emotional outpouring with tears and kissing of Jesus' feet? (from the time Jesus arrived, 7:45).

³⁹ Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner.”

- The host (Simon) is upset that Jesus is tolerating this woman’s attention.
- If he truly were a prophet he would know she is a woman of ill repute, a sinner (Simon’s assumption is that he would therefore treat her as unclean and have nothing to do with her).
- Does this give us insight into Simon’s motivation for inviting Jesus to dine? To test the popular belief that he was a prophet? (Luke 7:16-17; cf. 4:24). To “straighten out the young upstart rabbi” or perhaps to “expose” him as a fraud?
- As he will soon be made aware, Simon draws the wrong conclusion about both Jesus (who is indeed a prophet) and the woman (who is a forgiven penitent sinner which puts her in a better place in relation to God than the self-righteous Simon; cf. Luke 18:9-14).

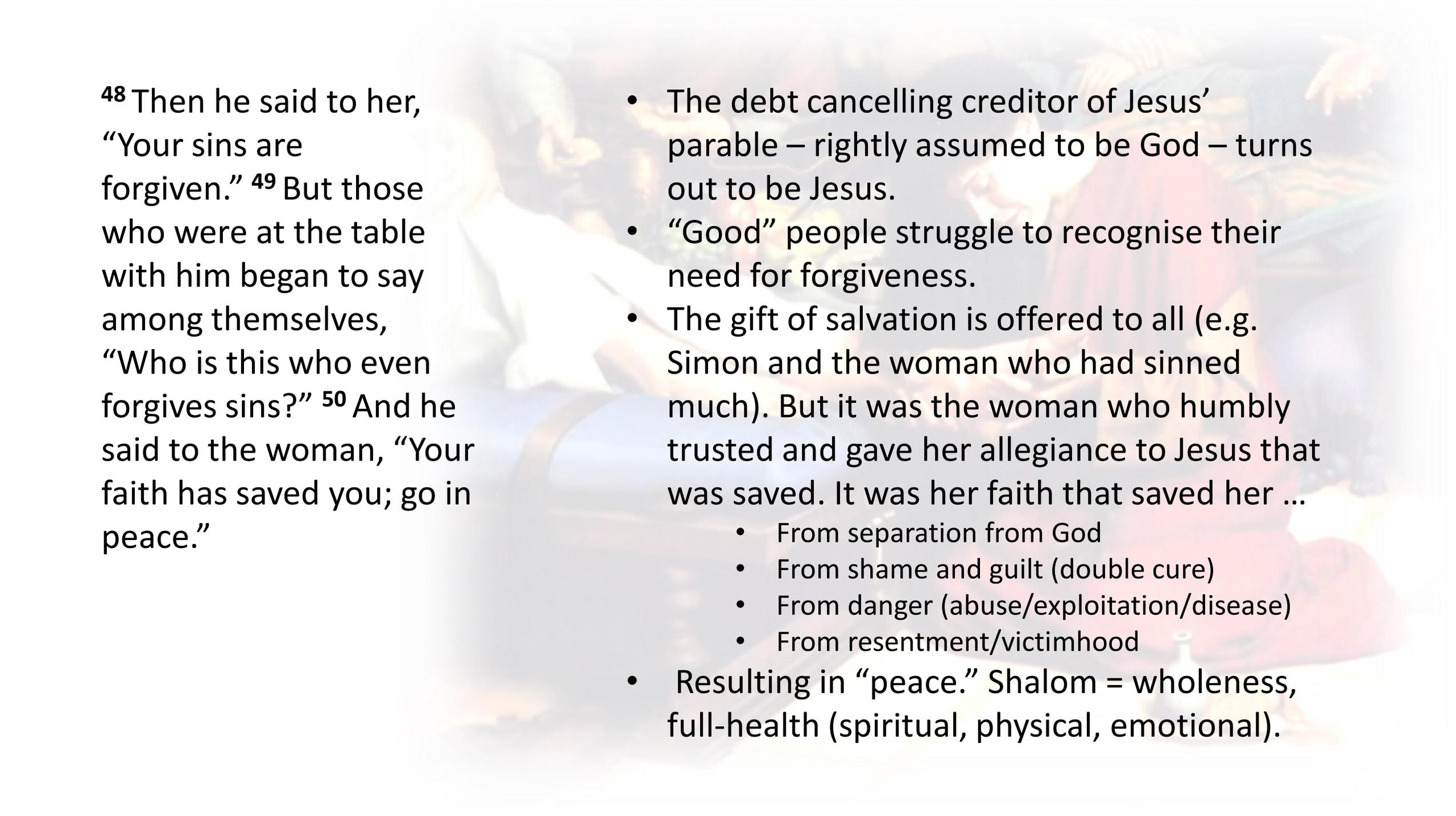


⁴⁰ Jesus spoke up and said to him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” “Teacher,” he replied, “speak.” ⁴¹ “A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² When they could not pay, he cancelled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?” ⁴³ Simon answered, “I suppose the one for whom he cancelled the greater debt.” And Jesus said to him, “You have judged rightly.”

- Idiom for “a blunt truth the listener may not like.”
- This parable is a succinct summary of the human dilemma (sin) and its only solution (God’s grace, the gospel of Jesus Christ).
- A denarii equals a labourer’s daily wage.
- One debt very large, the other comparatively small. The point is that neither debt could be repaid to the creditor by the debtor. Both required grace if the debt was to be dealt with.
- The concepts of “debt” and “sin” overlap in Scripture (sin = commission; debt = omission).
- “we owe a debt we cannot pay; he paid a debt he did not owe.”
- God’s grace prompts our gratitude and love ... and our response to God is often proportionate to our appreciation (we love God because he first loved us, 1 John 4:19).

44 Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. 45 You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.”

- It is not the woman’s behaviour that is scandalous (though it was socially awkward: e.g. letting down her hair and touching Jesus). It is Simon’s insulting and disrespectful lack of decorum that is the real scandal.
- Customary for a host to provide water for the washing of a guest’s feet (expedited by a slave).
- Customary for a host to greet their guest with a kiss (on the face, usually one or both cheeks).
- Customary for a host to provide olive oil for use by their guest. Olive oil served many purposes including refreshing, cleansing and washing.
- Could it be that this disrespect and humiliation suffered by Jesus at the hands of his “host” distressed the woman ... tears of anger and remorse over his mistreatment as well as tears of joy and appreciation? His earlier compassion for her (forgiveness) now leads to her compassion for Jesus and her “standing up” for him (bride letting down her hair on her wedding night – pledging allegiance?).



48 Then he said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” 49 But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?” 50 And he said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

- The debt cancelling creditor of Jesus’ parable – rightly assumed to be God – turns out to be Jesus.
- “Good” people struggle to recognise their need for forgiveness.
- The gift of salvation is offered to all (e.g. Simon and the woman who had sinned much). But it was the woman who humbly trusted and gave her allegiance to Jesus that was saved. It was her faith that saved her ...
 - From separation from God
 - From shame and guilt (double cure)
 - From danger (abuse/exploitation/disease)
 - From resentment/victimhood
- Resulting in “peace.” Shalom = wholeness, full-health (spiritual, physical, emotional).

- **Forgiveness & love:** The more forgiveness the believer receives from Jesus the more costly love he or she offers to Jesus. Grace begets grace; love begets love.
- **Sin:** Two overarching types of sinner are clarified. Both law-keepers and law-breakers are sinners in need of forgiveness (cf. the parable of the father and his two sons in Luke 18).
- **The cross:** Jesus offers a costly demonstration of unexpected love to the woman, which anticipates the cross. We all owe a debt we cannot pay; he paid a debt he did not owe; our saviour Jesus Christ redeemed us through his crucifixion.
- **Faith, obedience, forgiveness, salvation and peace:** These five great themes are linked in the one story. The woman is forgiven and saved by her active faith in Jesus. The result of this process is peace.
- **Women:** The position of women is elevated. Jesus is willing to risk harm to publicly reach out in costly love to this un-named, immoral woman.
- **Prophethood:** The nature of being God's spokesperson is clarified. Simon thought God's person avoids contact with sinners. Jesus taught it is to offer costly love to sinners.
- **Christology:** Jesus duplicates and appropriates to himself the actions of the creditor in the parable. He confers forgiveness upon the woman (cancelling her debt) and accepts her grateful response.