

February 17

Loving Sinners, Complaining Do-gooders

God saw their works—that they turned from their evil way. God relented of the disaster which he said he would do to them, and he didn't do it. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry — Jonah 3:10-4:1

[Luke 7:36-8:3] One of the Pharisees invited him to eat with him. He entered into the Pharisee's house, and sat at the table. Behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that he was reclining in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of ointment. Standing behind at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and she wiped them with the hair of her head, kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what kind of woman this is who touches him, that she is a sinner."

Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you."

He said, "Teacher, say on."

"A certain lender had two debtors. The one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they couldn't pay, he forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him most?"

Simon answered, "He, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most."

He said to him, "You have judged correctly." Turning to the woman, he said to Simon,

To whom little is forgiven,
the same loves little.

"Do you see this woman? I entered into your house, and you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave me no kiss, but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss my feet. You didn't anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little." He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

Those who sat at the table with him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

It happened soon afterwards, that he went about through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good news of the Kingdom of God. With him were the twelve, and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out; and Joanna, the wife of Chuzas, Herod's steward; Susanna; and many others; who served them from their possessions.

1. Does it say "...is forgiven much loves much"? Why the difference? Do you love much?
2. How does this differ from a later anointing (e.g. John 12)? Why are the women listed?
3. Lord, I want to be like this woman, not like Jonah or Simon the Pharisee, please forgive...

February 18

Explaining Away Jesus' Works

For the fool will speak folly, and his heart will work iniquity, to practice profanity, and to utter error against Yahweh...The ways of the scoundrel are evil. He devises wicked devices to destroy the humble with lying words, – Isaiah 32:6-7

[Matthew 12:22-37] He came into a house. The multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. When his friends heard it, they went out to seize him: for they said, "He is insane." Then one possessed by a demon, blind and mute, was brought to him and he healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. All the multitudes were amazed, and said, "Can this be the son of David?" But when the Pharisees and the scribes who came down from Jerusalem heard it, they said, "This man does not cast out demons, except by Beelzebul, the prince of the demons."

Knowing their thoughts, Jesus summoned them and said to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? If I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can one enter into the house

*You offspring of vipers,
how can you, being evil,
speak good things?*

of the strong man, and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then he will plunder his house.

"He who is not with me is against me, and he who doesn't gather with me, scatters. Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit is guilty of an eternal sin, it will not be forgiven him neither in this age, nor in that which is to come"—because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."

"Either make the tree good, and its fruit good, or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by its fruit. You offspring of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. The good man out of his good treasure brings out good things, and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings out evil things. I tell you that every idle word that men speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." [Mark 3:19-30]

1. "by Beelzebul" was common lie against Jesus (see Luke 11). What lies do you believe?
2. How do you know that you have "good treasure" in your heart? What is your fruit?
3. Jesus, I've believed lies people tell against you and my words condemn me, please...

