# Luke 7: 36 – 50 – A tale of two sinners

Simon uses his influence/position to gather people and have Jesus around for a meal. Yet he treats Jesus with callous contempt. What are the ways in which we see this as the story unfolds?

What does this tell us about the way in which Simon sees himself?

How different is God’s view of Simon?

## *Refection: How easy is it to see my own weaknesses? What will enable me to better understand my own weaknesses?*

How does the woman see herself? What are the clues in the story that give us an insight into how she is thinking and how she is feeling?

Jesus and Simon see her very differently. What characterises Simon’s approach? What is at the heart of Jesus’ approach.

As Jesus uses Isaiah 61 to explain his ministry (Luke 4) one of the key statements is recovery of sight to the blind. This is first and foremost about recognising Jesus and who he is. How is that demonstrated in this account?

Simon’s blindness isn’t just towards who Jesus is, as he cannot see who else is there. It’s a key test of faith – if Jesus has opened our eyes, we see other people through the eyes of faith – we see them as God sees them.

*Reflection: Who are the people I really struggle around? What does this say about me? What will enable me to be better at seeing others as Jesus sees them?*

It could be argued that Simon responds to Jesus purely with intellectual curiosity, whilst the woman responds with emotion, and the story Jesus tells helps Simon to see the outpouring of the woman as a loving response. Yet clearly the woman has to know who Jesus is before she responds.

What will help us to get the right balance of head and heart in our response to Jesus? What are the dangers of a response that is all head? What are the dangers of a response that is all heart?

*Reflection: What might I begin doing to strengthen the right balance of head and heart in my own walk with Jesus?*

Isaiah 25:6-8 gives us an understanding of why Jesus and gatherings around food are such an important pointer to the kingdom of heaven. Jesus embodies grace in such circumstances. The church has a similar role today.

One commentator states that whilst Jesus went to eat with sinners, the church today invites them instead to religious services. How does this account challenge us in our thinking about how we reach out to those who don’t know Jesus? How could this shape our culture of invitation?

Simon had all kinds of barriers around his hospitality that were about making people feel unwelcome and emphasising that they did not belong. Does the church fall into the same mistake (whether intentionally or unintentionally)? What are some of the things we need to think about doing differently?

Jesus meets the cry of help with forgiveness, acceptance and words of faith. In what areas does our church need to grow to be today that same place of forgiveness, acceptance and faith?

Jesus was able to model grace and truth. He deals graciously with the woman seeing how forgiveness has changed her life. Yet he also speaks clear words to Simon, challenging him about his love of God. In what areas does our church need to grow to be today that same place of grace and truth, treating people with love whilst speaking God’s truth into their lives?