

Washed with tears

A sinful woman anoints Jesus, from Mark 14, Luke 7, and John 12

ONE NIGHT JESUS WENT to dinner at an Important Leader's house. The Important Leader invited his Important Friends. They were all just sitting down to eat when a woman walked in. She was not invited but everyone knew who she was.

"Who does she think she is?" the guests whispered. "How dare she?" The woman was a big sinner and everyone knew it. (It was easy to see — after all, she had broken the rules and done bad things.)

The woman walked straight up to Jesus. She was carrying very expensive perfume.

Now the thing about perfume back then was that it didn't come in bottles, it came in jars. And the jars were made out of precious stone, like alabaster. But here's the catch: the jars didn't have a lid, or a stopper, or anything. So the only way you got the perfume out was if you broke the jar. Once you broke the jar, that was it — you had no more. Most people didn't use perfume because it was too precious. They just kept it on a shelf and looked at it.



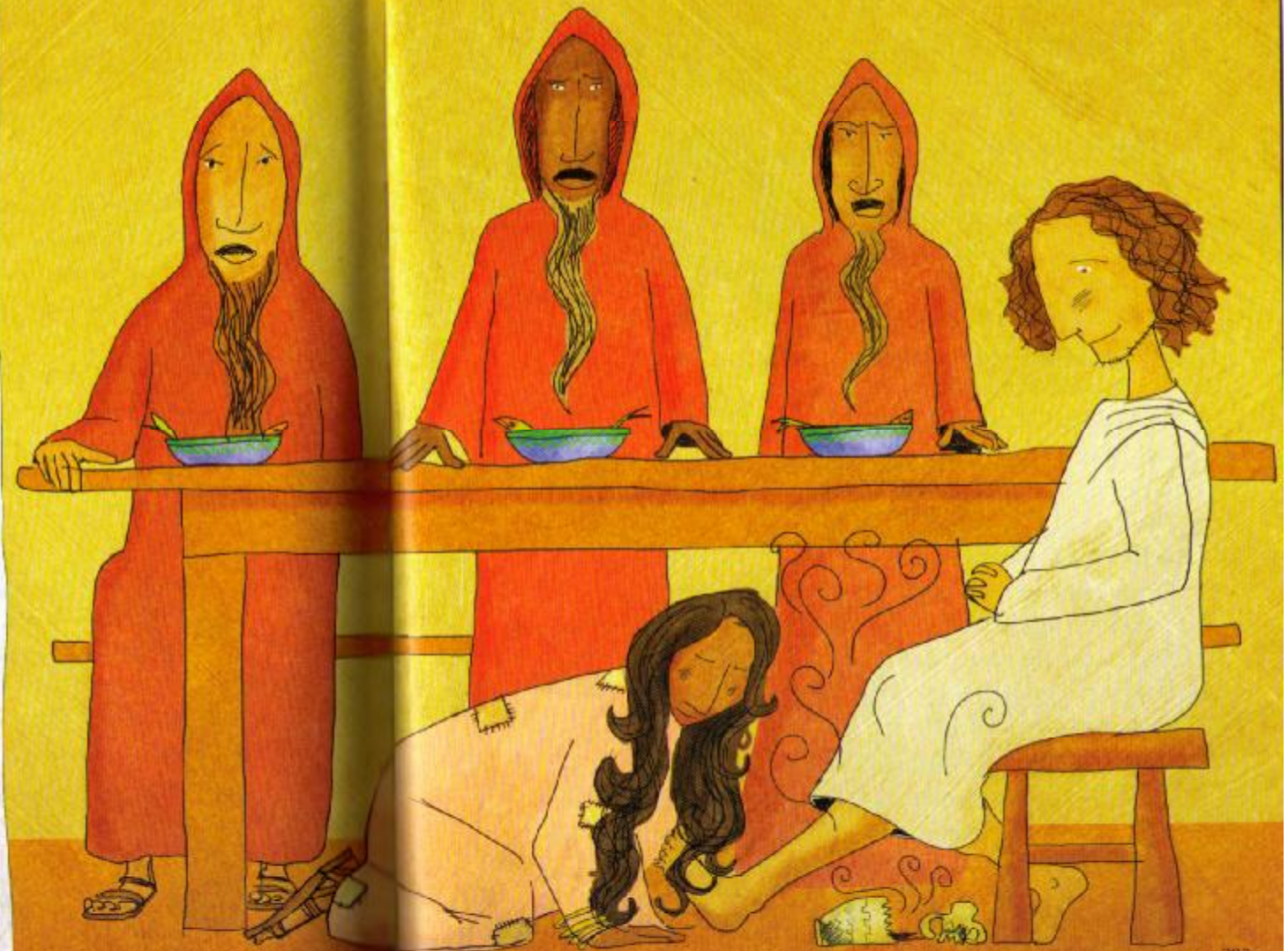
So you see, this perfume was the most precious thing in all the world. It was her treasure.

The woman knelt down before Jesus like he was a king. She held Jesus' feet in her hands and started to cry. Her tears fell onto Jesus' feet, washing them. She kissed his feet and dried them with her long, dark hair. And then she did something strange. She broke the jar and poured the perfume all over his feet.

Everyone gasped. What a waste! Over someone's feet? Such expensive perfume!

It smelled like lilies in a summer field.

Jesus looked at the woman, and he smiled at her. What she had done was the most wonderful thing. Just as Samuel had anointed David, God's true king, all those years before, so this woman had anointed Jesus — not with oil, but with her tears.



The Important People were cross. They thought Jesus should not be kind to this woman. "That woman is a sinner!" they grumbled.

"We're the good ones."
(And it's true, they did look good — from the outside. After all, they were keeping all the rules.)

But Jesus could see inside people. And inside, in their hearts, Jesus saw that they did not love God or other people. They were running away from God, and they thought they didn't need a rescuer. They thought they were good enough because they kept the rules. But sin had stopped their hearts from working properly. And their hearts were hard and cold.

"This woman knows she's a sinner," Jesus told them. "She knows she'll never be good enough. She knows she needs me to rescue her. That's why she loves me so much.



"You look down on this woman because you don't look up to God. She is sinful on the outside — but you are sinful on the inside."

The Important People shook with anger.

Jesus turned to the woman and smiled. "Your sins are forgiven," he said. "You trusted me. And God has rescued you!"

"Who does Jesus think he is?" the Important People whispered. "Only God can forgive sins."

They didn't believe Jesus was God's Son.

The more Jesus loved people and helped them, the more the Important People and Leaders hated him. They were afraid people would follow Jesus instead of them. They were jealous. And angry... Angry enough to kill Jesus.

