

רַחֲמִים שֶׁל יֵשׁוּעַ

Yeshua's Compassion

One day Yeshua was in Bethany, a small village located on the east slopes of the Mount of Olives, just across the Kidron valley from the city of Jerusalem. While He was there, a Pharisee by the name of Simon invited him to eat dinner at his house. Now Simon was known as “Simon the Leper,” but of course, he had been healed of his leprosy, because no one with leprosy would have invited a teacher like Yeshua into his house, not to mention asking Him to eat a meal together. This is because the Torah requires that lepers live alone, outside of the village and to avoid coming into the contact with others (Lev 13:45-46). So even though he had been declared clean from his leprosy, he was still known as “Simon the leper.” If anyone should have understood how it felt to be separated because of uncleanness, and to have experienced the mercy of HaShem, it should have been Simon!



A woman in the village heard that Yeshua had come to the home of Simon the Leper, and she desperately wanted to meet the Master. Presumably she had heard of His teaching, and she must have thought that He was very important, because she wanted to express her own sorrow to Him for having lived a life of sin. Perhaps she realized that Yeshua was the long-awaited Messiah, and that He would be able to assure her that her sins had been forgiven. So she came to Simon's home while Yeshua was there.

We don't know what the woman's name was, the Bible never tells us. But we do know that she brought with her a bottle made of alabaster full of perfume made from olive oil into which very costly spices had been mixed. Indeed, this kind of perfume was very expensive! In Luke's gospel, we read that it would have cost 300 denarii, which is more than a whole year's wages. When the woman saw Yeshua, she immediately began cry, and she fell at His feet. She had come to the One Who would make a way for her to be forgiven of her sin, and she was overwhelmed with gratitude to Him. She took the perfume from the alabaster bottle, and poured some on His feet. Then she used her long hair like a towel and washed His feet with her tears.

When Simon saw this, he was angry. What right did this woman have to make such a scene in his house, and even to disturb his Guest with such actions? He even thought to himself, “If Yeshua is truly a prophet with wisdom, why doesn't He know that this woman has a bad reputation in our village?” Yeshua realized that Simon was not pleased, and so He said to him, “Simon, I have something to teach you.” Simon replied, “Please, tell me!” Yeshua said, “Suppose there were two people who owed money to the same lender. One owed a lot, while the other owed only a little. When neither of them could pay their debt, the lender graciously forgave both of their debts. Which one of them do you suppose will love the lender the most?” Simon answered, “I suppose the one whose greater debt was forgiven.” Yeshua answered, “Yes, you've answered correctly.” Then motioning toward the woman, Yeshua said, “When I came into your house, you didn't even offer water to wash my feet, but this woman has washed my feet with her tears. You didn't give me oil with which to anoint my face, but this woman has anointed my feet with costly perfume. You gave me no special greeting, but this woman has continued to treat me like royalty. I know that this woman has done wrong things, but she has repented, and has been forgiven. You both have shown favor to me, but because her debt, which was greater than yours, has been forgiven, her love is also greater. The proof that her sin has been forgiven is seen in the manner in which she shows her love.”