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November 27th: Isaiah 40 & Luke 7:36-50

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Comfort, comfort my people. A sinful woman anoints Jesus' feet.

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Transcript

Isaiah chapter 40. I'm going to read this to you. I'm going to read this to you.

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I'm going to read this to you. Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news. Lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news.

Lift it up, fear not. Say to the cities of Judah, Behold your God. Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and His arm rules for Him.

Behold, His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him. He will tend His flock like a shepherd. He will gather the lambs in His arms.

He will carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. Who has measured the spirit of the Lord, or what man shows Him his counsel? Whom did He consult, and who made Him understand? Who taught Him the path of justice, and taught Him knowledge, and showed Him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales. Behold, He takes up the coastlands like fine dust.

Lebanon would not suffice for fuel, nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering. All the nations are as nothing before Him. They are accounted by Him as less than nothing and emptiness.

To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness compare with Him? An idol? A craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold, and casts for it silver chains. He who is too impoverished for an offering chooses wood that will not rot. He seeks out a skillful craftsman to set up an idol that will not move.

Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in, who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness. Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when He blows on them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like Him? says the Holy One.

Lift up your eyes on high and see. Who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name. By the greatness of His might, and because He is strong in power, not one is missing.

Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, My way is hidden from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God? Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary. His understanding is unsearchable.

He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might He increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted. But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength.

They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint.

In Isaiah chapter 40 we move into a new section of the book. Until chapter 12 of the book, the text especially focused upon the crisis of the Syro-Ephraimite war during the reign of King Ahaz in the 730s BC and the years prior to it. The oracles against the

nations and against Judah that followed them in chapters 13-35 had the wider Assyrian crisis as their focus.

This climaxed for Judah in 701 BC when Sennacherib came up against Jerusalem, an event recorded in chapters 36 and 37. In the latter half of the book, however, the book speaks concerning a very different situation, where the dominant power is no longer Assyria, but seems to be Babylon, where Judah is in exile, but return is promised under Cyrus and the Medo-Persian Empire. However, even though Babylon and Cyrus do come into view more directly at certain points, the material of the rest of Isaiah is overwhelmingly far more general in its visions of judgement and restoration, with sparse details to tether it to specific historical and personal reference.

In this and other respects, something like chapter 35 is perhaps the closest comparison to it within the first 39 chapters of the book. After chapter 39, Isaiah's name is no longer mentioned and he no longer features as a character, as he did in various of the earlier narrative sections. Specific historical references and allusions to specific kings and times being addressed, or references to dates at which things happened, which we find at a few points in the first 30 chapters, are also lacking.

Scholars commonly further argue that there is a discernible change in the style. The weight of these facts probably should not be overstated. For instance, besides the superscriptions that open the first two chapters and the narrative sections of chapter 7 and chapters 37-39, Isaiah's name is only found in a superscription in chapter 13 and in two adjacent verses in chapter 20.

Furthermore, those arguing for a shift to a far more poetic style after chapter 39 often also argue that certain material from the first 39 chapters should be attributed to a later hand, given its similarity to material of the concluding 27 chapters of the book. In particular, as the gaze of the Prophet moved beyond his more immediate historical horizon and regarded a more eschatological and archetypal vista of salvation in various passages in the earlier part of the book, he seemed to employ a similar poetic and figurative style. The suggestion that there might have been two or more authors of the book of Isaiah is not a new position.

It has been around for at least 850 years. However, the theory of a first and second, or proto- and deutero-Isaiah, later expanded to include a third or trito-Isaiah, typically seen as running from chapter 56 to 66, became dominant in large measure on account of the rise of higher criticism. Higher criticism's instincts tended towards radical fragmentation of texts into different sources and forms and could treat texts as untrustworthy witnesses betraying the political and partisan interests of those who wrote and edited them.

Besides this, on account of their liberal unbelief in predictive prophecy, many could not accept, for instance, that Isaiah could foretell the name of Cyrus in Isaiah chapter 44

verse 28, over 150 years prior to Cyrus' decree. It's important to recognise that the arguments against Isaiah's authorship of the entire book are not simply based upon such unbelief. Even in the case of the declaration of Cyrus' role in the return, it is not immediately obvious that the texts of Isaiah chapters 44 and 45 read most naturally as a prediction of a figure nearly a century before his birth.

Likewise, even if we believe in predictive prophecy, we still need to explain why a prophet would seemingly address a radically transformed situation of around 150 years later. In recent decades, commentators on Isaiah from the school of the canonical approach, such as Brevard Charles and Christopher Seitz, have reasserted the importance of the unity of the completed text of Isaiah in its canonical form, so that this position now enjoys a lot of respect within mainstream scholarship. While they hold to the presence of different sources from different historical periods in Isaiah, they maintain that the unified book itself must be given priority, and that it is manifestly a single piece of literature, with 2nd Isaiah bearing the hallmarks of being formed in terms of 1st Isaiah, for instance.

Even if Isaiah was not the author of the entire book named after him, the entire book is a unified work of literature. If traditional higher criticism were like treating the Bible as a jigsaw to be disassembled, its pieces gathered into the different sources of contrasting colours, and the different forms of contrasting shapes, the canonical approach is the gentle reminder that the pieces ultimately belong together in the completed puzzle. Nevertheless, many conservative scholars are not quite so prepared as Charles and Seitz and others to deny Isaiah's authorship of the entire book.

It is difficult to discern the intended addressee of the later part of the book. While the future foretold would be most directly relevant to the exiles of Judah in Babylon in the years leading up to 539 BC, we should recall that Isaiah had foretold the rise of Babylon and Judah's captivity to Babylon in chapter 39, which immediately precedes this section. That future was already a projected event in the consciousness of the hearers of Isaiah at the end of the 8th century BC.

Consequently, a prophetic projection of deliverance and restoration through and from that exile in a much less specific and more poetic form would not be out of place. Isaiah could meaningfully prophesy about that future to people in his own day. Furthermore, much as the form in which the oracles of imminent judgement in the earlier part of the book foreshadowed the future judgement that would come upon Babylon over 150 years later, so the more abstract and poetic accounts of judgement and redemption would have enabled faithful people at the time of Isaiah to recognize themselves in the projected experience of their descendants.

Alec Martyr, in making his case for Isaiah's authorship of the entire book, observes details such as the references to idol-making that seem to presume the context of

Palestine where suitable trees for idol carving could be obtained. As for the specifying of Cyrus' name, there is no reason in principle why this should be rejected. King Josiah's name was predicted centuries before his birth in 1 Kings chapter 13.

Besides, considering the great emphasis that the later chapters of Isaiah place upon the Lord as the one who is the master of history, who declares the future before it unfolds, the power of these chapters to address not merely people of Isaiah's day, but also those of a time yet to come, might not be quite so out of keeping. In many respects, arguments for Isaiah's authorship of the entire book are on a stronger academic footing now than they were throughout the past century, as mainstream scholarship rediscovers the theological and ideological unity of the entire book. However, there remain difficult questions for such a position, and where there are not underlying theological commitments holding them to single authorship, it's not surprising that some commentators, who are otherwise theologically conservative and believe in predictive prophecy, would nonetheless be unpersuaded that Isaiah authored the entire prophetic book of his name.

This is a debate that is not yet over. In chapters 40-48, the theological themes of the Lord's steadfast love for his people, his commitment to save them, and his power over all other so-called gods, come to the fore. The death of exile would come, but it would not be the end of the story.

The Lord would bring his people back to life after their national death. In the process, he would demonstrate his identity and supremacy as the sovereign over creation, history, the nations, and all of their gods. Here, the theological heart of Isaiah's prophecy comes into view.

This, above all things, is a book about God. As John Oswald notes, there are several things in chapter 40 that recall the commissioning of Isaiah in chapter 6. He writes, The prophet's, what shall I say, in chapter 40 verse 6, sounds like the response, how long, in chapter 6 verse 11. Finally, the announcement of good news to the cities of Judah, chapter 40 verse 9, looks very much like a reversal of the command in chapter 6 verse 11 to speak the word of God until the cities lie in waste.

Reading these two chapters in terms of each other then, we might hear an answer to Isaiah's sorrowful question, how long, back in chapter 6. In chapter 40's assurance, that the time of judgment has passed and that restoration is at hand. The Lord loves his people and will restore them in his mercy, grace, and righteousness as the God who keeps his covenant. The great covenant formula, I will be your God and you shall be my people, is gently alluded to in the tenderness of the chapter's opening words of encouragement and reassurance.

The Lord has not disowned his people, but he will redeem them for himself. A new commission is given to messengers of God, a declaration of peace, forgiveness, and then

of return. The exile was the work of the Lord, dealing with the sins of his wayward and wicked people, but now their sins have been dealt with, they're forgiven, pardoned, and released.

Again the messenger in verse 3 is uncertain, but his message is a joyous one. Earlier parts of Isaiah spoke of fruitful lands being reduced to wilderness under the Lord's judgment, but now a way is being provided through the wilderness, a way for the Lord's return, presumably at the head of a vast company of his returning people. We've already had an intimation of this return through the wilderness to Zion, back in chapter 35 verses 8-10.

And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way.

Even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come upon it. They shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there.

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing. Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. They shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The way back through the wilderness suggests that a new exodus is occurring, much as the exodus from Egypt. The path of return from Babylon did not pass through the wilderness as that from Egypt did. But the path of return was most definitely through a figurative wilderness.

A vast work of terraforming is described, valleys being lifted up, mountains and hills made low, and a levelled path being spread before the Lord, the returning King, all obstacles removed from his route. Again we might here recall the great eschatological vision of Isaiah chapter 2 verses 2 to 4. The Mount of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples.

And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nations shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. The lifting up of the valleys and the lowering of the mountains, much like the lifting up of the mountain of Zion over the other mountains, speaks to the Lord's radical transformation of the powers of the world, humbling those who are lifted up, and lifting up the humble.

When the Lord returns, his glory will be seen by all, decisively demonstrating his identity. While this clearly looks to the return from Babylon, it no less clearly looks beyond that to a more complete and final demonstration of the Lord's uniqueness in history. In verse 6 the voice of verse 3 cries out again, but now to summon another to cry out with it,

perhaps the prophet himself.

The message is one of frailty and transience, comparing flesh to grass that withers, and flowers whose beauty fades when the spirit of the Lord blows upon them. A similar message to passages like Psalm 90. This is not the first time that we've seen this message in Isaiah.

He had to remind Ahaz that, beyond the terrifying threat of Israel and the Arameans, were merely two frail human beings, Rezan of Damascus and Pekah the son of Remaliah. He had a similar message in chapter 31 verse 3 to men of Judah looking to Egypt for aid. The Egyptians are man and not God, and their horses are flesh and not spirit.

When the Lord stretches out his hand, the helper will stumble, and he who is helped will fall, and they will all perish together. Man is weak, even in his imagined power. Only the word of the Lord will stand forever.

True security and certainty can only be known by those who live by faith in that word, rather than depending upon the things of sight. The Lord's promise will not fail. Zion herself is summoned to take on the part of a herald of good news, of the gospel.

The message of the Lord's return to Zion, coming as the mighty warrior, victorious over all of his enemies, with great spoils to deliver to his people. He is also coming as the tender shepherd of his harried and scattered flock. He will gather, restore, and tend to them as a gentle and good shepherd.

In Isaiah chapter 52 verses 7 to 10, we will later return to the themes of these verses. For the Lord has comforted his people. He has redeemed Jerusalem.

The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. Facing powers such as the Arameans in the northern kingdom of Israel, then the Assyrians, and then the even greater power of Babylon, the people of the Lord might have wondered whether the Lord was powerful enough to deliver them. Was their God's might sufficient to deliver them from such great foes? These questions would have become even more pronounced in the grave of exile, uprooted from their land, with no realistic prospect of return in sight.

In the teeth of such opposition, Isaiah's message is one of a God whose might exceeds all such creaturely powers. In these passages in Isaiah, we see some of the strongest statements of divine sovereignty and power in the entire Old Testament. If the Lord truly intends to deliver his people from exile, Judah needs to be reassured that he is more than mighty enough for the task.

The prophet's words here, with their pointed rhetorical questions concerning the uniqueness of the Lord's might, might recall the Lord's speech to Job, declaring his supremacy over all of the forces of death, chaos and evil that assaulted him. Judah and

Israel may just be small nations in their wider region, dominated by much greater nations and empires who served foreign gods. Considering that the Lord was their God, Israel and Judah could easily fall into the trap of fancying that the gods of the Assyrians, Egyptians or Babylonians must be greater, as their nations were dominant over theirs.

Yet they needed to be reminded that the Lord was truly the God of the whole earth, the sovereign over all of creation. None of the nations are accounted as anything before him. His wisdom and counsel exceed all humans searching out.

His sovereignty extends over the untamed waters of the seas, and rules over the entirety of the heavens. The towering mountains are like small objects to be weighed out in scales for him. Considered in terms of their vaunted power and greatness, the nations that so terrified Judah are utterly inconsequential before him.

When one considers the true majesty of the Almighty God, the notion that he is comparable to any other, let alone the idea that one could craft a likeness to him, is utterly ridiculous. In particular, idolatry is exposed for the complete folly that it is. An idol is fashioned by human artisans, who need to be careful that their image doesn't rot or topple over.

Yet the true God rules eternal in the heavens, beyond any power to displace him. Verses 21 to 26 reinforce the point of verses 12 to 20, inviting the hearer to contemplate the heavens themselves as a testament to the incomparability of the Lord. As Psalm 19 verses 1 to 6 expresses things, which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat. The Lord sits enthroned in the highest heavens, above the vault of the firmament, here pictured as a vast hemisphere. The entire realm of human habitation is under this, the Lord having spread out the heavens like a tent over the earth.

Returning to the language of the frailty of flesh, and the comparison of it to grass and flowers, verse 24 speaks of nations, princes and rulers as akin to such fragile and transient things. The Lord's question is renewed with added force. To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? The Lord is the master of the very stars in the heavens.

What mere creature could be considered similar to such a one? The practical import of this great vision of God's glory, splendor and might is pressed home at the end of the chapter. To a disheartened Israel that might consider itself beyond the Lord's sight or the reach of his arm, Isaiah's declaration of the Lord's incomparable strength, his loving commitment to his people, and his immeasurable wisdom is the very greatest reassurance they could be given. They have not passed beyond the Lord's loving

concern and oversight, and none of their oppressors or obstacles before them could withstand his might.

He is the true source of strength for those who lack it. Even those who naturally seem to possess great strength will find that their strength fails them. Yet those who draw their strength from the Lord will find unfathomable resources of rejuvenation opened up to them.

To a much weakened people, facing the prospect of the death of exile, this is the source of the most remarkable hope. A question to consider. In the ministry of John the Baptist, he presents verse 3 of this chapter as an explanation for what he is doing.

How does an understanding of this statement in its context help us better to understand what John the Baptist is doing with it in his pronouncement? Luke chapter 7 verses 36 to 50 One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who was touching him, for she is a sinner.

And Jesus answering said to him, Simon, I have something to say to you. And he answered, Say it, teacher. A certain moneylender had two debtors, one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.

When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more? Simon answered, The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt. And he said to him, You have judged rightly.

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 wet my feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in, she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not 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 he who has forgiven little, loves little. And he said to her, Your sins are forgiven.

Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, Who is this who even forgives sins? And he said to the woman, Your faith has saved you. Go in peace. In Luke chapter 7, Jesus has been accused of eating with tax collectors and sinners.

And in the next and final scene of the chapter, he is eating with a Pharisee. There is

some humour and irony here, I suspect. This passage juxtaposes Simon, the Pharisee and the woman.

Perhaps we should see another of Luke's male-female pairs here again. It is similar to an event recorded in Matthew, Mark and John in the final couple of weeks of Jesus' life. There it is Mary of Bethany, who seems to be a member of the dinner party, rather than a sinful woman who is seemingly intruding upon the feast.

In those passages, the focus is upon preparing Jesus for his burial. That is the significance of the event. The outrage is caused by the costliness of the ointment, not by the character of the woman.

And the story is there closely connected with the passion narrative in each account. It seems to me then that in addition to the fact that this is found at a very different part of the story, we are justified in saying it is not the same event, as that recorded in Matthew, Mark and John. Simon, Jesus' host, is a Pharisee.

We often see Pharisees simply as the bad guys, but their identity is rather more complicated and nuanced. Some Pharisees were faithful. In Acts 15, verse 5, we discover that there were some early Christians who also belonged to the Pharisees, even as Christians.

The apostle Paul calls himself a Pharisee before the council, even after his conversion. Now when Paul perceived that one part was Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Paul, to use a modern term, is clearly trolling the council here, trying to excite differences among them. But there is no reason to believe that his statement is not true on this account.

Simon could have been a fair-minded person who still had to make his mind up on Jesus, and he seems, in part, to be inviting Jesus to this feast for this reason, to discover his true character. Jesus seems to address him as someone who is, at least to some degree, open to what he is saying. His identity as a Pharisee does seem to be an important part of the framing of the story though.

The Pharisees challenged Jesus, as a party for the most part, for a reason, as Jesus unsettled a number of their distinctive emphases and concerns. The Pharisee concern for ritual purity, for instance, is an important part of this story, as it is unsettled by Jesus' teaching of radical forgiveness, and what that means in the treatment of the woman. Simon the Pharisee invites Jesus for a meal, and he seems, as we read the beginning of this account, to be a generous host, an upstanding religious man of the city.

But then a woman of the city, a known sinner, comes into the group. It would seem that she has not been invited. She is described in a way that would suggest that she is a prostitute.

And what happens next is nothing short of scandalous, not just to the Pharisees, but to practically anyone within that society. She lets down her hair, she wets his feet with her tears, she wipes them with her hair, and anoints them with her ointment. This is a familiar story, but we should recognise how scandalous this is.

This action, and even more so when performed by a known prostitute, has a distinctively erotic flavour to it. A woman letting down her hair in that society would clearly offend sexual propriety. On the surface of things, the scene seems shamelessly sexual.

Simon, seeing this, thinks it must be proof that Jesus isn't a prophet. He is not acting as a righteous man, in tolerating such practice and contact, and he clearly lacks insight into the character of the woman. Everyone else knows that she is a notorious sinner and prostitute, and this prophet seemed to be oblivious to the fact.

Jesus recognises this and speaks directly to Simon's thinking, showing that he can in fact understand the nature of human beings, indeed that he has far greater perception than Simon might have attributed to him. He tells a story to Simon, inviting his judgement, a story of the cancellation of debts. And the cancellation of debts is a theme of the Kingdom Message.

It's a model for understanding forgiveness. The extravagant cancellation of debts is something that opens up the possibility of a new way of relating, a way driven by liberated love rather than by indebtedness. Forgiven a great debt, the released party is freed to respond in love.

However, those who feel that they have been forgiven little can still implicitly operate in the framework of debt and its bonds and obligations. Jesus gets Simon to cast judgement on his question, and then he turns to the woman to reveal the true nature of the situation, one that turns the picture that the reader of the passage has, and that Simon might have, on its head. Simon, who seemed like the grand and honourable host, turns out to have been rather negligent in his hospitality.

As a guest of a good host, Jesus might have expected water for his feet, a kiss of greeting, an anointing of his head with oil. Simon performed none of these acts of hospitality. However, the sinful woman performed the most extravagant acts of hospitality imaginable, performing far and above anything that Simon failed to perform.

She goes to scandalous cultural extremes, and we really shouldn't miss this. She loses her hair, she touches Jesus, she anoints and kisses his feet, actions which were far more sexually weighted than they are today. She weeps openly.

No respectable woman would do any of these things. However, she loves Jesus too much to behave in a restrained fashion. She also performs these actions on Jesus' feet, the most humble part of the body, connected directly with the dust, honouring him in the

very highest way that she can.

Jesus here provides everyone with a very different way of looking at things. No longer does Simon appear as the honourable host, and the woman as the sinful intruder, performing an unseemly and sinful act, compromising the supposed prophet. Now Simon appears to be the negligent host, while the woman is the forgiven sinner, extravagantly making up Simon's neglected acts of hospitality out of her profound love.

She is covering his debt. While Jesus is the prophet who brings forgiveness and healing to those outside the camp of the righteous, in a way that shows up the unrecognised sins of the righteous themselves, revealing how little they love. Jesus declares that the woman is forgiven.

We should presume that Jesus has already interacted with her prior to this, as she seems to be responding to having been forgiven already. But Jesus' declaration of her forgiveness is not merely or primarily for her own sake, although it does reassure her. Rather it is for the sake of everyone else.

She is being publicly affirmed as one of the righteous. The challenge now is for everyone else to recognise and affirm this. We noted earlier the sexual connotations of the woman's action.

While Jesus' explanation challenges the interpretation that something inappropriate and sinful is occurring, and it becomes clear that this is extravagant hospitality and love, rather than a sexual advance, her actions still have a somewhat sexual character. And it's hard to escape this. What are we to make of it? She behaves towards Jesus in a way that one could only ever really imagine a wife behaving towards a husband, for instance.

She recognises in this that the bridegroom has come to the feast. Simon, who completely fails to honour Jesus, does not. She makes up for Simon's failures by treating Jesus in a way befitting the bridegroom of Israel.

We might here think of David's dancing before the Ark of the Covenant in 2 Samuel 6, when it was brought into Jerusalem. The passage ends with the woman being commended for her faith. What does faith mean in this context? We've seen elsewhere in the Gospels that it can involve persistent or pronounced confidence in Jesus' capacity and willingness to save.

In the case of the centurion, it's confidence in Christ's authority, his word. And here it seems to be these things, but also an extravagant act of hospitality, by which Jesus is received and recognised as the one that he truly is. This is a woman who, perhaps hurt by the dishonour given to Jesus by a negligent host, makes up all that is lacking within his hospitality with her extravagant love.

She acts towards him in a way that displays who he truly is, in an act of such intimate

attachment and love that could only ever be proper within the context of marriage, or in the context of a relationship with someone who delivered you from all of your sins. A question to consider. What are some of the ways in which a form of behaviour arising out of love, flowing from the release of unpayable and unimaginable debt, differs from a form of behaviour based upon honour and what one owes to others?