

SAVIOR
SERVANT
FRIEND

SERMON FOR
ASH WEDNESDAY



FORGIVER

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SERMON

☐ Ash Wednesday is a mess. There is ash and dust everywhere. And it's also strange. We all come here clean and relatively put together. We come and we hear a messy and painful word from Genesis 3: "For you are dust and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19). We gather together to hear that we will one day die and give our bodies back to the earth. We hear that we are sinners and that our sin has brought the curse of death upon us. This message makes a mess of our arrogance and pride. And this message is accompanied with a mess of ashes.

In our Gospel reading from Luke 7, we hear about a woman who was a mess. She may not have had a mess of ashes on her forehead, but her life was a mess and she had the tears prove it. This woman—we are not even given her name—was marked by her sin. It defined her, described her and determined her standing within the neighborhood. Everybody knew her by the mess of her sin.

When she walked into a room, everybody would say: "...she is a sinner" (Luke 7:39).

Everybody, but Jesus. Luke tells us that Jesus was dining in the house of a Jewish leader. It was the custom in that culture to leave the door to the house open when having a party. People from the city were allowed to enter and be part of the celebration—sort of. Uninvited guests did not have a seat at the table, they were not supposed to interact with the guests of honor and they could only eat the scraps from the table. And, so, this sinful woman entered the dinner party of this Jewish leader and began to wash the feet of Jesus. Moved by reverence for Jesus, this woman used her tears for water and her hair for a towel. Though this woman was a mess, she took her mess to the feet of Jesus.