



*An invitation to reflect . . .*

# Desperation

■ by Erin Davis, MSW, LCSW

*I am so desperate I can't even see straight. Something inside of me is screaming "let me out" and yet I'm completely mute besides the humming in my mind. I exist, but I am not seen. I am desired in the dark, but the morning brings me only sorrow. Is this grief from the feeling or the not feeling? I can no longer distinguish.*

*Yet, something changed for me yesterday. There was a man...He was teaching on the Mount that I walk by every day on the way to the marketplace. I saw a group of people congregating with a curious thirst in their eyes. I was intrigued to say the least. I thought if I could just blend in the crowd...slip by unnoticed, I could see what all the commotion was about.*

*There was something about this man and the way he talked. Call me crazy, but I swear I knew him from somewhere...or maybe wanted to know him would be more accurate. He kept looking at me while he spoke—and not in the way I'm normally looked at—if you know what I mean. His eyes were full of kindness even when His words were piercing. Is that possible? I didn't want to leave...I forgot why I had left in the first place... and apparently no one else wanted to leave either because there were thousands of us peppered across the giant hill...listening and eating...I wonder if anyone else thought about how strange this all was?*



*I have prided myself in reading people because it's the only reason I've stayed alive this long. I know how to stay under the radar...it's what I do, it's who I am. And yet, I could not read this man. Every word seemed to hammer at the rock encompassing my heart until all that remained was a thick layer of ruddy sediment. I became aware of a need...I had forgotten what it was like to need...and to recklessly need at that. I had spent the majority of my life suppressing my needs to preserve what humanity I have left.*

*So I asked around—only the way that a girl in my position can, and found out where he would be tonight. It turns out*

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He's at a Pharisee's house. Of all the places...this is where I find myself?! It's like I'm choosing to crawl into the mouth of the beast. I know that walking through that door is pretty much suicide. It doesn't make any sense! All I know right now is that I need Him. I felt most alive when I was hidden at the foot of the mountain and he found me with his eyes...his searching eyes that broke my whole world open.

So I muster the last bit of courage I have left, and I burst into the house clutching my jar with the grip of death. I avert my eyes so I won't give in to the fear threatening to steal my nerve. I know it's only a few seconds, but it feels like decades pass by while I'm scanning the room for him. I'm so nervous and scared that I'm shaking...I'm losing it, but I see Him and He's already looking at me...like He knew I was coming.

I scramble towards him and throw myself at His feet. I can't control the violent wave of emotion that sweeps over me. I weep like a newborn child. I weep for the years I've lost, but even more for the hope in this moment...this expectant moment. It's all coming forth in a messy pool by His feet. I don't even think, I just start wiping his feet with my hair. I've lost all sense of reserve at this point. It's as if I'm wiping away all the years of regret and shame...I'm being cleansed in my own offering.



Then I take the jar...my precious inheritance and I pour it out—on his head and feet. I hear the scorn in the voices of the onlookers...I had forgotten for a moment that anyone else was here. I feel their anger and disdain, and for the first time, I'm not afraid. I expect the man to pity me, but when he speaks, he not only defends me, he praises me. He sees me and meets my desperation with a mercy so tender that it stuns me. He offers me freedom...I never thought I could be free...me of all people. And yet, here I am, drinking it in. ■

Erin Davis is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and sees clients in our Oak Park, IL location.

This reflection is based on the following Bible passage: Luke 7:36-50



## An invitation to reflect . . .

This reflection came about from a desire to understand the humanity of the stories in the Bible. Often, I would read scripture looking for a promise of certainty to stand on, instead of as an invitation to reflect. When I see the humanity of the experiences of the woman or even of Jesus, the words take on new life and meaning. I begin to explore, question and discover more in myself and my experience with God. When I read these with clients, I use them as tools of exploration...to notice what God is eliciting in them. What do they feel in their bodies, or what word or phrase jumped out at them? ~ Erin Davis MSW LCSW

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