

The other morning I was thinking about a piece of technology that could really change the world. You've all heard about caller ID, maybe some of you have it so that when the phone rings the number of the person who is calling you is displayed. Well, I think that thought ID would be really interesting.

Can you imagine a world where each of us would have a display screen on top of our heads, and others could read our thoughts.

So that's what you think of my new shirt I would think as I read. And as I think it he already can read what I'm thinking about him now. I think things would happen real fast in the world of thought ID. Wars and Romances. There would be no more "I'm not talking to you" nor would we ever say, "A penny for your thoughts." We'd all love to have everyone else sign up for this service, though I don't think a one of us would sign up ourselves.

Well, being around Jesus was like having a thought ID display board that he could read. So many times Jesus knew what people were thinking and responded. As in today's gospel.

Simon the Pharisee was host. Jesus was one of the invited guests. At this point Simon must have thought Jesus more friend than enemy – interesting - maybe someone he'd like to get to know better.

So Simon was watching, trying to decide about Jesus.

Sometimes we are like that. We nibble a little bit at the edges of faith. Sort of believe in Jesus, like sticking a toe into the water in order to test the temperature, or wading in up to our ankles or knees. But not ready to take the plunge, not wanting to be a fanatic.

Deciding, still deciding. Maybe Simon had given this first invite hoping that Jesus would be acceptable, maybe even hoping Jesus would be a good friend. But then she came in.

Simon must have known her, if not personally then as part of a class of people. Like the way we might know someone who is from the south, or on welfare, or a lawyer.

She came into Simon's home, brought a jar of ointment with her, weeping she bathed Jesus' feet with her tears, dried them with her hair, continually kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. Quite a scene she was making.

And Simon said to himself, "If this man were a prophet he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner."

I've been Simon so many times - having a place for everyone in my thoughts - criticizing, judging – knowing where the boundaries are for who is in and who is out. Even judging what Jesus is allowed to be and not allowed to be for me. As if Jesus has to measure up to my standards. And you also.

If he was a prophet he would know. Now Simon knew Jesus was no prophet.

“Simon, I have something to say to you. A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, the other fifty. When they could not pay, he canceled the debts of both of them. Now which of them will love him more?”

Simon answered, “I suppose the one for whom he canceled the greater debt.”

“Do you see this woman, Simon? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time she entered she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you her sins, though many are forgiven. Hence she has shown great love.”

Yes, Jesus is a prophet, he knows the woman, Jesus also knows Simon.

And you.

Jesus knows if you are like the woman overwhelmed with love for him. If you are one who bears a great weight of guilt like David who committed adultery, arranged a murder Jesus knows. If you come to Jesus this day dreaming of a word of pardon then I say to you in Jesus name, “Your sins are forgiven. Your sins are all forgiven. Do not doubt, believe.

The great feast is prepared for you, Christ is your host - you are the most welcome guest of all.”

But Jesus also knows if you are like Simon. Or like the older brother who could not join the celebration over the sinners return.

I don't know what happened to Simon the Pharisee, or to the older brother in the parable of the prodigal son.

I don't know what God will be able to do with us Christians whose thoughts continually judge our neighbors. Especially when we think that Jesus should belong to us in a way that Jesus should not belong to them.

Jesus said, “The judgement you pronounce will be the judgement you get.” Simon could have embraced Jesus in love. I suspect he continued shopping for a more acceptable Lord.

Most of us are a lot more like Simon than we are like the woman. At least I know that I am. I think that my life with Jesus will be better if I can keep from having to ask for much forgiveness. The more my faith is about not sinning; the further I am from Jesus.

Christ died for sinners - for adulterers and drunks, for tax collectors and judges, for the woman, and for Simon - for you and for me.

Jesus died for sinners, for those who continually disappoint God and themselves.

Jesus died for sinners because he did not want to leave you and me and Simon and the woman out.

Jesus died for you. Jesus was raised for you.

This table to which he invites you has room for us all. One thing he asks us to know: that we all belong here today. Every sort of sinner belongs here today.

If you need the love of Jesus then this is the feast for you. Amen.