

Worship. The Wordless Worship of a Sinner Woman

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[0:00] Luke 7, if you've got the Bible there, Luke 7. If you'd like a Bible to borrow,! Luke 7, from verse 36.

And one of the Pharisees desired him, that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house and sat down to meet. And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meet in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

We're in Luke 7, verse 39. Luke 7, 39. Now when the Pharisee, which had bidden him, saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for she is a sinner.

And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

There was a certain creditor, which had two debtors, the one owed 500 pence, and the other 50. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.

[2:14] Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most. Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

And he turned to the woman and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house. Thou gavest me no water for my feet, but she washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

Thou gavest me no kiss, but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint, but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven. For she loved much, but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

[3:28] And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee. Go in peace. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for your precious word. These exceeding great and precious promises.

This word that is alive and it's sharper than any two-edged sword. This word that is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

That the man of God, that the woman of God, may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Lord, we pray. Open our eyes to see that which you want us to see.

Help me, Lord, that you might be glorified in what I say, that you would be lifted up and draw all men unto yourself. In Jesus' name. Amen. Here was the setting, the Pharisee's house.

And he went into the Pharisee's house and sat down to meet. This is verse 36 of Luke 7. The slander of the Pharisees, as in verse 35, was that this man was a friend of sinners.

[4:42] In this account, there are two people who come unto Jesus. Two people who wanted to see Jesus. Simon, the Pharisee, and the sinful woman.

They both wanted to see Jesus. Perhaps Simon, the Pharisee, thought, well, there's someone who's getting a bit of acclaim, a bit of attention. Perhaps some of his fame might rub off on me. Who knows whether he had ulterior motives. But nevertheless, he invited the Lord Jesus into his abode. Simon, and then we see the sinful woman, the sinner woman.

Verse 37, we meet a woman which was a sinner. A woman which was a sinner. That's all we know of her. We don't know her name even. Just that she was a sinner.

She had no reputation other than a bad one. She was ill thought of. Her reputation preceded her and it was not a good one.

[5:47] A sinful woman. There was no denying it. It was plain for all to see. But people knew who she was, what she was. Yet she just wanted to see Jesus.

You can imagine she was looked down upon. She would have been the object of cutting criticism. Perhaps she was spat upon. Perhaps she was publicly insulted and scorned.

Perhaps she bore the brunt of nasty jokes. Potentially she was broken and hurting and wounded. She was one who had failed miserably and she knew it.

For her to come to that banquet at Simon's house, the Pharisee's house, that was a hard thing for her to do. She was viewed as a sinner, unclean.

But the sinful woman had heard of Jesus. She'd heard of the Lord Jesus. She'd probably heard about his teaching, about his grace, of his gracious words, of God's love, of the message that lifted people and brought forgiveness and healing and restoration.

[7:03] She had heard him. Potentially she had heard him speak of God's love. She had heard that he was one where she could find hope and help.

Verse 37. Verse 37 it says again, And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at me in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment.

She stepped in, into the Pharisee's house. This would have been a place where she would have had a great trepidation and fearfulness, that she would encounter condemnation and rejection.

She stepped into the Pharisee's house. There was a dinner party here. She would not have been an invited guest. Who would invite her? Perhaps she was a gate crasher, as it were, to this party, as it were.

Although I've heard some reference that potentially when there was a dinner time, it was kind of an open house and people could come and be present, observing.

[8:19] But nevertheless, I'm sure that she wouldn't have been on Simon the Pharisee's invitation list, as it were. She wouldn't have had an invitation sent to her house to come to his house.

This woman, she was a notorious woman. She had a history, a reputation, an evil woman, an evil woman, a no-gooder, a no-good woman, a sinner woman, the worst.

Her life was a mess. She was unworthy. She would have felt ashamed and very self-conscious and difficult about even being present in such a place.

But truly, as the word tells us, we are all sinners, saved only by grace. There's no higher than another. The ground is level at the cross, isn't it?

The ground is level at the foot of the cross. We're all in the same boat. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. We are all sinners, saved only by grace. Perhaps there was the thought, who let her in here?

[9:29] Where did she come from? She's not allowed in here? How dare she? A woman that was a sinner.

This is a story of repentance, of forgiveness, of grace. As someone has described it, we see here in this account, the wordless worship of an unnamed woman.

Wordless worship. You see, people talk of worship these days. I know just this afternoon I saw something with Julie. Someone sent a little message and it was a live broadcast of a church and it was just blackness and strobe lights and there was a woman there preaching and giving some extra biblical revelation that somehow it just wasn't in this book but it was some other kind of revelation and it was quite a bizarre kind of strange words that were coming out of her mouth.

And I just thought, worship, what is it? What should it be? Should it be a rock band and lots of crashing noises and lots of noise?

Or potentially worship can be just the wordless worship of an unnamed woman. Just that quiet worship. You know, sometimes worship can be just quietness, can't it?

[11:02] Be still and know that I am God, he says. I know I've said it before, sometimes it's be still and know that I am not God. He is.

Be still and know that he is God. And it says that she brought an alabaster box of ointment. Here was this special container, this special vessel of this ointment, of this precious perfume. It had cost her something. It was a personal gift, her best, her gift. And she gave of herself as she gave it, as she poured it.

And she sought out the Lord Jesus. She had made it her aim to get to Jesus. No matter the discomfort, no matter the difficulty, no matter the criticism that she might attract, she knows what this Pharisee and his friends think about her.

But she doesn't care. She'll come anyway because she's not there about them, she's there about him. And because Jesus has already changed her life, the Lord Jesus has already changed her life, we see that she's come to worship.

[12:16] Verse 38, it tells us, she stood at his feet. She stood at his feet behind him, weeping.

Now, as in those times, as people would sit down to meet, to sit down to eat, they would recline around a kind of reclining position, maybe leaning on their elbows or certainly half sitting, half lying down, was the custom and they would come in such a fashion, not as you'd see pictured by Leonardo da Vinci that they're seated on chairs around a table.

It's quite not the case. But they were reclining, as it were. And it says that she stood behind him, at his feet, weeping.

She began to wash his feet with tears. And so she was coming up behind him and as he was lying down, she was behind him at his feet, weeping.

And she began to wash his feet with tears. And did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with ointment. This is verse 38.

[13:38] She poured out her perfume on the Lord Jesus. She poured out her perfume. She poured out her gratitude. her thanks, her love, herself. This is ministry.

Isn't it? You pour out yourself. You poured out. As it were, as a drink offering.

You poured out as you pour out your life. That's ministry. That's what we do. this is ministry.

Being poured out. She gave of herself. It seemed wasteful. It was a shocking breach of what was expected. For her to loose her hair. The hair would not have been loosed in such a fashion.

This was a shameful thing. It was not the dumb thing to do. It was kind of shocking. It was I've heard it put that it was certainly not customary.

[14:41] Not something that would have been seen being socially appropriate. She didn't care about that.

She wanted to be with the Lord Jesus. She wanted to pour herself out to him. It says that she shed tears. God moves upon us.

He moves us to tears sometimes. There are abundant tears here. Tears of repentance. Tears of gratitude. Tears of joy. In Psalm 51.17 it says the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.

A broken and a contrite heart O God thou wilt not despise. Worship ministry poured out her heart. It was gut wrenching. These were no crocodile tears. This was reality. We just need to be open before God and be as this wordless worship of this unnamed woman.

[15:50] Just come before him and let him know your love. People can be very sensitive. see it. Some people might have been shocked and thinking this is totally out of order.

This is inappropriate. People would have been staring at her. Maybe there's people pointing at her. What is she doing?

What is going on? Who is that? What is she doing? She maybe humanly could have felt embarrassed at such treatment.

She was not wanted. She was scorned. Yet we see her love here. Her appreciation of the Lord. Her Lord. And then they started accusing the Lord Jesus himself.

Verse 39. How can you allow this? This is an outrage. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself saying, this man if he were a prophet would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him.

[17:07] For she is a sinner. Simon was graceless and loveless. He even accused the Lord himself of something improper that he would allow this woman and what manner of woman this is to touch him.

This was again something improper. Something that this was totally wow that's not allowed. This cannot happen.

It's not rightful. And Simon was filled with doubt and unbelief. Self-righteous and arrogant. Self-willed. Even the Lord Jesus did not meet his standards. The Lord Jesus did not meet his standards. But he was blinded to his own sinfulness in this.

The Lord then shows Simon the Pharisee about grace. Verse 40. He shows Simon about grace. Verse 40. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee.

[18:16] And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors. The one owed 500 pence and the other 50.

Now this was in contrast like a debt on the one hand of one and a half years of your income versus one and a half months of income.

A real contrast there. One and a half years, one and a half months is the kind of comparison. Verse 42. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.

Tell me therefore which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most and he, the Lord Jesus said unto him, thou hast rightly judged.

Simon said, and Jesus agreed that the one who had the greater debt forgiven would love with a greater love. Verse 44. And he turned to the woman and said unto Simon, seest thou this woman, this woman, I entered into thine house, but thou gavest me no water for my feet.

[19:27] But she hath washed my feet with tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss, but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

Simon had not even greeted the Lord Jesus appropriately. He was out of order, as it were. He had breached protocol and appropriate social etiquette.

He had not even greeted the Lord Jesus. He had not given him the customary embrace and kiss of the day.

That was the appropriate welcome, as it were, in today's language, a handshake, a hearty welcome. His was a self-righteous approach, that he had not even extended the common courtesies.

The kiss of welcome, water for his feet, oil for his head. The custom of the day was that a traveller, a guest, would have his feet washed at the entrance to the home, that a servant would come and wash their feet, as the customary welcome to the home.

[20:40] But Simon had neglected the Lord Jesus in failing to do so, and he was too proud to see his own sin. Verse 46, My head with oil that didst not anoint, but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

Now that was extravagant. This woman went beyond what was expected. It was kings that were anointed. You know, prophet, priest, king, they're anointed.

A prophet, a priest, a king is anointed. This woman in anointing the saviour was in effect acknowledging that. Prophet, priest, king, her king, her lord.

She was acknowledging the Lord Jesus as her king, as her lord. She was showing her thankfulness unto him, showing her love in this graphic demonstration.

Worship, worship, worship. It's not just singing from a hymn book and going through the motions. It's sometimes wordless worship.

[21:49] I know I've been touched in times in past times when we've had some prayer times and there's some people that don't even utter a word, but they're there to worship, aren't they?

I've seen that. You think, well, that person never prayed at the prayer meeting, but they're entering in just as really and truly as the one who might do the long and flowery prayer.

They are there to worship. They're in the place of worship. They're in the mode of worship because worship is a loving relationship. It's a closeness to your Lord.

It's being with God. It's being in his presence. And she recognised her sin, her need of the Lord's forgiveness. She wasn't putting on a pretense that she recognised she was a sinner.

This woman is a sinner. Yes, I know I'm a sinner. That was her heart. She knew her need, her lack, her need of his loving forgiveness, of his grace, undeserved as she stands guilty, condemned, yet receiving.

[22:59] His grace. And he received her worship. What's more, this was an offering. This was pure, unadulterated worship. It was worship, it was ministry, it was an offering.

Pure, unadulterated worship. This was a humility of heart. Likewise, there was no airs and graces, there was no performance, no, no, no, no, no, no, meeting others' expectations, no, stopping her that she was outside of what was accepted in that setting that she just wanted to express from her very heart, her worship.

In verse 47, it says, So we see the response of the Lord Jesus.

The Lord Jesus received her, he received her, he received her worship, he received her offering, he received her ministry, he welcomed her, he embraced her, as it were, in that acceptance of her worship.

Notice the approval of the Lord. Forgiveness was extended. If you want forgiveness, come to him. Sometimes we can hold back from that.

[24:27] That which we need is his forgiveness, we need his grace. This woman showed great love, deep love, she bowed down at his very feet. Can we come unto the feet of Jesus today?

We see the contrast likewise in Luke of Mary and Martha. And the Lord Jesus says that as Martha was cumbering, she was cumbered about with much serving, fussing and fretting and fussing with all these things that she had to do to get things ready.

And the Lord Jesus says, Martha, Martha. He says, hey, Mary has chosen the better part, the good part, the best.

She has chosen the best, which was to sit at Jesus' feet and hear his word. There's still necessary works to do, but the best part is to worship, the best part is to enter in, as this sinful woman did.

And she showed her great love, her deep love. She bowed down at his feet. And it's like this reverence here, this coming onto the feet of Jesus today.

[25:46] We can do that today, just as really and truly, just as fully and personally as she entered in. It was a sacrifice, it was a pouring out, it was a coming into his presence with awe, with reverence, with honour.

Some would have thought what she was doing was dishonourable, but what mattered to her, she wanted to honour the Lord. That was what mattered, that was what counted, and it was coming in to his presence.

It was saying, worthy is the Lamb. It was saying, I honour you, Lord, I worship you. Think, for example, of David, as he rejoiced with the ark, and people were saying, oh, he's going crazy here, and he was discounted, and there was a rejection by Michal of his exuberance in worship, but he likewise had that heart, I want to honour the Lord, I want to rejoice, I want to worship him, and honour him, and be glad before him, and rejoice, and show my love, in that exuberance of dancing, of worship, and likewise this woman, in that weeping, in that tenderness, in that compassion, in that brokenness, she wanted to honour the Lord, and verse 48, it says, your sins are forgiven, thy sins are forgiven, he said unto her, and verse 49, they that sat at meet with him, the others around the table, they began to say within themselves, who is this, that forgiveth sins also, who is this, but there's not a person in the world who does not need forgiveness, the Lord

Jesus was able to forgive sins, and everyone, everyone at that table, had sinned, and needed God's grace, and forgiveness, there's no more, no less, for any of us, that we need his grace, isn't that right, that we need God to extend his grace, to look past our past, to extend his forgiveness freely and fully, to cleanse our heart and remove the sin, the Lord Jesus did, he took her guilt and shame, we see grace, grace, grace, marvellous grace, grace that is greater than all my sin, this woman received mercy, God's mercy is wide, and it is deep, and we see that grace is about getting close to him, this is the heart of worship, of genuine worship, of pouring out of our soul, of coming unto him, of bowing down at his feet, this devotion, this adoration, to sit at his feet, and to hear his word, now I was blessed lately to see a

Bible that belongs to someone very dear to me, and to see that it was falling to bits, and I think she's got three Bibles that are like that, underlined, and marked, and coloured, and just because I was trying to look up a Bible verse, because I generally look at the Bible verses on my computer, but I thought, no, I'll just grab one of my wife's Bibles and look up that Bible verse that came to mind, I thought, wow, these pages are just crumbling, they've just been read, so many times, and they're so smudged, and marked, and very tenderly, they've been handled many, many times, and

underlined so many parts and places, and I thought, wow, how blessed I am to be married to such a godly woman, and she spent time at his feet, she spent time in his word, and this is this devotion, this adoration, this heart of worship, here is a woman who wanted to be with

[29:55] Jesus, no matter what it cost her, no matter how it seemed so hard for her to go into this place, to be conscious of maybe this, these discordant thoughts, and these ones who had criticized and condemned her, and to pour out her adoration, salvation, and it was expansive, it was extravagant, and verse 50, and he said to the woman, thy faith has saved thee, go in peace, wow, thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace, faith and grace are combined, thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace, salvation had come to this woman, faith had made her whole, we see God's wondrous peace as the result, her guilt was gone, grace was come, will we fall at his feet, fall at his feet, the best worship may be wordless, it's not some big rock band crash, bang, wallop, smash, blare, blast, boom, bang, sometimes it's just quietly coming before him and hearing his word and sitting at his feet and receiving his mercy and let him receive the offering of who you are on the altar as a living, breathing sacrifice unto him, that this is ministry, that you'll pour yourself out when others will scorn and mistreat you and you'll be hurt and rejected and you'll be criticised and condemned and you'll feel it's too hard to go on, humanly speaking,

I can't bear this any longer, that's ministry because we're living sacrifices, we don't care what others say, we want to honour our Lord and God, we want to honour him first and foremost and absolutely above all and no matter what else happens, no matter what, what comes against us, nothing will stop us from falling at his feet because the best worship may be wordless, her worship was without one word, what could she say, she had nothing to commend herself, she had nothing to say, oh look I've done this for you and done that for you and I have this and I have that to commend me to you my Lord, what could she say, she was a sinner, she depended on grace that is greater than all her sin, it was worship, it was adoration and friends that's what it is, it's worship, come unto Jesus, love the Lord Jesus and show your love to God and you can do that in so many ways, in your gratefulness to God, in your thanksgiving, in your reckoning of what he has done, the cross, his blood, precious blood, the spotless lamb of God, shed for you, how thankful we can be, how can we choose to worship, how can we take time to worship, and it's not so much, we can get hung up that it's all about the meetings, it's not so much the meetings or the schedule or the allocated times, as much as God helping us, we'd like more people present at such meetings, at such gatherings, but it's not about the meeting, it's meeting with the Lord, isn't it?

It's meeting with the Lord, and brother, sister, you can sometimes get a blessed meeting with God right where you're at, wherever you are.

I know there's a dear brother who I know testifies to me how sometimes he just wants to come and park here just so he can pray, just so he can pray on his lonesome in his car and he counts that.

[34:32] It's coming unto his feet, isn't it? And that's worship, isn't it? You can worship in your home, you can worship as you're driving here and there, as you're at work, as you're out doing your day by day business, worship, worship, it's coming unto him, it's loving God, it's pouring your heart out and sometimes it's that broken spirit where you think, wow, it's hard to worship, there's things happening that make it hard for me to worship.

What manner of woman is this that toucheth him? Oh, how we need to touch Jesus, don't we? How we need to touch him, how we need to be like this woman and just worship.

Let's pray. Lord God, we thank you for the testimony of this woman, it speaks to us still of her worship of you, our Lord God. And help us Lord to have the spirit as it were of this woman, this spirit of worship, of love, this generosity of heart, of pouring out this worship, this ministry, this offering, this grace, this love, your reception, your forgiveness.

How can we thank you, Lord, for what you've done for us? We know that all around that table, all that met in that home of the Pharisee Simon, all had sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Yet this woman received grace and you sent her in peace with forgiveness, Lord. We pray that anyone here might know that love and show that love to you in return of worship.

[36:32] We pray if there's any struggling today for whatever reason, that we would know that tenderness that you give to us, that grace that is wide and deep, is greater than all our sin.

Lord, help us to worship. Help us, Lord, to find that and make that time. So, Lord, it's not about a schedule of meetings, but it's that we can meet with you in every time we can take that we'll be conscious of your presence with us because you never leave us nor forsake us.

And even in those moments of brief prayer and acknowledgement, Lord, we can spend those moments just in meditation of your word, of your love for us, of your grace you extend.

And we know that really it's relative, sin is relative, that when we're really truly conscious of the depth of our sin, and I'm speaking of myself, Lord, the depth of my sin, the ugliness of it, the unworthiness that I have of my own self, my complete inadequacy, my many failings, that your grace extends greater than all our sin.

And we receive that grace, Lord, we thank you for your forgiveness, that everyone here can know that if we just simply call upon you and receive it.

[38:12] Lord, we thank you for that. We pray if there's any here present that have yet to trust you personally as their master and Lord and saviour, that today might be that turning point of a life born again, made brand new, a new heart, a new start, a brand new life by your grace, Lord.

We thank you for it as we might put our trust in the blessed work that you have done in bleeding and dying, in rising, in saving those who will call upon you.

Lord, we trust that, that great work. And help us, Lord, to truly honour you such that we won't mind what others will do or won't do.

We won't be distracted by what others might think or want or say or what we might imagine they would say, that nothing will deter us from worship.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Thank you.