

# Look Who Came To Dinner

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[0:00] Who is Jesus of Nazareth? Who is He? Well, whoever He is, He can't ride the fence.

Jesus of Nazareth calls for a response. You will either deny Him, whether that's blatant or not so blatant, or you'll live for Him.

Everything you've got for Him. Jesus calls for a response. And to learn who Jesus of Nazareth claims to be, we turn to the Gospels. The Gospels are books of the Bible that provide historical accounts of the life, teaching, miracles, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

So, if we're going to ask, who is Jesus? We turn to the Gospels. If you would open up your Bibles and turn to the Gospel of Luke 7. The Gospel of Luke 7.

This morning, I want to get you to an unforgettable dinner party. It's awesome. It took place in the house of a guy named Simon.

[1:17] And I want you there because we learned the answer to the question, who is Jesus? Who is this Jesus of Nazareth? And what we're also going to see are two very different responses to Jesus.

First, let's go back to 1st century Judea. So, turning to Luke 7. I want to help you see some things. What I'm going to do right now is just kind of walk you through Luke 7.

I'm not going to read it. I'm just going to kind of skip through it. You just follow along with me. You ready? Let's go. Now, if we showed up, if we got in a time machine and went back to Judea, 1st century, we would find ourselves in an area that was buzzing with news of Jesus.

Who is this guy? There's a lot going on. Well, we hear that Jesus has just heard or healed the servant of a Roman centurion. That's chapter 7, 1 through 10.

The servant was at the point of death and we hear that Jesus just healed him from a distance. From a distance! Who is this guy? And then we hear that this Jesus, while in a town called Nain, you'll see this in chapter 7, verses 11 through 17, he comes across a funeral procession of a young man.

[2:37] Well, he was the only son of a widow. And so this widow's social security just died with her boy.

So Jesus comes along this funeral procession, sees the mom, has compassion on her, goes right up to this dead boy and says, young man, I say to you, arise.

And you know what happened? The young man sits up. It doesn't record what he said. Who are you? We don't know. Are the Packers playing this afternoon? It doesn't say that. I'm hungry.

Can you give me something to eat? It doesn't say anything like that. What we do read about is the response of everybody else. There's a prophet among us. God has visited us.

There's fear. There's amazement. Who is this guy that just raised this young man from the dead and handed him back to his mother? Who is this guy?

[3:37] In Luke 7, 18-35, we see a very interesting interaction between Jesus and the disciples of John the Baptist. John the Baptist sends a couple of his followers to Jesus to ask him, are you the one who is to come?

Or shall we look for another? In other words, who are you, Jesus? Specifically, are you the long-awaited Messiah? Are you the promised one who would deliver God's people?

And in 22 and 23, Jesus gives an answer. He says, Go tell John, my cousin, go tell him the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor hear the good news preached to them, blessed is the one who is not offended by me.

Sounds like Jesus is saying, yeah, I'm the one. I'm the one. I'm the long-anticipated one. And that brings us up to this amazing dinner party. It's just simply amazing.

Unforgettable. Let me read it for you. Verses 36-50. One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, asked Jesus to eat with him, and Jesus went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table.

[4:51] And behold, a woman of the city who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at a 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 wipe 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 is touching him, for she is a sinner.

And Jesus answering, said to him, Simon, I have something to say to you. And he said, say it, teacher. A certain money lender had two debtors.

One owed 500 denarii, the other 50. One that could not pay, he canceled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more? Simon answered, the one, I suppose, for whom he canceled the larger debt.

And Jesus 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? But she has wet my feet with her, excuse me, I entered your house.

[6:01] 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 this, her sins, which are many, are forgiven. For she loved much, but he who is forgiven little loves little. And he said to her, your sins are forgiven.

We'll finish off the rest in a little bit. Now you've got to understand some things culturally about first century Judea. Typically when a dinner guest showed up at the home of someone in the first century, the guest would either be given water to wash his or her feet, or there would be a servant there to wash his or her feet.

It was a nasty thing walking around in sandals in the first century. It was pretty gross. And so they would come in, they would have their feet cleansed. It would have been very refreshing. It was just common courtesy of the time.

But it didn't happen to Jesus in Simon's house. Typically a guest would be greeted with a kiss from the host. Common courtesy. The host is saying simply, welcome, you're at peace here.

[7:16] We didn't see that happen from Simon to Jesus. And typically a guest would be given a dab of olive oil on their forehead. It was fragrant, a gesture of welcome, common courtesy, but it did not happen in Simon's house.

When Jesus showed up to Simon's house, it was kind of icy. No common courtesy is here. Simon did not welcome Jesus into his house.

Simon's self-righteous pride was suspicious of this Jesus. There was a power play going on around this table. Simon was guarded towards Jesus.

Simon was distanced towards Jesus. And it was not an uncommon response to being in the presence of Jesus of Nazareth. But you could cut the tension with a knife.

Now when Jesus took his place at Simon's table, he did not pull up a chair. At Thanksgiving this Thursday, probably you'll be sitting in a chair. Not in the first century Judea.

[8:22] What they would do is there would be these lowered tables and you'd walk in and they would recline a table. So you'd recline on your left hand and then you would eat with your right feet out away from the table because they're usually kind of stinky still.

And so when Jesus comes, he takes his spot at the table with his feet still dirty.

Then the real controversy breaks out. And you thought it was already tense. In verse 37, we read about someone walking in.

She's called a woman of the city. Most likely a prostitute. She walks into the room carrying an alabaster jar of perfume.

She must have already heard Jesus preach. She must have already been convinced of who this man is. Because she comes into this room, Simon's house, already believing.

[9:30] She's already convinced of this one reclining at table across from Simon. She already knows something about him. She's already been forgiven. She's a changed person already.

You can see that in what's about to take place. For this woman to walk into this man's house was courageous. We have a prostitute in a Pharisee's house.

Two very different people. very different people. Her faith in this man with the dirty feet was the reason why she had been cleaned from her dirt.

She was coming to see Jesus. She was drawn to him. She wanted to be with him. She knew something about him that obviously Simon did not.

She comes in and she stands behind Jesus and starts weeping. Now it seemed as though she walked in with this alabaster jar of perfume and her intention was just to simply anoint Jesus.

[10:43] And so she comes up and she comes up behind Jesus and she loses it. She loses it. She starts weeping uncontrolled. She loses it.

She goes to plan B. Her big tears are dripping on Jesus' feet. She's overwhelmed. She's overwhelmed with gratitude.

And so then she does something amazing. She lets down her hair. Simon would have been aghast. What? What is she doing? Here's why. First century Judea only wives let down their hair for their husbands.

It was a demonstration of intimacy. This woman was just reaching for whatever she could grab in order to wipe the tears and clean the feet of her savior.

[11:49] She had no sexual intent. None whatsoever. She was using the only thing she had to wipe the dirty feet of her savior. Something that Simon wasn't intent on doing.

And then she starts to kiss his feet. Keep on kissing his feet. Then she pours out some of the perfume on his feet.

The room would have been filled with the fragrance. this woman's overwhelming gratitude for what Christ had done for her brings an atmospheric change to the room.

It's got everything to do with this person Jesus. It's got everything to do with him. Was this like overly extravagant? Was this woman kind of over the top? Not at all.

Not at all. This was the right response of a woman who knew what she had been forgiven of and knew who with some inclination of who this man must be.

[12:58] verse 39 Simon is taking all of it in. And he's thinking 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.

In other words he should have no business with her. The irony is in verse 40 Jesus knows exactly what he's thinking. He is a prophet.

He's more than a prophet. Because not only does he know what this man's thinking he knows everything about this woman. And he welcomes her. He does not flinch as she cleans his feet.

He welcomes her. Who is this guy? Who is he? Well Jesus seizes the moment as Simon is Simonizing and he says hey Simon I have something to say to you.

Go right ahead teacher Simon says to which Jesus shares a parable. A parable designed to explain the overwhelming gratitude of this woman and it's designed to expose the hardness of heart of Simon.

[14:27] His heart was about as hard as the table that separated him from Jesus. Here's the parable. A certain money lender had two debtors. One debtor owed the equivalent of 20 months of pay.

The other two months of pay. One owed ten times as much as the other. To put it in our day figures. Let's say one owed \$60,000 and the other owed \$6,000.

That's quite a lot of money. 60 grand. That's a lot of money. But what we see in verse 42 is a very important point Jesus makes. Both couldn't pay.

Both were insolvent. They didn't have it. They didn't have the capacity. They couldn't pay this debt. So Jesus goes on. He goes on to share that the money lender goes on to forgive, cancel both debts.

In other words, debts are forgiven. And then Jesus in a stroke of brilliance, he's a teacher unlike any other. In a stroke of brilliance he says to Simon, asks him, now which of the two debtors will love the money lender more?

[15:47] Both are canceled. Which one will love him more? Simon responds and you can hear his guardedness in the response.

The one, I suppose, who owed the larger debt. That's right, says Jesus. And then he turns to the woman and says to Simon, Simon, when I walked into your house you gave me no water for my feet but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

You gave me no kiss but she hasn't stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil but she anointed my feet with perfume. Simon, there is a clear difference in the way that you have treated me and the way that this woman has treated me.

So this morning I want to ask you this question. How do you account for the difference? Why did this Simon respond to Jesus his icy hard way and this woman respond to Jesus overwhelmed? She didn't care who was around. This is he. Jesus spells it out for us in verse 7. He says, therefore I tell you her sins which are many are forgiven for she loved much but he who is forgiven little loves little Simon.

[17:10] And then Jesus says to the woman, your sins are forgiven. Your sins have been forgiven, sister. To be forgiven much results in loving much.

To be forgiven little results in loving little. Being forgiven much results in great gratitude, great thanksgiving. To be forgiven little results in not much gratitude, not much thanksgiving.

You see the issue here is forgiveness. forgiveness. Specifically, the realization that you need forgiveness. The realization that you are a sinner.

This woman knew she was a sinner. That she needed to be forgiven of her many sins. Simon, not so much. If Simon needed to be forgiven, he didn't need to be forgiven that much.

And he was probably thinking his own righteousness should cover that anyway. He didn't see himself as a sinner. What Simon failed to recognize was that he was in debt to God and incapable of paying it.

[18:25] And it showed up in the way he treated Jesus. Simon didn't need a Savior. He didn't see himself as one needing to be saved. He didn't see himself as one who is in debt to God and in need of God's mercy.

His confidence was in his own self-righteousness. If you don't need forgiveness, you don't need Jesus. And if you don't need Jesus, you treat him like Simon did.

You keep him at a distance. Simon was blinded to Jesus by his own self-righteousness. He who is forgiven little, loves little.

But if you know you are a sinner, you know you need a Savior. because you know you can't pay your debt. You need Jesus. And when you experience the forgiveness of Jesus, the cancellation that he can only provide through his death on the cross, when you experience that, you start to love Jesus like this woman, this prostitute loved Jesus.

Overwhelmed with gratitude. You don't care what other people think. where Simon was blinded by his self-righteousness. Those who are forgiven much are blinded to what other people think because your gratitude of what Jesus has done for you.

[19:45] You don't give a rip. I'm praising Jesus. The one who's forgiven much, loves much. How do we respond to this?

How do we respond to God's word this morning? Well, we need to realize three things. The first is this. We're all debtors.

We're all debtors. Debtors to God. Incapable of paying our debt. Our sins accumulate like debt in God's eyes and we can't pay for it.

We all need to be forgiven of our sins and we've all sinned much. So let me ask you a question this morning. How great is your debt? Are you like Simon the Pharisee who didn't think he was in debt to God?

He didn't think his sins amounted to much so therefore there was really no need to be forgiven? Showed up in his coolness towards Jesus? Or are you more like the woman of the city?

[20:57] Are you more like the prostitute? Are you more like this woman who was thoroughly aware of her many sins? She knew she racked up so much

debt that there was no way she could pay it.

Her many sins made her desperate. Desperate for a Savior. Desperate for Jesus. Her only hope for forgiveness forgiveness was Jesus.

He had forgiven her and there he is sitting at the table. Jesus graciously forgave her. Your sins have been forgiven.

Jesus did not forgive religious Simon because Simon didn't think he needed to be forgiven. Jesus pronounced forgiveness for the sinful prostitute because she knew that only Jesus could forgive her.

What about you? are you aware this morning of your many sins? Do you need to be forgiven? We are all in debt to God.

[22:03] Only Jesus can forgive you. It's only through his payment on the cross that can pay the debt of our sins. This morning I want you to know if you are in here and you're realizing I have not been forgiven.

My sins stand against me. This morning the Savior who died and then was raised is offering you forgiveness in full.

All of it. Paid. He's offering it to you. You know how you respond? You just say I'll take it.

I'll take it. There's no way you can earn it. You receive it by faith and then you experience the peace of being forgiven much.

All you need to do is receive this gift by faith. The second realization is for those who have already been forgiven.

[23:13] For those of us who have already received this gift by faith. For those of us who have recognized our sinfulness and realized we needed a Savior and maybe a month ago or years ago you put your faith in Jesus.

You were forgiven much. But I don't know about you. But there seems to be a tendency for those who have been forgiven to get forgetful.

Those of us who have been forgiven we can slowly become like Simon trusting in our own righteousness while cooling towards Jesus.

Because what can happen is we start thinking we don't need Jesus anymore. He's forgiven us. Big thing done. There can be this subtle yet gradual shift after you're saved.

A shift from the focus on being on Jesus to coming off of Jesus and coming on to yourself. Oh forgiven brother and sinner who is forgetful.

[24:35] And I'm preaching this to myself as much as anybody else in this room. You need Jesus just as much today as you did the first day you believed in him.

You need him. You'll never outgrow him. You've been forgiven. That's where you live. In his forgiveness of you. It's all about him.

he is the vine. We are the branches. Apart from him we can do nothing. We need him. And so if you're in the room and you've been forgiven but you get forgetful, remember how much Jesus has forgiven you.

Do you remember what he's forgiven you of? How much he has forgiven you? Maybe you're in the room and you've been raised in a Christian home and you're like I became a Christian when I was four.

I don't remember that. Turn to Ephesians 2 1-3 and ask God to impress upon you what you've been forgiven from. What he's delivered you from.

[25:47] Remember how much Jesus has forgiven you and then express your gratitude to him. You see gratitude is the result of being forgiven not because.

There's one more thing I want you to see here. It's this. The third realization is who this Jesus of Nazareth is.

Look at verse 49. After Jesus says to the prostitute your sins are forgiven, have been forgiven, those around the table began to say to themselves who is this who even forgives sins.

You see what the people around the table knew that you may not know is this, that only God can forgive people of their sins. Ultimately when we sin, we sin against God and only God can forgive our sins against Him.

So when Jesus says to this woman, your sins are forgiven, do you know who he's claiming to be? He's claiming to be God. He's more than a prophet.

[26:59] He's God in the flesh. And he died for sinners like you and me. His death on the cross is the only way our debt can be paid in full.

And his resurrection proves his payment was accepted. Who is Jesus? He's God in the flesh and he's the only one who can forgive your sins because he is God.

It's all about him. We've much to be grateful for this Thanksgiving, don't we? We live in a wonderful country. We've got wonderful freedoms.

But this Thanksgiving, when you sit down for dinner, think about the one who reclined a table. we've got a wonderful country. We have a more wonderful Savior.

We have many freedoms, but the greatest freedom of all is being forgiven of all your sin. And the result, gratitude.

[28:08] Let's pray. Lord Jesus, you are awesome. like the prostitute, God, we rejoice in you.

And we are drawn to you, Lord Jesus. We want to be around you. God, would you continue to stir up gratitude in our hearts? Would you remind us over and over of being forgiven much?

It's in your name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.