

As Her Great Love Shows

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- [0 : 00] Begin thinking about what you'd like to put in it. As we come to the Word of God this morning, we're going to actually jump a little bit ahead in the Gospel of Luke! From where we were last Sunday.
- Last Sunday, we heard about John the Baptizer's moment of doubt. And Jesus, on that occasion, actually takes some time to talk to the crowd about John.
- Lord willing, we'll come back and look at those words more closely. Except for one comment, which Luke makes right in the middle of that, which we will read, which is in verses 29 and 30.
- Luke says this, he says, All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been baptized by John.
- But the Pharisees and the experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves. because they had not been baptized by John.
- [1 : 02] We've heard about the Pharisees and the experts in the law already in Luke's Gospel. They opposed Jesus. They condemned Jesus.
- They condemned Him for attending that banquet at Levi's house. They condemned Him for allowing the disciples to eat wheat that was ripe in the fields on the Sabbath day. They condemned Jesus for healing a man on the Sabbath day.
- They accused Jesus of being a glutton and a drunkard. They said, He's a friend of tax collectors.
- He's a friend of sinners. Well, this morning we're going to see one of Jesus' encounters with a Pharisee and, at the same time, a sinner.
- We're in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 7, verse 36. When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with Him, He went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table.
- [2 : 10] A woman in that town, who lived a sinful life, learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house. So she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume.
- So a Pharisee invites Jesus to come over to His house for dinner. And we remember that the Pharisees were a highly influential religious party among the Jews.
- They were especially influential among the common people. They were known for their strict adherence to the Scriptures, at least on the surface. And they saw themselves as an authority when it came to understanding and interpreting and applying the Scriptures, the law of Moses found in the Scriptures.
- And Luke tells us that a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town caught word that Jesus had been invited to this Pharisee's house.
- Not only did she hear, but she comes knocking on the door and shows up to this guy's house with a jar of perfume.
- [3 : 22] Already we know this is going to be interesting. We've got a highly religious man and we've got a well-known sinner in the same room. And Jesus is right in the middle of this.

And then comes the awkward part. this woman is weeping. As the woman stood behind Jesus at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears.

Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and poured perfume on them. Now it's difficult to picture this without a few cultural details.

The tables that they ate at in their culture were very low to the ground. Rather than sitting at them in a chair, they actually laid on their sides around the table with their head and their hands near the food and then their feet stretched out behind them away from the table.

And this is where it gets really awkward. not only is the woman crying and why is she crying but it seems that she's hiding her face behind her hair over top of Jesus' feet and her tears are dripping down onto Jesus' feet.

[4 : 52] And she begins to wash Jesus' feet with her tears and her hair. This is very strange.

Not only that but she kisses Jesus' feet. And you're not weird if you think that's gross. Feet are often dirty and smelly especially by dinner time and especially in this hot part of the world in a society where everybody walks everywhere in sandals.

This is not a hygienic thing that she's doing. And then on top of all that she begins to pour expensive perfume on Jesus' feet.

Can you imagine the Pharisee sitting there and watching this? What might he be thinking? Well we don't have to guess because Luke tells us in verse 39 when the Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw this he said to himself if this man were a prophet he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is that she is a sinner.

So what's the Pharisee thinking? He's not wondering at all why she's crying. he thinks that Jesus if he's a righteous and holy man should not be allowing this unclean and immoral woman to be touching him.

[6 : 30] This Pharisee is thinking about how this woman's sinfulness and guilt might rub off on Jesus and in the Pharisee's mind he's passing judgment on Jesus.

everybody's been talking about whether he's someone special perhaps a prophet perhaps even the Messiah well if he was a prophet he would know that this woman is dirty and unclean a sinner he would forbid her from even touching him.

You can hear the pride you can feel it in his thoughts. Jesus answered him Simon I have something to tell you. Tell me teacher he said.

Two people owed money to a certain money lender. One owed him 500 denarii and the other 50.

Now a denarius was the usual daily wage of a day laborer. So one owed the money lender 500 days wages that's a lot and the other owed him 50 days wages.

[7 : 52] Neither of them had the money to pay him back so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?

Simon replied I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven. You have judged correctly Jesus said.

keep going then Jesus turned toward the woman and said to Simon do you see this woman I came into your house you did not give me any water for my feet but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

Back then it was customary to do a foot washing before reclining at the table for a meal. You did not give me a kiss but this woman from the time I entered has not stopped kissing my feet.

In Jewish culture a kiss! A kiss on the cheek or the forehead was a common way of greeting or showing hospitality to a friend. And I think we'll just say it's somewhat implied here but clearly the kissing of the woman of Jesus feet was not sexual in nature.

[9 : 25] Remember she's crying and she's kissing Jesus feet. This is the kind of thing we might expect to see between a guilty criminal and a king sitting on his throne as the criminal begs for mercy.

You did not give me a kiss but this woman from the time I entered has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head but she has poured perfume on my feet.

Again this is a cultural thing. It wasn't expected always that hosts anoint the head of their guests with oil but it was sometimes done to special guests to honor them.

And as we've been hearing from Luke's gospel Jesus is the Messiah. He is the anointed one. God's chosen king. And so it would be very fitting for Simon to show Jesus this honor.

He's dining with a king. The king. You did not put oil on my head but she has poured perfume on my feet.

[10 : 37] And there's several contrasts here. The first is between the oil and the perfume. The oil which Simon could have used to anoint Jesus' head was relatively common and inexpensive in Israel.

Perfume on the other hand was very expensive. And so that's the first contrast between the oil and the perfume. Jesus is maybe saying you didn't even honor me with a few drops of olive oil.

She has honored me with costly perfume. And then there's the contrast of body parts that we notice here. Simon, you wouldn't grace my head with oil but she has poured perfume on my feet.

Now ordinarily nobody would put an expensive perfume on their feet. You would use a cheap bar of soap on your feet. It's almost like the woman is saying that even the lowest and dirtiest part of you, Jesus, is worthy of the best that I have to give.

Even your feet are worthy of anointing with this costly perfume I've brought. The contrast is so stark, isn't it?

[11 : 53] Here's Simon, this Pharisee, sitting there in his self-righteous pride, disgusted that Jesus would allow himself to be touched by this woman.

And here's this woman bawling her eyes out and humbling herself to the lowest of lows before Jesus, paying him the highest of honors, showing him the love that you would show to a king.

How could it be that there's such a difference in the way these two treat Jesus? The answer, I think, is found in that little parable that Jesus tells, which we read in verse 41.

I'll just read it again quickly. Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him 500 denarii and the other 50.

Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now, which of them will love him more? Jesus actually explains how the parable relates down in verse 47.

[13 : 05] He says, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.

Then Jesus said to her, her sins are forgiven. The other guests began to say among themselves, who is this who even forgives sins?

Jesus said to the woman, your faith has saved you. Go in peace. God will be first of all, notice that Jesus doesn't deny she's a sinner.

In fact, he agrees with Simon about her past. He says, I tell you that her many sins have been forgiven. She was a person who had sinned much.

And Jesus didn't deny that. He didn't minimize it. She really was a person with a past full of doing things that in God's sight were wrong. But here's the massive difference between Simon the Pharisee and Jesus.

[14 : 23] When Simon looks at this woman, he sees a despicable sinner and nothing more. When Jesus looks at her, he sees a woman of faith who is right now repenting of her sins.

He sees that she is truly sorry. for the wrong things that she has done. Jesus sees a person who is right now acknowledging her unworthiness to be in his presence.

Jesus sees a woman who believes his good news that God will forgive those who come to the man God has sent.

God and it's like these tears of guilt and shame, tears of a broken heart over all the wrongs that she has done become the gift that she brings as she washes Jesus' feet with them and anoints his feet with her best perfume.

in this moment as she sees that Jesus does not reject her or push her away or tell her to leave as Simon would have done, she knows that Jesus' message is true.

[15 : 46] That God's forgiveness really has come to her in this moment and she pours out her pure and thankful love for Jesus with this beautiful act of service and honor.

She knows that she is forgiven by Jesus and so she loves Jesus much by doing what she's doing. That's what Jesus is saying by the parable is going on with her.

But what does Jesus point to Simon? Well a few things. First, how much or how little we have sinned matters nothing to whether we can be forgiven.

No matter how many sins that we've committed, we are not beyond God's mercy and his ability to forgive. This woman is the proof of that.

Her sins are many and yet Jesus says to her, looks her in the eye and says to her, your sins are forgiven. second, the more we realize and understand how much we have sinned against God, the deeper our love for him will be if we receive his forgiveness.

[17 : 07] I don't think Jesus means to say that Simon hasn't sinned that much and that he's a pretty good guy. rather, until we understand just how much we have sinned and are in need of God's forgiveness, we just will not love or appreciate Jesus as we ought to.

Let me ask you this question. Do you love Jesus? Do you treasure Jesus? If not, could it be that you are like Simon, thinking you're pretty good, only in need of a little bit of forgiveness?

We will not treasure Jesus and the forgiving love that he has until we humbly acknowledge how great is the debt that we owe.

And then third, how do we receive this forgiveness from Jesus? Notice Jesus parting words with the woman.

He says, your faith has saved you. Go in peace. The answer is simple. Come to Jesus Christ in faith.

[18 : 33] Believe that he can and does forgive. when we come to him in earnest repentance like this woman did.

This is the good news of Jesus. We can have peace despite our many sins in the past.

Have you done that? Have you put your faith in Jesus? have you experienced like this woman did his forgiveness?

In just a moment we're going to partake together of the Lord's table. And we do this every month to remember Jesus our Savior. This woman knew that she was utterly unworthy and a sinner.

in faith she saw that Jesus was truly worthy of the best and highest honor she could give. She wept over her sins and washed Jesus' feet with her tears and poured out that perfume on his feet and kissed them.

[19 : 51] She knew just how much she had been forgiven. She was so deeply stirred with love for the one who had forgiven her. This woman really stands out, doesn't she?

maybe almost a little bit like the centurion that we heard about a couple weeks ago. One of the few who through eyes of faith saw Jesus as he really is and herself as she really was before him.

He a wonderful and merciful king and she a sinner in need of mercy. As the story goes on we'll see even more of how wonderful and worthy and merciful Jesus is.

He is truly the anointed one of God and yet he will willingly choose to suffer and die on a cross to atone for our many sins.

Let's just fast forward to that moment a little bit and hear it again. On the night before Jesus died he reclined with his disciples around the table to mark the Passover and he took bread and he broke it and he gave it out around the table he said in that moment this is my body given for you do this in remembrance of me and he took a cup and he passed it around saying to them drink from it all of you this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins this was a symbolic thing that Jesus did and it was all intended to explain what would happen the next day he would be crucified on a

[21 : 54] Roman cross though innocent his body would be broken and his blood poured out he would die and yet through his death would come the forgiveness of sins for many a new restored relationship with God what Jesus said to the woman your sins are forgiven would depend on this act love his death for us on the cross what a deal the worthy and sinless king seeing that we do not have the means to pay the debt we owe would pay the debt we owe!

himself he would take the punishment we deserve for our many sins on himself so that we could be forgiven and live in peace let's take a few minutes now to reflect on this and to pray silently once we've done this for a few minutes the elders will come and pass out the elements if you believe in Jesus as your savior and as your king please join with us eat and drink with us and celebrate and remember Jesus with us and if not please just let the elements pass you by we're going to wait until everybody has been served and then we'll partake together in unison but let's take a few minutes now to reflect and to pray!

how many are your sins how much have you been forgiven?