

Who is this Who Forgives Sin?

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Preacher: Danny Saunders

[0 : 00] This is the evening service at Holy Trinity on the 21st of July 2002. The preacher is Steve Brown.

His sermon is entitled Who is this who forgives sin? and is based on Luke chapter 7 verses 36 to 50.

When I was a teenager, my mum could be really embarrassing. Now don't get me wrong, mum is fantastic.

She really loves me, but that's the problem. I remember my first week at Brandon Park Tech, year 7. I got into a fight and I got a blood nose and I went home and mum totally panicked.

She rang up the principal and demanded that the culprit be found and then punished. And the principal had probably heard this hundreds of times.

[1 : 08] So he basically said, don't worry about it. You know, it'll sort itself out. It's nothing too major. So mum got me in the car, drove to the school and had it out with the principal in the office.

And the whole time, I'm thinking, oh no, how embarrassing. It was terrible. When my friends came over for sleepovers and just to come over after school, mum would always demand to get a kiss from me.

And so if I was staying over with friends and we were leaving the house, I'd have to give her a kiss so I would try to sneak out the back. But mum would always catch and insist that I got a kiss, that she got a kiss from me.

And my friends would just sort of stand in the background and laugh and snigger at me while I had to pucker up. And I thought to myself while I'm doing this, oh no, how embarrassing.

But the worst, the worst thing was when I brought a girl home. That was the worst because in fact this one actually lasted all the way until I brought Melissa home to meet my parents.

[2 : 32] Mum would get my baby photos out. And there they would be. Laughing.

There they would be. Laughing. And they'd be pointing at me. Wasn't he cute? Look at him. He's naked. And I thought to myself, oh, how embarrassing.

Thanks, Ash. I'm over it now, you see. I can put it up there. Now if you think that's embarrassing.

You think my mum could be embarrassing.

And get a load of this. In verse 36 it says, one of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him. And he went to the Pharisee's house and he took his place at the table.

And a woman of the city who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and dry them with her hair.

[3 : 54] Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with ointment. How embarrassing. Can you imagine it?

A known prostitute comes into your house and starts to show affection for one of your guests. You see, in those days, the banquet was a public affair.

The invited people, the guests, they would come to the banquet and they would recline at the table, usually a low table to the ground and there was cushions all around it and they would just lie there with their feet extended away from the table outwards and they would face the host.

But, the public, the city, the people from the city were allowed to come to these banquets. They weren't guests, but they could come in and crowd around the guests all around behind them at their feet so that they could listen to the discussion going on, the religious discussion or the discussion about politics.

And this woman, this prostitute has come in and tonight we're going to call her Jane because she doesn't have a name in this passage. But Jane, hopefully, I'm sorry if that's your name, Jane comes

in.

[5 : 14] Jane comes in and she stands behind Jesus and she loses control. She becomes all emotional and she starts to cry and her tears fall onto Jesus' feet.

And by now, the crowd are starting to look at her. They're starting to shift their attention away from the discussion and looking at this woman. How embarrassing.

Embarrassed, Jane attempts to dry his feet but she's got nothing to do it with. So what does she do? She lets down her hair and everyone gasps.

You can't do that. A woman couldn't do that in those days. She'd only let down her hair for her husband. A great intimate act.

Jane gets down and she starts to dry his feet with her hair. Rubs his dirty feet with her beautiful hair. And by now, everyone is silent.

[6 : 31] The whole room has just gone silent. And they're shocked and their mouths are open and they're looking at this woman and they're thinking to themselves, what is she doing?

How embarrassing. Jane doesn't stop there, does she? She starts to even kiss his feet and then she pulls out a little bottle, a little vase of perfume, very expensive perfume, used to make herself smell nice, make herself attractive for her clients.

And she pours it all out because she doesn't need it anymore. She's not going back to that lifestyle anymore. And she pours it all out onto the only man that she ever wants to be attractive to.

And everyone is just shocked. They're silent, they're stunned. And they're looking at her and they're thinking, what is she doing? This is so embarrassing.

embarrassing. What's going to happen? How embarrassing. If this happened at your home, do you think you'd be embarrassed?

[7 : 53] Because the host of this banquet was embarrassed, he was shocked and he was angry. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, if this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is, who is touching him, that she is a sinner.

Who does this Jesus think he is? Who does this Jesus think he is accepting all this extravagance and emotional attention from this woman? Doesn't he know she's a sinner?

Doesn't he know that this woman is a social outcast? Doesn't he know that this woman is vile and beneath contempt? Doesn't he know that this woman makes him unclean?

Doesn't he know that this woman shouldn't be touching a teacher of God's law? Shouldn't he know that this woman should never touch a prophet of God?

Doesn't he know? Because a prophet should know. A prophet would know. A prophet would never allow himself to be touched by this woman to let this sinner come near him.

[9 : 15] A prophet would never allow a prostitute to come and show him this affection, especially in front of the whole city, the crowd and the banquet.

you see, the Pharisees have finally got him. They've got him. It's all over.

They've got Jesus at last because if he was a prophet, there's no way he would let this happen.

There's no way that Jesus would allow this woman to come even near him.

And the Pharisees have got him at last and they've been chasing him for chapters since we've been going through this. They've got him. Jesus spoke up and he said to him, the Pharisee, Simon, I have something to say to you, teacher, he replied, speak.

A certain creditor had two debtors, one owed 500 denarii, the other 50. when they could not pay, he counseled the debts for both of them.

[10 : 30] Now which of them will love him more? Simon answered, I suppose the one for whom you counseled the greater debt.

And Jesus said to him, you've judged rightly. You've judged rightly. In my first year at Ridley College, which is the Bible college that I go to, I was in the middle of writing my mid-year Old Testament essay, 4,000 words of blood, sweat and tears.

And Paul Barker was marking it. That was scary. And I was in the middle of writing this 4,000 word essay, when my computer crashed and died.

And I tell you what, I was in a panic. I was panicking big time. My essay was lost, my computer was out of commission, I was dead in the water, I couldn't do anything.

And I didn't have enough money for a new one, I couldn't just go out and buy a new computer and start all over again. And I knew that this was going to cost a lot to get fixed.

[11:47] I knew that I probably wouldn't be able to fix it. And in desperation, I rang Bruce. Now, Bruce owns his own computer consulting firm, he's a friend of mine.

And I knew it was a real long shot. It was a long shot. I mean, Bruce is running a business and this person rings up and says, I need help.

He had a business to run. And I knew it was a long shot, but I thought he might be able to just give me a bit of advice. Just some advice. I mean, that's all I can expect.

And after the call, Bruce came around straight away. It was fantastic. He took my computer. And a couple of days later, he came back.

Essays saved, computers saved, with a new hard drive and CPU and whatever else goes into a computer. But I thought to myself at that moment, oh no, how much is this going to cost?

[12:55] How much is this going to cost? I can't pay, what can I give him? I owed him big time. And I remember standing there and I said to Bruce, how much do I owe you, Bruce?

And I'll always remember his reply. Nothing. Nothing. Don't worry about it. I've got to tell you, I loved him for it.

It was fantastic. I'll always be grateful. I'll always be thankful to Bruce for doing that for me. I'll always remember his grace and his mercy. I couldn't pay, but he waived my debt and I absolutely loved him for it.

You see, Jane is in debt. She's a sinner in debt to God. And she knows that one day God is coming to collect the debt.

He's going to correct the ledger and balance the books. And she can't pay. What can she give God? What can she give God to fix up her sin debt?

[14:12] And everyone knows it. The people of the city, the guests, the Pharisees, even Jesus knows that she's in debt, big time.

And everyone reminds her of her debt. The men that use her, the women and children who shun her in the streets because there goes the prostitute, the Pharisees that judge and condemn her. They all remind her, they all know she's in debt, but unlike me, she knows the price. Rejection from God, ejection from God's people, hopelessly separated from God's kingdom, no future. That's the price. And she was in debt, big time. But on the other hand, Simon the Pharisee, he doesn't owe that much.

Simon doesn't think he's got a lot of debt. He's a Pharisee who has only got a small debt, perhaps. And he knows one day that God is going to collect, that he's going to come and correct the ledger and balance the books and he'll have some credit to offset the debt.

[15:35] After all, he's always been a pious Pharisee. He's done all the right things. He won't be rejected by God.

He won't be ejected from God's people. He won't be separated from God's kingdom. See, he's got a future, so he thinks.

Then turning towards the woman, he said to Simon, do you see this woman? 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 I came in, 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, which were many, have been forgiven. Hence, she's shown great love, but the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.

[16:44] people. I don't know about you, but when I have guests in my house, I try to be polite. I imagine everyone here would try to be polite. You try to give the proper greeting, a handshake or a kiss, and you say, hello, how are you?

Come in. I try to make my guests feel comfortable. You know, come in, have a seat, make yourselves at home.

I try to refresh them. Do you want a drink? Coffee, tea, Milo? But Simon isn't that polite. Simon doesn't try to give Jesus a proper greeting.

You see, there's no kiss, and in that culture, that was vital. But Jane greets him. Jane doesn't stop kissing his feet.

Simon doesn't try to make Jesus comfortable. There's no oil for his hair. But Jane anoints his feet with her own expensive perfume. Simon doesn't try to make Jesus refresh.

[17 : 50] There's no water for his feet to wash himself with. But Jane washes his feet with her own tears and her beautiful hair.

You see, Simon is the type of person who says thanks for nothing. Thanks for nothing. And I've got a video clip I'm going to show, and it's about that. Thanks for nothing. Thanks, Ash. nothing.

Thanks for nothing. Thanks for nothing. Forrest risked his life. He'd already escaped, he was home free, didn't have to go back.

He'd fought bravely, no one expected any more from him. But he was prepared to make the sacrifice. He was prepared to risk everything, risk his own life to help his mates.

[19 : 01] So he went back in and pulled them out, one by one. What a hero. What a hero. But all Lieutenant Dan could say was thanks for nothing.

Thanks for nothing. He's just like John. John is sitting in his lounge room one day watching telly. When outside, out of the blue, he just hears bang.

And he rushes outside and he sees Matt lying there, slumped over the wheel, blood trickling down his face. And there's glass everywhere all over the road.

And the car is wrapped around the tree on the nature strip, mangled. And jumping over the glass, John heads for the door and he forces it open and he drags Matt out through the broken glass.

Then John starts CPR. Two breaths, 15 pushes. Two breaths, 15 pushes. John pushes a bit hard and bang, there goes a rib.

[20 : 14] Two breaths, 15 pushes, two breaths, 15 pushes, bang, there goes another rib. And he keeps going. And the sirens of the ambulance get louder and louder.

And the next thing John knows there's a policeman next to him saying are you okay, are you okay? A week later John gets a surprise.

That same police officer is on the phone and he says I've got some great news and some bad news for you John. The good news is Matt's going to live.

He's going to live. It's great. The bad news is that he wants you to pay the medical bill for his broken ribs. And if you don't pay he'll sue you.

thanks for nothing. John saved his life but all Matt could do was say pay him a bill.

[21 : 13] Instead of saying thanks for everything he said thanks for nothing. But the one to whom little is forgiven loves little.

are you like Simon the Pharisee? Do you say thanks for nothing? Do you love little?

Are you focused on what you want in life? On your dreams and you don't care about anyone else?

Do you continue to have disputes with other people even though you shouldn't?

That you know you shouldn't? Do you keep talking about people behind their backs and gossiping and slandering? Do you keep whinging about things that annoy you?

Maybe at the service you come to? Do you keep saying no to helping other people here at Holy Trinity? Do you keep saying I'll pray tomorrow for my friends and family and this church?

[22 : 20] Because if the answer is yes then you need to ask the question, have I really experienced forgiveness? Has God forgiven me? Am I like Jane?

Because Jane knows what it's like to be forgiven, doesn't she? She says, thanks for everything.

Thanks for everything. Thanks that I'm not in debt anymore.

Thanks that my debt has been erased. Thanks that my life is restored. Thanks I don't have to pay the price anymore. No more separation from God.

No more ejection from God's people. No more no longer separated from God's kingdom. Jane has a future now with God.

No wonder she says thanks for everything. No wonder she loves a lot. therefore I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven.

[23 : 23] Hence she has shown great love. Then Jesus said to her, your sins are forgiven. But those who are at the table with him began to say amongst themselves, who is this who even forgives sins?

And he said to the woman, your faith has saved you. Go in peace. Are you like Jane?

Do you say to God thanks for everything? Do you show great love? Because if you're a Christian, then that's what you ought to be saying. Thanks for making me a new person.

Thanks for giving me a new life. thanks that I have a new Christian family to enjoy and to be a part of. Thanks that I can come to church.

Thanks that I can come here and sing about you and hear about you and learn about you and experience you with my brothers and sisters in Christ. Thanks that I can pray for my friends and family and for this church.

[24 : 33] Thanks that I can contribute and help others at Holy Trinity. thanks that I can remind you that you remind me continually at church of your great love for me.

Thanks I have a sure future. Thanks that I'll dwell with you one day. Thanks that Jesus is going to return. Do you say thanks for everything? Do you say thanks for everything?

Maybe you know you're not a Christian. you sort of know that. You're not sure whether you're thankful, whether you say thanks for everything or thanks for nothing.

Maybe you know you say thanks for nothing. What Jesus offered to Jane is the same offer he gives to each of us. Jesus is able to pay for our debt.

Jesus is able to say your sins are forgiven. Jesus is able to say your debt is forgiven. Jesus is able to say this because he goes to a cross and on the cross he pays for our debt.

[25 : 53] He pays for Jane's debt and he pays for my debt and your debt. he's more than a prophet.

He's the son of God. God's son that came and paid the price. God's son that came and paid the price that we wouldn't have to pay the price.

You see he experienced separation from God and ejection from God's people and he experienced the hopelessness of separation from God's kingdom. while he hung and died on the cross.

So tonight don't be like those Pharisees at the table. Don't doubt his authority to forgive your sins. Don't be faithless like them.

Don't say thanks for nothing. Be like Jane the prostitute.

[26 : 57] although a great sinner she had faith in Jesus' authority to forgive her sins. Be like her. Say to Jesus thanks for everything.

Thanks for everything. Amen. Shar Thanks for anything you will Thank you.