

Fix Your Eyes on Jesus the Forgiver: "She loved much."

Focus Passage:

Larger Context: Luke 7:18–50

Sermon Recap

Luke 7:36-50 teaches that if we want to live a forgiven life, we need to experience the miraculous forgiveness of God. The passage centers around three main characters: (1) Jesus, (2) an influential Pharisee named Simon, and (3) an unnamed woman branded as a "sinful." Simon was curious about Jesus and invited Him to dinner. An invitation to dinner is often an invitation to relationship.

The customary manner of "reclining" at table in Jesus' day was to lay down, propped up on one elbow at a low table, leaving one's feet extended and exposed behind. The unnamed woman was apparently an uninvited guest and came up behind Jesus during the meal. Having easy access to his feet, stretched out behind Him, she began to wash them with her tears, dry them with her hair, and anoint them with ointment. Simon assumed that Jesus did not know what a sinful reputation the woman had or worse, if he did know and allowed her to do what she was doing, He would be disqualified as a prophet or holy man.

Jesus not only knew the history of the woman, He also knew what Simon was thinking. He proceeded to tell a parable of two debtors who were both forgiven different amounts. Jesus then asked Simon which debtor would have greater love the one who forgave the debt. Simon responded that the one who had been forgiven the greater debt would likely have more love for the forgiver. Jesus reframes the experience in terms of how much the "sinful woman" loved because she recognized how much she had been forgiven.

We see three main differences between Simon and the sinful woman that reveal why she loved Jesus so much and why Simon loved Him so little.

1. Simon had too high a view of his own righteous.
2. Simon had too mild a view of his own sinfulness.
3. Simon had too low of a view of Jesus.

The woman leaves the scene forgiven and in peace, while Simon does not.

Interpretive Helps

- "This woman could have been a sinner because of her occupation. Tax collectors, tanners, camel drivers, custom collectors, among others were considered ceremonially impure because of their occupations and could be labeled "sinners." In this instance, however, this woman's sinfulness involved moral not ceremonial matters (note 7:47–50)."¹

¹ Robert H. Stein, [Luke](#), vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 236.

Group Gathering

Group Check-in — Care, Celebration, Encouragement (About 1/3 of meeting time)

1. Informal conversation to allow individuals to catch up with one another.
2. Ask if anyone would share how they've been hearing and obeying God's direction.

Allow the Word to Speak — Be Hearers of the Word (About 1/3 of meeting time)

READ Luke 7:36–50

1. What from the passage or sermon was most impactful to you?
2. Were you left with any questions or confusion about the passage or sermon?
3. Write down “Simon” and “Sinful Woman” as two headings. Under each heading, list what Jesus says the woman did that Simon did not (Luke 7:44–46).
4. There are two ways to interpret Jesus' words, “Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little” (Luke 7:47). One is that the woman was forgiven because she loved much. The second is that her extravagant display of love was a response to her having been forgiven. Which do you think better explains the passage?
5. What do Jesus' words, “Your sins are forgiven” (Luke 7:48) and “Your faith has saved you; go in peace” (Luke 7:50) communicate about His identity that the religious leaders around the table did not comprehend?

Put the Word into Practice — Be Doers of the Word (About 1/3 of meeting time)

1. Which character do you most closely identify with in the passage?
2. What prevents you from having too high a view of your own righteousness?
3. Can you share how your sense of your own sinfulness has developed over time? If your sense of your sinfulness has grown, how has that affected the way you feel about yourself?
4. Do you see a correlation between how you view your own sinfulness and how you view Jesus? Explain.
5. Can you think of a “sinful person” —someone who feels marginalized by the Church— to whom you can demonstrate the love and forgiveness of Jesus? How might you go about that?

The Big Question: What do you sense God's Spirit saying to you and what concrete action will you take in response? Share your answer with the group or another trusted Christian and ask them to pray for you.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES: Click [here](#) for some good opportunities.

**We can't live forgiven until we experience
the wonder of forgiveness**

Obstacles to experiencing forgiveness

- **Righteous view of self**
- **Mild view of sin**
- **Lowly view of Jesus**

“A pardon is a slip of paper, the value of which is determined by the acceptance of the person to be pardoned. If it is refused, it is no pardon at all.”

Chief Justice John Marshall