

A Sinner Finds Forgiveness

Luke 7:36-50

INTRODUCTION

- A. Illustration about the young man filling out a job application, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #11637.
- B. As cute as that story is, it illustrates an important point: we are all sinners.
 - 1. Each one of us has done things of which we are deeply embarrassed and things we want no one else to know.
 - 2. Scripture confirms that we all are, in fact, sinful.
 - a. “None is righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10).
 - b. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).
- C. Because we all struggle with sin, we need forgiveness.
 - 1. This morning, we want to think about a sinful woman who found forgiveness.
 - 2. We want to think about the following: A Sinner’s Respect, A Sinner’s Rebuke, and A Sinner’s Redemption.
- D. We need to point out something before we get into this morning’s message: this chapter of Luke show: Jesus violating social taboos to reach out to people: he broke down social barriers (7: 1-10), he broke down economic barriers (7:11-17), he broke down religious barriers (7:24-35), and in our section he broke down moral barriers (7:36-50).
 - 1. What an honor to serve a Savior who doesn’t care who we are, but who is willing to help us regardless of who we are.
 - 2. Let’s explore Jesus’ forgiveness of a sinful woman.

A SINNER’S RESPECT, vv. 36-38

- A. One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and Jesus went into the Pharisee’s house, and took his place at table, v. 36.
 - 1. It was considered virtuous to invite a teacher over for dinner, especially if he had just taught in the synagogue.
 - 2. In our culture, it’s generally considered polite to invite the preacher over for dinner; this would have been something quite like that.
- B. A woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was at table in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, v. 37.
 - 1. A sinful woman of the city came to the feast when she heard that Jesus was there.
 - a. “Sinner” often does not mean one who is not a Christian; the term is often used of one who is openly living in sin.
 - 1) This woman is described as “a woman of the city” — this seems as though she is a prostitute and a very loose woman.
 - 2) This is not only a sinful woman but a woman everyone knows is a sinner and a woman from whom reputable people would stay away.
 - b. She came to the feast- the poor often came to large feasts, but they were to stay around the wall and away from the invited guests.
 - 2. She brought an alabaster flask of ointment- containers made of alabaster were considered appropriate for perfume.
- C. The woman stood behind Jesus at his feet, weeping. Her tears began to wet Jesus’ feet, and she wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment, v. 38.
 - 1. Jesus would have been reclining upon his left arm with his feet behind him pointed toward the wall thus the woman stands behind him and covers his feet with her tears.
 - 2. She wept on Jesus’ feet.
 - a. This woman obviously wept out of deep remorse for her sin.
 - 1) Who among us has not wept bitterly because we did something we knew was wrong?
 - 2) When Peter denied the Lord, “he went out and wept bitterly” (Lk. 22:62).
 - b. But, I honestly wonder if part of the reason this woman wept was that she was in the presence of the One whom she had ultimately wronged.
 - 1) She might have broken up homes and led men into sin, but her error was ultimately against the Lord.
 - 2) Therefore, she weeps in his presence.
 - 3. She began to wipe Jesus feet with her hair.

- a. Religious married women wore head coverings in this day and age; something like you see those in the Middle East wearing today.
- b. Thus, the fact that she is able to wipe Jesus' feet with her hair signifies that she was not wearing a head covering, and therefore, was likely neither married nor religious.
- 4. She kissed his feet — the kissing of the feet was a sign of respect in that day and age.
- 5. She anointed his feet with oil.
 - a. This is the typical, not the religious, word for anointing, so we are not to see any religious significance in this act.
 - b. This was simply an act of love and respect.
- D. Here's the point we need to grasp: this woman knew who could forgive her sins and she melted at his feet in remorse and respect.
 - 1. Have you been to the one who is able to forgive you of your sins?
 - 2. Have you shown him the respect he deserves? Do you worship him as you ought? Do you live for him as you ought? Is your life full of gratitude for what Jesus has done for you?

A SINNER'S REBUKE, vv. 39-46

- A. Simon thought 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," v. 39.
 - 1. Simon's thinking to himself, "If this man who really who he claims to be, he wouldn't let this woman anywhere near him."
 - 2. Do we sometimes think the same thing ourselves?
 - a. Someone is restored or baptized, and we think, "What's he doing here. That's really not the type of person we want here."
 - b. Sometimes I fear we're almost like the other son in the Parable of the Prodigal Son.
 - 1) He was angry and refused to join the celebration when his younger brother returned.
 - 2) When his father begged him to join the celebration, the younger brother said, "Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends" (Lk. 15:29). He basically says, "I'm better than my brother."
 - c. Let us remember that we are all sinners, and everyone who will come to Jesus has the right to do so.
- B. Jesus mildly rebuked Simon by telling a short parable, vv. 40-43.
 - 1. A creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.
 - a. A denarius was worth about 18 cents; this was the worker's average wage.
 - b. Thus, one debtor owed about \$90, and the other owed about \$9. But, remember one would have had to work about 500 days just to pay the debt, and the other about 50.
 - 2. Simon admitted that the one who had been forgiven the larger debt would be more appreciative than the one who had been forgiven the smaller debt.
- C. Jesus stepped up his rebuke of Simon, vv. 44-46.
 - 1. Jesus told Simon that when he entered his home, Simon gave him no water for his feet, but this woman had washed his feet with her tears and her hair - common hospitality included washing the feet of guests or at least having a slave to do so; this Simon failed to do.
 - 2. Simon had not anointed Jesus' head with oil, but this woman had anointed Jesus' feet with oil - olive oil for dry skin was considered a polite gesture when visiting in one's home.
 - 3. Simon had not kissed Jesus, but the woman had — kissing was a respectful form of greeting.
- D. The woman, because she had been forgiven much, showed respect to Jesus, but Simon did not show such respect.

A SINNER'S REDEMPTION, vv. 47-50

- A. Jesus told Simon, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little," v. 47.
 - 1. Jesus in a way agrees with Simon 4 Jesus admits that this was a very, very sinful woman, but her sins were forgiven.
 - a. God has a history of forgiving even the worst of sinners.
 - 1) Jesus called Paul, a murderer and persecutor of the church, to him.
 - 2) 1 Cor. 6:9-11 — the Corinthians had a long rap sheet, but they were forgiven.
 - b. There is not a person here whom God cannot forgive — it doesn't matter how many sins you've committed or how severe those sins have been.
 - c. Jeffrey Dahmer came to Christ before his death. If a murderous cannibal can be cleansed, don't you think you can be, also?
 - 2. This woman had shown Jesus much love, but Simon had not.

- B. Jesus turned to the woman and said, “Your sins are forgiven,” v. 48.
 - 1. Can you imagine what must have gone through this woman’s mind?
 - 2. She was a horrible, horrible woman; Simon and presumably the others at the feast didn’t want anything to do with her, and the Master of the Universe speaks her sins forgiven.
 - 3. That same Master can speak your sins forgiven this morning.
- C. Those who were at table with Jesus began to say among themselves, “Who is this, who even forgives sins?,” v. 49.
 - 1. The people at this banquet begin to scratch their heads: this man forgives this woman but no one but God can forgive.
 - a. When Jesus healed the paralytic, those at the house said, “It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sin but God alone?” (Mk. 2:7).
 - b. A priest could pronounce God’s forgiveness after a person had offered a sin offering, but Jesus just says, “You’re forgiven.”
 - 2. But, isn’t that exactly the point?
 - a. Jesus could forgive this woman of her sin, because he is God.
 - b. Illustration about Richard the Lionhearted, Encyclopedia of 15, 000 Illustrations, #4418.
 - c. Have you been to claim that forgiveness Jesus gave this sinful woman? Do you need to come and claim it this morning?