

This morning we're going to look at the forgiveness of Jesus in Luke 7. And I think a big portion of us understanding the Gospel rightly is understanding what we've been forgiven from. This is a huge deal for us, because if we get what we've been forgiven from, we'll get to worship him and understand him and know him better, and our affections for him will continue and continue to grow.

And so Jesus, at this point in Luke 7, he is traveling. He's in his three-year ministry stint, and he is traveling and speaking at multiple places. Jesus at this point had become very popular. People were kind of emptying out villages to come and hear him speak. And what you would see typically when Jesus would speak, he would draw a large crowd of people.

And what I've consistently talked about is Jesus has not been real interested in the crowd. He's been interested in his disciples and how he would teach his disciples. But what you'll see here is, when a crowd is gathered, people are gathered for multiple reasons, just like here today. But here's what this would look like for Jesus.

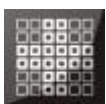
Some would come to Jesus because they knew that he was an excellent teacher. They knew that he would say very profound things that would just blow people's minds. And then other people would come because they knew that he was a healer, and so they wanted to be healed. Others knew that he had the authority and the ability to forgive sin. And we'll see this later in the text.

And what you'll also see is there's another group of people that would show up that basically their existence in being there was basically to find him wrong somehow and to call him a hypocrite and to find him at fault in theology somehow. And they would kind of catch his doctrine.

And by the way, it's never good to challenge Jesus on the Bible. All right, he wrote it. Okay, you're going to lose that battle. But the Pharisees, they didn't know that, and that's that group of people who were trying to hear him, and they were trying to challenge him. They just didn't realize that he was God, and so they're challenging him on doctrine.

So what they would often do is they would often invite him somewhere where they would know that they could catch him in possibly a lie or some type of hypocrisy, not fulfilling the law which they wanted everyone to fulfill, and it was some of their own manmade ideas that they wanted Jesus to follow.

So they're coming at Jesus aggressively approaching him. And they would often invite him to their house. And this is what we end up seeing here in the text in Luke 7. We see Pharisees that are inviting him to their house. We don't know exactly why, but it's possibly that they could trap him in some type of hypocrisy. It's kind of like those guys who are doing those schemes, you know. You meet them at Krispy Kreme and they're like, "Hey, I want to be your friend." And then they're like, "What are your dreams?" right? "Oh, I can help you achieve your dreams," right? And you realize that they're just trying to sell you something. And you're like, "You don't want to be my friend." And you feel hijacked, right?



And this is exactly how the Pharisees are seeing him up, "I want to be your friend. I want to talk to you. I want to get to know you." And then we see what happens here in the text. Look here in Chapter 7 of Luke Verse 36. It says this:

³⁶ One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table.

Other translations in Verse 36, it says that he took his place reclining at the table. Some even in my own Bible, the ESV translation, which I think is an excellent translation, it might have in some ESVs that it would say that he is reclining at the table. And what we find out in 37, he is reclining at the table, all right? So that's there. It's established. Jesus is reclining at this table.

Now, it sounds really interesting. When I read this at first glance, it almost seems like everybody's got Lazy Boys, and they're just sitting around the table. But here's what it was here in the ancient times when people would eat together. It meant more than what we do on Sunday afternoons after church. Like, it meant so much more than being at the Ale House and having multiple screens around and listening to the loud music and you're not even engaged in the conversation in front of you because you're watching – like I have to intentionally not face the monitors, because I will lose any thought that anyone said. I'm major ADD.

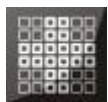
If you look at Ale House, that's like the worst nightmare for me, all right? It's like the worst thing in the world. I'm like, "Yeah, baby, that's good. Yeah. Okay, so your water broke. Yeah, man, that's awesome, man." And I'm just looking at the game, and I'm not in tuned.

And so we have so many distractions that I don't think we can really grasp, sort of the intimacy here what would happen at meals. And what would happen was, the table would be low, and people would lay down and kind of recline on their side. And they would sleep on their side, and their legs would often be faced the other way, so they would just kind of eat that way. And they would lay really close together, enough to make us feel really uncomfortable.

And this is what they would do when they ate, and it was very intimate. They were face to face, and this is kind of the setting of what we're looking at here. And what would happen, if someone was going to throw this type of gathering, this type of party where multiple people were invited, it really was a big deal for the whole community.

If you were an upper classman or a higher citizen, you would perform this type of party. And what would happen is you would sit around, and they would invite other people that they trusted and they knew that could come in. They couldn't eat, but they would stand behind everyone who's kind of reclining and laying down at the table. And they would listen and hear what is going on around us. And they would kind of listen to the conversation, and that would be a privilege for someone to listen and hear this conversation.

So this is a really big deal that Jesus is invited to this party of someone who is high class in society. That's a big deal. This Pharisee is someone that people knew. And so these guys are reclined. So these



bystanders often – some scholars will actually say some of the bystanders could actually have access to the leftovers after the meal was done.

So it's very, very interesting as you see kind of this thing playing out and building. And so Scripture shows us something that is really out of the norm in this sort of situation. Look at Verse 37. 37 says this:

³⁷ And behold, a woman of the city, who was a –

What's the word?

– sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, ³⁸and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment.

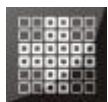
Now, we're not sure exactly – we agree theologically here that all of us our sinners. And so when it says that she was a sinner, you're like, "Well, that's everybody, right?" Well, the way they would understand it here, if you were a sinner, you were classified in that way. You were not allowed at dinners like this. It was not going to be a privilege for you. You were an outcast, and you would have been characterized by a specific sin that maybe your parents did that you didn't have anything to do with or that you had just been known for.

And so some would say that this woman was a prostitute. We're not exactly sure. Some would say she had been married to someone who had bad dealings, and he was a corrupt business man. And we don't really know exactly what this woman's sin is, but she was classified in this way, and she was known in this community as, "Stay away from that girl."

It's kind of like in John 4, if you look in John 4, one of my favorite passages in all of Scripture is John 4 when Jesus is talking to the woman at the well. The woman at the well was a Samaritan. Jesus was a Jew. This is like a Carolina fan talking to a Duke fan. This is what this looks like. And Jesus is the Carolina fan here in this passage, and this is what you have that's happened. I'm just preaching the word.

But you have this Jesus talking to this Samaritan woman, which a man would never talk to a woman. And what you would see then is he's starting to approach her at noon at 12:00 in the afternoon. She was known also as a sinner. It's very interesting. And she is going to the well at noon. The well for women was like Starbucks, all right? I mean, they would go early, early in the morning and meet and talk about whatever girls talk about. I'm not sure. I'll ask my wife later. But they would talk. They would just get together and talk, and this is what the soccer moms would do, right? They would get together and talk at the well early.

And this woman, because of her reputation, she comes and she shows up at 12:00, because she's isolated from the soccer moms because of what she's done. And Jesus asks her. He's like, "Where's



your husband?" She's like, "I don't have a husband." He's like, "Yeah, that's right." Jesus calls her out, and he says, "You know what? You don't have a husband, but the guy that you're living with you're using for rent money. You're shacking up with this guy." And then he gets right to the heart of the issue with this woman, and he shows her great, great compassion. It's very similar.

In Luke 7, there's a woman who shows up unannounced that normally soccer moms and everyone else would avoid and stay away from at this uppity gathering of all the great people in town. And she begins to come to Jesus. She's weeping over her sin, and she begins to wash the feet of Jesus.

I love what the Scriptures tell us, because she walks into the party knowing that she is going to be treated horrifically by these people around her. She's not like the Pharisees in John 12 that love the glory that comes from man more than the glory from God. She doesn't care what people think. She's going in unannounced ready and knowing that Jesus is going to show her compassion and love. And she bows down, and she worships him.

And I love what the Scriptures say, because it shows that right away she comes prepared. She comes prepared. It says that when she learned this she brought an alabaster flask of anointment.

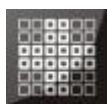
Now, let me explain what that is, because when we think of anointment, we think like Vicks Vapor Rub or Vaseline. And you're like, "Thanks, lady. You put that on my feet? That's gross," right? But no, this is her perfume. This is her fragrance, and women would often wear a flask of perfume around their neck to only use in special occasions. So this is like her Chanel, right? This is her Calvin Klein. This is her Gucci, right? This is what's going down. She's got it on her neck, and she would typically use this – and I only knew that because I Googled it – she only would use this in certain occasions like an occasion of if she's a prostitute luring a man to sleep with her. This is the occasion that she would use this.

And so now she is pouring this out on Jesus' feet. She was prepared and knowing that this is my sacrifice. This is all that I have. I'm going to give it to Jesus, and I'm going to bow at his feet in this way. And it says that, when she learned that Jesus was reclining at the table, that is when she brought this flask. She came prepared.

And I've got to tell you this morning, as I looked at that, I could of shook and said, "Man, how often are we prepared to see and hear Jesus?" I mean, on Sunday mornings when you know that you're going to come and hear from the Lord, you're going to hear from the Word of God, how prepared are we when we do that? I love this woman and how prepared she is. She knows that she's going to meet with Jesus, and she brings a sacrifice.

Do we bring sacrifices? Are we going and praying, "God, will you show me something this morning from your Word? Will you challenge my heart? Will you allow me – will you forgive me of my sin? Will you open my eyes to new parts of my heart that I just don't see?" Do we do that? Are we prepared?

I love how prepared this woman is, and I also love how humbly she comes. It says that she stood behind Jesus and she stood at his feet. That's a great place to be, right? At the feet of Jesus worshipping him,



offering all that you have to him regardless of what others might think. She began to wash his feet with her own hair and her own tears and her own fragrance.

And I've got to tell you as we look at this and I think about my own upbringing and growing up in church, we did foot washing. I've been in foot washing ceremonies before, and it's not the same as we see it in Scripture. And it's not the same as we see it in Scripture. I mean, I was in one recently and they didn't even take my shoe off. I'm like, "No, no, no, we're taking these dogs off, man. Like, these socks are coming. You're getting that lint out. That thing is irritating. Like, if you really want to show me love, man, we're going to get this on." I mean, it was like a Flowbee on my shoe, and I'm like, "This isn't foot washing at all," right?

What would happen here in Scripture is this. Feet were gross. All right, they're gross. I'm really grossed out by feet, by the way. My wife has the cutest feet, but she's like the only person in the world that I think, and my son for right now. But they're like the only people in the world that I think, "Aw, I can wash my son's feet," right?

But feet were nasty. People didn't have shoes then. They had sandals or they walked around barefoot. And so they are walking around in dirt, mud, and manure, and their feet were covered in that all the time, you know, nasty, bloody, stinky feet. And she's doing this. It says that she kisses the feet of Jesus.

I want you to think about her humble state. This ain't like, "You know, I'm taking off his Nikes. I'm going to wash them just to get the little piece" – no, it's a big process that she's going through when she meets with Jesus. She comes humbly. She comes prepared.

Let's look further in the text, because Jesus is showing this woman great generosity and I want you to see what's happening here. Verse 39:

³⁹*Now when the Pharisee –*

Uh-oh.

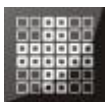
– who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner."

It says this.

⁴⁰*And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "Say it, Teacher."*

It's very interesting here what's happening, because it says that this is what this guy is thinking, all right? This is not what this guy said. This is what he thought. I mean, by now, people should have realized that Jesus can read your mind. It should be like *Inception* where you're like, "Clear your mind. Let's not let anyone in here know what's going on in my head," right?

But this guy is just like, "Yeah, she's a sinner. If he knew that" – like, he's thinking that in his mind. And then Jesus calls him on it. He's like, "Simon," which is very interesting, because you rarely see Jesus call



a Pharisee by name. But here he's like, "Yeah, I know you, and I know what you're thinking right now," all right? And this is how he responds. He gives him a very easy parable here soon. But he says, "Say it, Teacher. If you have something to say to me, say it, Teacher."

What that word is Rabbi, and what you would see consistently, this is not a word that followers would often use. Followers would sometimes call him Rabbi, but they would also call him Lord. Pharisees call him Teacher consistently throughout Scripture.

There's a scene where you've got Jesus in Matthew 26 at his very last supper, and Jesus is again reclined at the table with 12 of his disciples, and he's like, "Hey, listen, one of you are going to betray me. One of you are going to abandon everything that I've been talking about. You're going to walk away, and you're going to betray me." And then all of the disciples, they just start speaking. They say, "Listen." And they're smart by now. They know that he can read their mind. They're not denying it. They're like, "Is it I, Lord?" So you have throughout every single disciple is going, "Is it I, Lord? Is it I, Lord?" You've got Peter, "Is it I, Lord?" You've got John, "Is it I, Lord?" And then it finally comes all the way down to Judas, and this is what he says in Matthew 26:25.

²⁵*Judas, who would betray him, answered, "Is it I, Rabbi?" He said to him, "You have said so."*

All the disciples said, "Is it I, Lord? Is it I, Lord? Is it I, Lord?" But it comes down to Judas. Notice what he calls him. "Is it I," what? Rabbi. "Is it I, Teacher?"

And this man here that Jesus approaches in Luke 7, he says, "Tell me, Rabbi. Tell me, Teacher. What is it that you have to say to me?" Jesus knew that this man's heart was not authentic. He knew that this man's heart was not real. He just knew him as a Teacher but not as Lord.

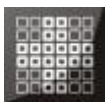
I love what's happening here, this picture that we see. Jesus is reclining at a table, and he acknowledges that there is a possible prostitute there. And he acknowledges that these people are Pharisees and he's laying there. And he is comfortable with both. He's comfortable with both. He knows there's Pharisees there. He knows there's sinners there. He knows that, and he's having fellowship and eating with both.

Guess what. There's probably both here in this room. There's probably a group of people that are Pharisees. There's probably a group of people who are just broken and in sin. Jesus is comfortable with both. He's comfortable with both. If you're sitting there going, "Yeah, I know who he's talking about," guess what you probably are, right? And then if you're sitting there saying, "Yeah, tell those Pharisees," I mean guess what, right? Guess what.

Jesus is comfortable with both. So Jesus responds to this man, Simon. We know him just based on this. This is what we know his name to be. It says this in Verse 41. This is his parable that he says to Simon.

⁴¹*"A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.*

⁴²*When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?"* ⁴³*Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly."*



Now, this is a very simple parable. It's not really hard at all, not really difficult. But Jesus is reading this man's mind, which shows you, by the way, that he is fully God and fully man. This is a big theological term. It's called hypostatic union that Jesus was in the flesh, and he lived his life as a man. But he also emptied himself of some divine rights. But right now, he's using some of the things that only God can do. He can only read minds. This is what God can do.

And so this moment, he's beginning to live himself out as the man-God. So the man-God is sitting at a table with Pharisees and with sinners, and then he begins to tell him a really simple parable. He's like, "Which one?" He's like, "Definitely the guy who has the most debt. He's going to be more grateful. He's going to be more thankful for what you've done and what you've brought him out of. He's going to realize and he's going to love that person who got him out of debt more. He's just going to be thankful. It's obvious."

And I can even see the sarcasm of Simon, because he's like, "Well, I suppose the guy who's been in great debt." And Jesus says, "You've judged rightly." He's getting more and more to the heart. Look at Verse 44. Look at how this thing continues to unfold. He says:

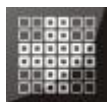
⁴⁴Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. ⁴⁶You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment.

This wonderful fragrance, this perfume. This is what Jesus is saying to this man. He's calling out things that you would normally do if you were throwing a party like this. You would just be generous to the guests who have arrived. You would show them a warm welcome by kissing their cheek. In Christian culture, we do the side hug, and that's what we do.

But he's saying, "Kiss my cheek. This is what you typically would do. You typically would have water out for people to wash their feet. You don't want people's stinky feet all over the table, and you want to show them that you love them and that you care for them." Basically, what Jesus is showing him is, "Your party is lame. Your party is lame." Why can't you throw a party? Why can't you just throw a normal party where everyone comes and they feel welcomed and loved? This is a sterile environment that you've created. Why can't you just throw a good party?"

Jesus gives them the answer in the very next text, because you wonder why in the world wouldn't they do these things. This is what everyone knew to do. Everyone knew that you hug and you kiss and you love the people that are coming and you wash their feet. And, you know, you take care of them. Jesus is like, "Why are you throwing a party like this?" Verse 47 it says this:

⁴⁷Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little loves little." ⁴⁸And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."



Those are the most beautiful words I've ever seen in Scripture, "Your sins are forgiven." And he says this to this woman, and he's saying, "Listen, the reason why you can't throw a good party, the reason why you are even rude to every guest who comes, is because you don't have love." And if you look at these Pharisees, they have the rules. They follow the customs. They do all the right things. But he's like, "Listen, you don't have love. You don't have love." And it's just like what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13.

³ *If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain –*

What?

I gain nothing.

I can do all of these things, and I could do all of these miracles, and I can give all this food to the poor, and I can do international missions trips, and I can come and join, and I can sign up after church and say what team I'm going to be on. But if I don't have love, I gain nothing, and no one gains anything from it. He's like, "You're missing the foundational part of the Gospel, because you don't realize what you've been forgiven from." And that's the Gospel. That's the Gospel.

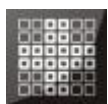
And I've got to tell you, what we see in Jesus, he does not minimize this woman's sin. He doesn't say, "Well, she's a pretty good person, and I've just made her a little bit better now by forgiving her." No, he's like, "Her sins are many." He's like, "I've known her for a long, long time. You don't even know what I've seen," right?

This woman has many sins. And I got to tell you, when I see churches that minimize sin, they're minimizing the Gospel. And they don't preach sin. They don't talk about it, because it's offensive. It'll bother people. And you can't grow your church that way. I know that. I know all those things. But here's the thing that Jesus is saying. The one who is forgiven much will love much.

So if we see our sin, and we see the nature of what our sin does for us and how it destroys us and how it continues to separate us and push us away from our relationship with God, and we will acknowledge that we have sin in our heart, then we see the great saving work of Christ that he says, "Yeah, Ben Tugwell, his sins are many, but I've forgiven all of them." And you know what that brings up in me? More and more worship in him.

I can't invest my life in sin. I have to repent, and I will love him all the more. And as a result, everything that he's given me beyond hell, which I deserve, all the things that he gives me I just appreciate so much more – my wife, my family, my children, my health – because I realize that I don't deserve any of those, because I realize that I'm a sinner.

And we struggle with that. We struggle saying that. And we have cute terms that our culture has taught us and we've brought them into church. We're like, "Well, God hates the sin, not the sinner," right? We've heard that, right? He doesn't hate the sin. He just hates – like the sin is just some sort of cosmic thing that's just floating around that God hates. And then whatever it lands on, "Yeah, I hate that."



No, that's not the language of Scripture. By the way, that's not a Bible verse. I just want to clarify that. It's not a Bible verse, all right? Here's what the Bible says about God's hatred towards us because we are sinners. It's going to be uncomfortable here in a minute, all right? Can you guys hang onto that? Hang on with me. Psalm 5:5:

*⁵The boastful shall not stand before your eyes;
you hate all evildoers.*

Anybody have that on their windshield? Anybody boastful in here? God hates you. Let's pray, right? What are we going to do with that? That's tough. Psalm 11:5:

*⁵The LORD tests the righteous,
but his soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence.*

Proverbs 6:16:

¹⁶There are six things that the LORD hates –

Oh, can't wait to hear those.

*– seven that are an abomination to him:
¹⁷ haughty eyes, a lying tongue,
and hands that shed innocent blood,
¹⁸ a heart that devises wicked plans,
feet that make haste to run to evil,
¹⁹ a false witness who breathes out lies,
and one who sows discord among brothers.*

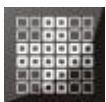
Anybody struggle with any of those things that I just listed off? What do you do with that? Romans 3:23:

²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

If I just ended there, that is a really bad sermon, by the way. That really, really stinks. That's really bad news, right? I mean, because we look at these lists and say, "I've got them. That's me. He's got me." Look at what he says to this woman in Verse 48.

⁴⁸And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." ⁴⁹Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" ⁵⁰And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

They're saying, "Who does he think he is? Who can forgive this woman for the multitude of sins that she's done? Who can forgive this woman that Jesus even says, 'Her sins are many?'" Well, that's again him saying, "I'm God. I have the authority to forgive sins." But let's just answer the Pharisee's question of who can forgive this woman of these sins. John 3:35-36.



³⁵ *The Father loves the Son and has given –*

What does it say?

– all things into his hand. ³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on –

Who? Seriously, who?

– him.

Thank you. The wrath of God, the anger that God has toward – all of the Scriptures that I just showed you about God's hatred toward sinners is now put on his innocent and perfect son. Every single sin that you and I and this woman and the Pharisees at the table were all put on his perfect and innocent son. When God looked, the hatred that he saw in sin was cast on his son at the cross of Christ. When Jesus went to the cross, he absorbed all of our sin. That's what he did. That's what he did. Isaiah 53:6:

⁶ *All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.*

Of us all, every single one of us. 1 Peter 2:24:

²⁴ *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.*

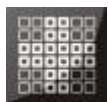
2 Corinthians 5:21:

²¹ *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

This is the passion of the Christ, Christ going to the cross and absorbing the sins of this woman, the sins of the Pharisees, and the sins of you and me. That's the beauty of the cross. So I don't want to minimize sin, because what I would do is minimize the finished work of Jesus.

And so when you acknowledge that you have sin in your heart and you acknowledge the weight of your sin and the guilt that you live in about your sin, just know that Christ forgives. Christ took on that wrath that God has hatred toward. He took it on himself so that you can see and worship him rightly, so that you can come humbly weeping at Jesus' feet that you would serve him and worship him and love him. And the people that acknowledge and see their sin will love Christ more, because they realize what they've been forgiven of.

And so this morning, I want you to be challenged by how much do you acknowledge sin in your life, and how much do you acknowledge the forgiveness that Christ offers. Repentance is a huge part of you coming to know Jesus. So if you don't know him, you acknowledge your sin, and you repent of it. And



you acknowledge that he's the only one that can forgive. The Pharisees couldn't believe that he had that authority. Do you believe that he has that authority?

I want you to respond with great joy this morning if you're a believer, acknowledging the sins that you've committed toward God and acknowledge the forgiveness that he offers you. And that's the great Gospel that we have. That's the God that we serve.

And so for our church this morning, what I'd like to see is that we would be a church that consistently preaches the Gospel, Christ and him crucified, and through that we would acknowledge our sin, and through that we would walk in joy, knowing that when he died on the cross that he rose from the grave which conquered the penalty of Satan's sin and death and that we can be restored to new life in him only if we believe in him.

So I pray that we would be people of joy. We wouldn't be people of sterile passivity like the Pharisees, who when new folks come in we don't even through a good party. We just kind of sit there and judge, that we would come to people with open arms, that we would love and hug and show hospitality and generosity, because we know what we've been forgiven for, and we know the king that we worship, and we know the king that we serve, and people can know it by seeing it in our face. That's what matters, that people would see the Gospel. Let's pray.

