



Road Trip: On the Road with Jesus in Galilee

Week 17b: **Jesus Forgives a Sinful Woman** (Luke 7:36-50)

The Text:

³⁶ One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to have dinner with him, so Jesus went to his home and sat down to eat.
³⁷ When a certain immoral woman from that city heard he was eating there, she brought a beautiful alabaster jar filled with expensive perfume. ³⁸ Then she knelt behind him at his feet, weeping. Her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing his feet and putting perfume on them.

- We looked at these **first three verses** in some depth last week:
 - There are **four** reports of Jesus being **anointed women** while he was alive on earth. These appear to describe three different cases. When we look closely into these three accounts, we find that they were actually three separate events that occurred on three separate days in three different places by three different women.
 - **The Immoral Woman** (Luke 7:36-50)
 - **Mary of Bethany** (John 12:1-11)
 - **The Unnamed Woman with the Extravagant Gift** (Matt 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9)
 - **There is one more attempted anointing.** On the Sunday after Jesus had been crucified, a group of women came to anoint his dead body with spices and ointments (Matthew 28:1-6, Mark 16:1-6 and Luke 23:55-24:7). Just one thing stood in the way. Jesus had been resurrected and was **no longer in the tomb!**
- ³⁹ When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman is touching him. She’s a sinner!”
 - The Pharisee’s internal response to the aggressive outpouring of affection upon Jesus is remarkable. It is really interesting that the pharisee didn’t attack Jesus’ character, but **his prophetic anointing**.
 - No matter how much the Pharisees hated all that Jesus said and did, they **never crossed the line** and accused him of being personally involved with a “sinner.”
- ⁴⁰ Then Jesus answered his thoughts. **“Simon,” he said to the Pharisee, “I have something to say to you.”** “Go ahead, Teacher,” Simon replied.
 - **Jesus knew exactly what Simon was thinking.** The following story is a direct response to what Simon was thinking. The Lord will sometimes move in our lives in profound ways, not just in response to what we say or do, but even in response to what we are thinking!
 - **What did the Pharisee think Jesus was going to say?** He might have thought Jesus was going to ask him to remove the woman from the dinner because she was being a distraction. He may have even thought Jesus would try to “explain away” the lavishness of her sacrifice knowing that his reputation might be at stake.
 - Instead, **Jesus uses the woman’s “testimony”** as a picture of what true personal transformation looks like.

⁴¹ **Then Jesus told him this story:** “A man loaned money to two people—500 pieces of silver to one and 50 pieces to the other. ⁴² But neither of them could repay him, so he kindly forgave them both, canceling their debts. Who do you suppose loved him more after that?”

- A Simple story. One man comes and says he needs 500 denarii, that's 500 day's wages. He got a year and a half's wages! The other person came needed around two months wages, fifty denarii. Neither one had the means to re-pay the debt. So **he graciously forgave them both.**
- **Anytime someone forgives a debt they themselves incur that debt in full.** To understand this gives you insight into the forgiveness of God. When he forgave your sins, he took the debt upon himself and Jesus died to pay it.
- Like Paul when he's writing to Philemon, talking about Onesimus to Philemon, he says, "Whatever he owes you, **put on my account.** Whatever he owes you, transfer to my account, I will repay." The debt just doesn't disappear. The forgiver incurs it. That's true of God who incurred the full debt when He forgave you and Jesus paid it.

⁴³ **Simon answered, “I suppose the one for whom he canceled the larger debt.”** “That's right,” **Jesus said.** ⁴⁴ **Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, “Look at this woman kneeling here. When I entered your home, you didn't offer me water to wash the dust from my feet, but she has washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You didn't greet me with a kiss, but from the time I first came in, she has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶ You neglected the courtesy of olive oil to anoint my head, but she has anointed my feet with rare perfume. ⁴⁷ “I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love.”** ⁴⁸ **Then Jesus said to the woman, “Your sins are forgiven.”**

- Here is the principle that is being demonstrated...**Great love comes from great forgiveness.** Where you see great love, you have seen great forgiveness. The greater the forgiveness, the greater the love.
- Nobody had ever seen anybody do things like that. What would cause someone to be so loving? What would make someone so grateful? This is almost bizarre... **weeping all over someone, wiping their feet with their hair, holding on and never letting go and pouring out...**this is extravagant behavior!
- Notice the little statement, "I tell you, her sins—and they are many—**have been forgiven.**" That's perfect **tense.** It didn't happen right there then, but sometime in the recent past...with **continuing** effect. **She had already been forgiven...**in some other place, some other day, some other time.
- She came there already forgiven, **to find Jesus to thank Him.** Maybe it was the day before that she encountered Him. Maybe during that week she encountered Him. We don't know when or where. She had been forgiven and the guilt was gone, the shame was gone and life was different.
- She began to **long after holy things** and **righteous things began to occupy her heart** and she was swept away with gratitude, swept away with affection and love for the One who had forgiven her.
- **This is a transformed life.** You can't explain this woman's behavior any other way. She's been forgiven. She's grateful because all the bondage of her sin is gone, all the sting of guilt is gone.



⁴⁹ **The men at the table said among themselves, “Who is this man, that he goes around forgiving sins?”**

- **Her lavish love was tied to His lavish forgiveness.** And they understood it. The people said, "Who is this man, that he goes around forgiving sins?" **How did they know that she was forgiven?** You can't see forgiveness. But you can see the transformation that it brings: joy, gratitude, love, affection.
- Jesus used this woman as a **clear testimony of His power to transform a life.** His goal was not to get the woman to break down and cry, but **to witness to the Pharisee** of the transforming power of His truth.

⁵⁰ **And Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”** (Luke 7:36–50 NLT-SE)

- Her salvation was evident, not by something she said, she never uttered a word, but by her passionate love for her Savior. **"Your faith has saved you."** It wasn't her love that saved her. **It was her faith that produced love everyone could see.** It was your faith that saved you, always,
 - ⁸ For by grace you have been **saved through faith.** And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Eph 2:8–9 ESV)
- It was her faith that saved her. **It's always faith that saves.** Because your faith saved you, your love is clearly evident to all because your sins are forgiven.

What Did We Learn?

- Great love comes from great forgiveness.
- True gratitude is evidence of a transformed life. Authentic gratitude is seen and heard, not just felt.
- Let's unlock gratitude!



Charles Spurgeon
Preacher (1834-1892)

Let gratitude be
awakened...
let humility be deepened...
let love be quickened.