

Luke 7 (36~50)

I'm sure every one of us in this room are feeling the impact of this spiraling economy. Given the rising cost of "everything," except our incomes, I think it'd be safe to say, that most everyone here is directly impacted by this troubled economy. How many of you have cars or homes you still owe for? What if, as a result of pity towards you, an act of pure generosity, one completely unsolicited, your banker comes to you and says, "*I want you to know, that I see your suffering and hardships, and I'd like to help you out, by letting you know, that all your bank debts...are cancelled. You owe us nothing!*" How would you respond? What would be your reaction? Wouldn't you think that such an act of generosity, an act of kindness, don't you think it would result in a sense of deep gratitude, a sense of "*indebtedness.*" You know what I mean, where you "*don't know what to say...*" You're just so overwhelmed that, words can't express it. You'd probably grab him and hug him, out of simple gratitude, right? Do you think you'd remain loyal to this Bank and this man? Or do you think, that in time, you'd go to another bank and do business? Absolutely not...I think anyone, would be very loyal to this man and the bank he works for, simply out of gratitude and appreciation! Well...what about God?

At the center of this story, is a woman, (whom Luke does not identify) other than declaring her to be a "*sinner.*" And by the way it is stated, she was one of those women that everyone knew, as a result of the kind of lifestyle she lived, she was a "*notorious sinner.*" Given that, and given what Simon says, it's very likely she was a prostitute.

The transaction, Luke describes, that took place between this woman and Jesus, is one of great beauty... This has to be one of the most beautiful, outpouring of love and gratitude there is. How she washed his feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair...how she kissed his feet, and anointed his feet with the ointment...everything, was just an outpouring of love and gratitude, for what He had done for her. I say that, because, apparently just prior to this event, she and Jesus had, had a previous encounter, where Jesus had spoken to her of forgiveness. In verse 47, Jesus declares that what she was doing, was a result of being forgiven much!

It's just a beautiful, tender moment, a beautiful picture of the outpouring of pure love... Then, it is contrasted by this ugly, repulsive picture of this man, Simon, a man filled with contempt, pride, arrogance, which he pours out on this woman.

(Vs 39) ³⁹Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that touches him: for she is a sinner.

Notice...***he spake within himself...***" He didn't say these things out loud, but rather this is what he was "*thinking.*" That's important, because this entire passage revolves around the fact that though he didn't say it out loud, Jesus heard him. No one else at the table had a clue what Simon was thinking. But Jesus did, and he let him know it...

Notice what Simon said, "*This man...if he were a prophet...*" that is to say, that given what was taking place, he had determined, that Jesus was no prophet. "*If this man were a prophet...if this man were a HOLY MAN OF GOD...he wouldn't let SUCH A WOMAN come near him!*" Now don't miss this, those "*thoughts*" reveal a lot about this man. It reveals that in his mind, his understanding of God is, that God hates sinners, and wants nothing to do with such people. Is that true? Absolutely not! If we know nothing else about God, we know He loves sinners! Here, yet again, do we have another example of what Jesus was talking about, when he said, "*they are the blind, leading the blind.*" Meaning, though they profess to know God and His ways, they walk in darkness, and spiritually blind!

I stress this, because we see this same attitude in our day! There are folks sitting in churches this morning that have the same mindset as Simon! They profess to know God and the teachings of His word, but based on the fact that judge and condemn sinners, and how they look on them with such contempt, and distance themselves from them, reveals that they are spiritually blind as well.

Ironically, here Simon, declares that it is Jesus who is spiritually blind! In essence, here's what he said... *"This man is certainly no prophet of God, for if he was, he'd **"have some insight"** to who this woman was, and would have nothing to do with her! I know who she is, I know what kind of woman she is, and I'll tell ya this much, she wouldn't come near me!"* He basically says Jesus is no **"SEER."** That's what a prophet was often referred to in ancient days, a "SEER." Here, Simon says, *"this man ain't no SEER, because if he was, he'd SE'ER."* And at the same time, declares himself to be the one with *"spiritual insight!"* True, he does manifest that he does know a lot about this woman, and her sinful lifestyle, which no doubt was true. But one thing is revealed as well, *his blindness and ignorance to his own condition!*

(Vs 40) Knowing what was going through his mind, Jesus says...

"Simon...there's something on my mind, I'd like to talk to you about..."

(Vs 41~42) ⁴¹*There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.* ⁴²*And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?*

The parable is very simple...it simply speaks of two individuals who *"are indebted"* to a creditor, with the emphasis being, that both were unable to pay. One owed 500 pence and the other 50. A *pence* or *"Denarius"* was equivalent to about one's day's wages, for the common laborer. So basically, the comparison is around two years verses tow months. Now, having said that, I think it's important not to mistakenly take the amounts literal to represent the woman and Simon. By that I mean, we should not see that as a scale, measuring the sinfulness of each one, to do that would be to miss the point I believe. Jesus is not saying, *"Simon, she is right here, near the bottom of the scale, while Simon you are right here, up more towards the top."* I don't think He's suggesting that at all, but rather I see Him as simply presenting a scenario based on Simon's perspective of the situation. That is the way Simon saw it. On Simon's scale of sin, he might rank himself around a fifty, right? I mean, I don't think he'd say *"I'm perfect."* He might *"think that,"* but I don't believe he'd come out and say that. I'm convinced Jesus did this, as to not have Simon shut him out, by putting him on common ground with this woman, which he would have done. I can hear him, *"you think I'm no better than this woman..."* and basically shut down, and not listen to Jesus' point. I see it as Jesus caters to his ego, in order to get him to listen to him, so that He can share His point with him, which is, *"Regardless of how much you owe the creditor, if you don't have it, you are in trouble."* Jesus' point is, Simon you may consider yourself a pretty good guy, but you know, as well as I do, you have sinned. And regardless of how small you may consider that to be, in light of the gross amount of others, you are still accountable to God...and the question is, what are you going to do? You might as well owe 500 as 50, if you don't have it to pay.

Beloved, we must not miss the point here... We may consider ourselves as being much better than others, by measuring ourselves with those living in gross immorality. But that doesn't mean that *"our assessment"* is true, that may just mean, we may be *"blind"* to our sin, just as Simon here, right? Let me ask you; was Simon any less a Sinner than this woman? You could argue the fact that she did many more immoral things, and that at least Simon did what was right, and was a decent man. But that doesn't change the fact that Simon just as much a Sinner, as this woman was. Just because he doesn't see that, or adamantly disagrees, doesn't diminish that truth.

Simon is a sinner, and just as much a sinner as this woman... The only difference is, he, by adhering to the Law of Moses, he has shown much restraint. Which is in contrast with this woman, who has shown no

such restraint, but rather has indulged herself in the desires of the flesh! Even though he has refrained himself from yielding to those desires, as she has, he is still as much a sinner as she is!

Let me explain with this analogy... You've all heard recently, about the attack of the monkey on a woman out in California. Story has it, this woman acquired this monkey when he was little, and basically domesticated it. It wore clothes, watched TV with her, ate the same foods, etc. I even think, it was in several commercials, driving a car, doing funny things. Bottom line, this monkey did a lot of things that humans do, so much so, it was almost human like. But just in recent days, for some unknown reason, it turned on a friend of this lady who owned it, nearly tore her apart. Reports were, it literally ripped her face off. They had to end up shooting the monkey in order to stop it. Nobody knows why it did what it did, it had never shown signs of that nature before. Here's my point, even though that monkey was unlike every other monkey out in the jungle, even though it was completely different in aspects of being wild, verses tame and domesticated, does that make it, *any less a monkey*? Absolutely not. It may have not acted like the other wild monkeys of its kind out in the jungle, but it was every bit a monkey like them!

In the same manner, just because you give yourself to religion, conforming your lifestyle to the principles of God, doesn't make you a righteous man or woman. It is quite possible, (just as it was with Simon here), that you can conform your life to the principles of God, attend church occasionally, live a good moral life, and yet still be as far from God, and under the judgment and wrath of God, as the vilest of sinners.

That's exactly the case we see here with Simon... The whole point of the parable was to point out, that he, just as this woman, was indebted to God, and it was a debt they could not pay! It was to point out that he was not "*as right*" as he thought he was, "**WITNESSED**" *by the fact that he showed no love or gratitude to God as did this woman*. Don't miss that, for that is the whole point of this teaching...

It was to point out that Simon was not "*as right with God*" as he thought he was... "**WITNESSED**" *by the fact that he showed no love or gratitude to God as did this woman*.

Whether or not we are "*Right with God*" goes well beyond that of simply doing "*right things*." God is concerned that the heart be right! The whole point of scripture, is to turn the hearts of men and women back to God, reconciling men and women back into a loving relationship with God! God is not concerned that men simply "*do right*," but rather they "*be right*," referring to their hearts being turned back to Him!

This parable explains why there are some folks who adore Christ, those who love Him with all their heart, soul and mind, who pour out their lives on Him in loving admiration and gratitude. While others don't... The difference is they "*See themselves*." Because Simon saw himself as a righteous man, his "*goodness*" blinded him to the "*Goodness of Christ*." He didn't see the "*Value of Christ*" as this woman did, because he didn't SEE his need. He considered himself to be a "spiritual man," but by his lack of love and affection towards Christ, revealed he was spiritually blind! This is contrasted with the woman, who "*Saw clearly*." She was completely aware of her sinful condition, and as a result, Jesus was very precious to her, because he was a forgiver of Sin! Listen, here's a woman, who fully realized her great debt to God! Thus when Jesus offered her, the forgiveness of sin, to clear her debt, she was overwhelmed with gratitude, resulting in this great show of affection...

(Vs 44~46) Jesus points to the woman, who is weeping and washing His feet, kissing them, and rubbing the oil on them, and says... Simon, your ***absolutely right***, it is the one who owed much. This woman, by her actions, has manifested a heart that is right with God. While you Simon, by your actions (***or lack thereof***) have manifested your heart is not right!

Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. ⁴⁵Thou gavest me no kiss: but

this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. ⁴⁶My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

True, she had lived a grossly immoral lifestyle for years...but through the love and forgiveness she encountered through Jesus Christ, *her heart was changed*. She repented of her lifestyle, and now manifested a deep, affectionate love for His Son! Beloved, that is what the scripture is all about! The bible was given to reconcile men and women back to a loving relationship with God! And unless that's true in your life, your hearts not right with God!

God's plan of redemption, is to "*Win the hearts of men and women*" by His great love! We are all "*debtors*" to God, deeply indebted. Each of us owes a debt we cannot pay! Our indebtedness to God, far, far exceeds beyond what we are able to imagine. If God were to open "*the books*" of our account, and give us a line-by-line account of the sin in our lives, and show us the "*tally*" of them all, we would *faint with despair*!

There may be some of you here this morning, who like Simon here, cannot comprehend in the least, of what I'm saying. Like Simon, that "500 pence" does not describe you, for you "*SEE*" yourself as a pretty good person, especially compared to some you know. Like Simon, you feel, though not perfect, you feel assured that you have earned the favor of God by the way you've lived. As a matter of fact, like Simon, you'd be insulted at me, and likely down right mad at me, if I compared you to a prostitute out here! You might think, like Simon, "*Well, I may not be perfect, but I'm much better than a prostitute! I may not be perfect, maybe here on the scale, but she'd be way down here!*" Well, even so, if that were true, may I say unto you, you still are indebted to God, you have still sinned, by your own admittance! What are you going to do? The bible says, "*the wages of sin is DEATH.*" My friend, you are condemned just as the prostitute, in that both of you will pay the toll!

That is...unless, the creditor were to give you a pardon... Listen, here is the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are all sinners! Though some act out more, though some live "*unrestrained*" lives, living to the desires of their sinful heart, while others "*show some restraint,*" by at least living morally right in accordance with God's law. But the truth is, that won't help you...you're still a sinner. And the wages of your sin is death. That's where Jesus comes in... God, the "*creditor*" in this passage, offers men a pardon! Now get this, the Creditor has forgiven all men their debt! In Christ Jesus the price has been paid! Now it is only for men to believe it, and receive it. Like this woman here, she simply got the message of Jesus...and as a result, understanding what God has done for her, through Christ death on the cross, she is overcome with love and gratitude, and pours out her life in worship to Him!

The message of the cross is aimed at restoring men and women to God, by the message of forgiveness of sin, to sinners. For those who are conscious of their sinfulness, and their sin, the cross is a beautiful thing, and the person on it, is one to be greatly desired! For guilty, condemned sinners, who realize that, they face the judgment and wrath of an almighty God, the offer of a pardon...is the most precious thing they could ever imagine. Out of that, flows a love and gratitude for the Judge...

God bless this message to those poor trembling souls who are deeply in debt through sin, that they may see God's way of forgiving them through the merits and death of His dear Son, Jesus Christ, and may those who are forgiven much, love Jesus much, and may God bless you all for Jesus sake. AMEN

- C.H. Spurgeon