

GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Easter Sunday: Your Sins are Forgiven

Text: Luke 7:36-50



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- April 11- 2nd Saturday (Men)
- April 26- Parent Info Meeting for Camp (Kids)

Check out the TJC Weekend Recap podcast for a more in-depth look at our sermons each week!

The podcast is available on all streaming platforms!

Welcome everyone to TJC. We are so glad you're here today. I want to give you a challenge and invite: 1. the challenge: make it to church each Sunday for the rest of the year and 2. join us next week for Week 1 of Pleasing God.

Today is Easter and I obviously want to talk about the resurrection, but I'm not going to focus on an explicitly-focused resurrection. Instead, I'm going to look at one of my favorite passages in the Gospels. It shows us the kindness of Jesus -- and His brilliance. It also shows the picture of faith and repentance. It shows the blindness to sin that many walk in. And it shows the true authority of who Jesus is.

This story has drama, scandal, plot twists, and surprises. And I think while it's not a traditional Easter passage, the message is about as Easter as you can get!

Scripture Exegesis: Luke 7:36-50

vs 36 -- the Pharisee wants to invite Jesus over because Jesus' fame and reputation had spread across Israel. To have Jesus over makes him look important. But make no mistake, this is a chance for him to ask Jesus some questions. To get a feel for him. To test him even.

vs 37-38 -- "a woman of the city" is not simple describing a female that lived in the town. The phrase is indicating that she had a reputation in the city. She was a sinner. Now, theologically, we all know we are sinners. But that is not the theological statement being made by Luke. She's known particularly for living in sin, having a sinful lifestyle.

She enters the home uninvited!! Think about this! This is audacious. It's desperate. But she does it anyway. And she takes an alabaster flask of ointment with her. This would have been worth around a year's amount of wages. Most likely spikenard (nard), imported from the Himalayas in Northern India. This wasn't local oil. It was an exotic luxury transported hundreds of miles through trade routes, driving the price dramatically higher. This would have been extremely valuable for this woman to have, perhaps gifted to her by family for a future wedding or financial security.

She makes her way through the home, to where Jesus is reclining, and eventually can't stay back any longer. She weeps at Jesus' feet, kissing them, and anoints them with this ointment. It had to have been a quite, awkward, and powerful moment with people looking around.

vs 39 -- The Pharisee who invited Jesus is observing all this. He's watching. And he says to himself, "If this Jesus were a prophet, he would know what sort of woman this is that's touching him, what her reputation is, that she is a sinner." He thinks Jesus' response to her (which is compassionate and gentle, not rebuking and angry) is evidence that Jesus must not know who she is, and therefore, must not be a prophet.

vs 40-43 -- Jesus knows exactly what this Pharisee, named Simon, is thinking. Because he's Jesus. So he tells Simon he has something to say to him. Simon invites him to say it. Then Jesus tells a sort of a parable. There's a moneylender who lends out money to two different folks. One owed him 500 hundred denarii and another 50. This is like someone owing \$10K and one owing \$100K. And Jesus says that neither could pay, so he cancelled the debt of both. So this is an incredible example of mercy and grace, forgiveness.

Jesus then poses the question to Simon: which of them do you think will love him more? It's not really a trick question. Jesus wants to know which one Simon thinks will respond with the greatest gratitude and love for their debt being paid off? Simon answers the one with a larger debt. And Jesus tells, "you're right!"

Okay, so where's this going? Why has Jesus just posed this parable and question to Simon? Because Simon seems to have answered correctly.

vs 44-50 -- Jesus then shows Simon that he and the woman are the parable in real life. He shows that when he entered Simon's house, he received no water for his feet, but the woman washed them with her tears. Simon gave no customary greeting, but the woman kissed his feet. Simon gave no oil for his head, but the woman anointed his feet with expensive ointment. In other words, this entire trip to the home of Simon has been a contrast in responses to Jesus.

Now watch what happens. Jesus is going to show why and it's not what you think.

Jesus tells Simon that her sins, which are many, are forgiven -- for she loved much. Okay, there's so much to say here, but I'll say a few things and then tie it all in in a moment. Jesus knows she's a sinner. He knows her reputation. Interestingly, Simon never gave him a speech about her. He simply thought to himself about her and Jesus not being a prophet for not treating her differently. But Jesus does know. Then He does something wild: he pronounces those sins (those many sins) forgiven. He forgives her sins. Guys, this can't be stressed enough: only God can forgive sins. In fact, we see that the people at the table with Simon and Jesus are say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" It's a rhetorical question. They know the answer. Only God forgives sins. And if Jesus is claiming the power to forgive sins, then he's claiming the power of God because He is.

But let's go back to his statement. Her sin, which is many, is forgiven. For she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little. Now, listen, at first blush this looks like what he is saying to Simon is: Simon, you're just not as big of a sinner as this lady. That's why she's done all this and you haven't done any of the things you should have. You're just not that big of a sinner. You love little because you've only had a little bit of sin that needed forgiven.

Friends, I promise this isn't what Jesus is saying to Simon. Here's the real message he's relaying: Simon, you love little because you don't realize how big of a sinner you really are. If you did, and you knew who was standing here in front of you ready to give you grace and forgiveness, you'd do the same. As it stands, you don't think you're that bad. That's the difference between the woman and Simon. She recognizes the depths of her sins and the depths of Christ's mercy. Simon doesn't think he's that bad. The woman's love is evidence of grace not the cause of it.

Jesus then tells the woman that her faith has saved her. She has placed her faith in the mercy of Christ. She has run to Christ and that faith in Him has saved her. She's saved. Her backstory is her backstory, but it no longer

defines her future or her standing with God Almighty. She can go in peace because she's been reconciled to God.

I have one more point I want to make, but before I do, I want to say that everyone in this place can know the same kind of grace this woman found this day by seeking Jesus the way she did. Seek Him with humility. Seek Him by faith. Seek Him with the kind of recognition that your sin is great, but the grace of the Savior is greater. Let it lead you to worship. Let it lead you to adoration. Let it lead you to sacrifice. He is worthy.

Close:

Now, here's how I want to close. It's Easter and you have to be wondering how this has to do with Easter. Let me connect how this story today connects with everything.

Jesus pronounces that the woman's sins are forgiven. Not only is it God alone who can forgive sins. But watch: without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. You know how Jesus could announce her sins forgiven? Because 2.5 years later He was going to carry a cross to a hill called Golgotha and He was crucified for sinners. And there at the cross, the sins of the woman from the city, a known sinner, were punished on His head. The wrath of God crushed Jesus for the sake of the sinful woman, for the sake of other sinners, and for the sake of all here today that put their faith in Him.

And then after He died on the cross, He rose again on the third day, defeating sin, defeating death. He's the King of Glory! He forgives sin. He takes it on Himself. He dies for the guilty. And He proves His lordship over all creation, Heaven and Earth, life and death. The grave is empty. Jesus' defeat of death demonstrates He is Lord of all.

Acts 13:36-39 -- 36 For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, 37 but he whom God raised up did not see corruption. 38 Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, 39 and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.

Now those of us on the other side of the cross and empty tomb, come seeking His mercy each day like this woman, and we remember that like her: our faith in the God-Man, Jesus, alone saves us. We can be freed from everything, just like this woman. Nothing else can free us but Jesus. Everyone who believes can experience that.

PRAY

Discussion

1: Seeing Your Sin Clearly – Read: Luke 7:37–39

Question: Why is recognizing the depth of our sin essential to experiencing the depth of God’s grace?

Leader Note: Clarify: awareness of sin leads to freedom, not shame for those in Christ.

2: Faith That Moves Toward Jesus – Read: Luke 7:50

Question: What does this passage show us about the nature of saving faith, and how is it different from mere belief or familiarity with Jesus?

Leader Note: Highlight that faith is active trust that moves toward Christ, not just intellectual agreement.

3: Authority to Forgive – Read: Luke 7:48–50; Acts 13:38–39

Question: What does Jesus’ authority to forgive sins reveal about who He is, and how should that shape our response to Him?

Leader Note: Drive toward worship and response—this is a Christology moment, not just application.

- How was your week? What is one thing you’re grateful for and one thing that challenged you?
- How did you grow in obedience to Christ over the last week?
- Where did you go to share the gospel or have a spiritual conversation with someone?
- What is a sin you have been struggling with that you need to repent of?





- **BUILD UP | SEND OUT**

- How are you making yourself known at church this week?
- How are you growing to know Christ better this week?
- How are you making Christ known this week?

- **PRAYER**

- **Pray over any request from your group members.**
- **Pray for our team:** John Hogan, Director of Technology & Production
- **Pray for our short-term teams:**
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- **Pray for our long-term units on the mission field:**
 - The Wilsons
 - The Grays
 - The Browns
- **Pray for the unreached.** Want to keep up with Unreached People Groups? Download the Unreached of the Day App <https://joshuaproject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday/app>