

# Marred in His Hands – Forgiven and in love with Jesus!

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Luke 7:36–50 (NIV84)

<sup>36</sup> Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. <sup>37</sup> When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, <sup>38</sup> and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

<sup>39</sup> When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

<sup>40</sup> Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you."

"Tell me, teacher," he said.

<sup>41</sup> "Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. <sup>42</sup> Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

<sup>43</sup> Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled."

"You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

<sup>44</sup> Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. <sup>45</sup> You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet.

<sup>46</sup> You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. <sup>47</sup> Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."

<sup>48</sup> Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

<sup>49</sup> The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

<sup>50</sup> Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

- (Series graphic) As we wrap up this series this morning, I trust these messages have been informative and insightful. Big thanks to Dr. Ann Gillies for her messages the last 2 Sundays. May GSCC be a safe place to have these conversations. I also hope this series has helped to prepare us to respond to our friends, families, and culture with both grace and truth.

- Sometimes we get these brief little Polaroid moments in the life of Jesus that just say it all. They say it all in terms of what Jesus was all about and they also show us what we should be about as Jesus' body – his church. Here is one of them: **Mark 6:34 - <sup>34</sup> When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.**
- Jesus' response to the crowds of fallen humanity – the crowds of messy human need – was compassion. Matthew's account adds the description that when Jesus saw the crowds he saw them as "harassed and helpless". That's how Jesus sees us. Why? Because we're marred, broken, sin sick, needy people – who need both a Saviour and a Shepherd. So what did Jesus do... "...began teaching them many things". Do you see how Jesus responded to people? Compassion first. He feels deep burden and love for us. **(Grace)**. And truth. He taught us truth. Richard Barnes sent me the cover for the most recent issue of Time Magazine – have you seen it? **Is Truth dead??** The context of the article, is political – Time interviewed President Trump in the US about his tendency to say, tweet, and claim false things – things that can't be substantiated by fact or investigation. So Time is asking the question: "Is telling the truth dead" today? Should we expect truth from our most powerful leaders? Well if Time interviewed Jesus and investigated his life and teachings, telling the truth wouldn't be dead at all – it would be very much alive! All throughout the Gospels we hear Jesus declaring – **"I tell you the truth, I tell you the truth"**.
- One of the reasons we continue to be "harassed and helpless" today is because we to a large extent have abandoned truth. We've made truth relative. Subjective. Individualistic and yes, there are consequences.
- We have seen over the last few weeks how sin's marring has affected our sexuality. We've been exploring together some of the consequences now in our culture of us abandoning truth in the area of sexuality and gender. So we are marred - but (thank God) we are still in His hands! Like the Potter in Jeremiah, Jesus wants to take us in our brokenness, heal us, restore us, and use us to compassionately respond to the need around us. We've seen in this series that whether it is heterosexual or homosexual or transsexual - whatever the brokenness – whatever the sexual pathology – wholeness and truth is found in Jesus – and found in Jesus working through his people, ministering with both grace (because we're a mess sexually), and truth (because we're confused sexually and abandoning truth).

- I continue to believe that what people need to see and feel FIRST from the Christian Church today in this area is irresistible grace and compassion....so our voice of truth will actually be heard!
- Our text this morning is another example from the life of Jesus that can shape us and direct us...
- Jesus was in the town of Nain in Southwest Galilee and was dining with a Pharisee named Simon. The Pharisees were a Jewish religious sect known for pious attentiveness to the Scriptures (OT) and the teachings of the Rabbis. They were also known for their strong belief in a coming Messiah – which is ironic considering that Simon is actually having dinner with Messiah! As a sect, the Pharisees actually came to be during the Macaabean Period – a couple hundred years before Jesus.<sup>1</sup> So Jesus was Simon the Pharisee’s invited guest.
- Enter the uninvited guest. A woman, who was a ‘sinner’, came into the house. “...she had lived a sinful life in that town”. She is well known for her lifestyle. We can only imagine but the implication is that she was a local prostitute; however, this word is also used generally. To the Jewish leaders, anyone who did not keep all the expected rules and rituals of the Talmud was considered a sinner (ex. shepherds, tanners)<sup>2</sup> .
- She is weeping – **literally** – “**raining tears on his feet**”! Obviously broken. Obviously repentant. Obviously Jesus has impacted her life in some way.
- You may be asking yourself how did she get in there? At these social events others from the town who were not invited were welcome to come and sit along the walls, look in the windows and doors, and listen to the conversations. In that culture, dinner guests reclined at the table – usually on the left elbow with your feet behind you.<sup>3</sup> So this promiscuous woman “of reputation” comes up behind Jesus, weeping, kneels down and begins to wash Jesus feet with her tears and dry them with her hair! In this culture – talk and in this setting – talk about awkward! This is the stuff of scandals! If CNN

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<sup>1</sup> Uteley, R. J. (2004). *The Gospel according to Luke* (Vol. Volume 3A, Lk 5:17). Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International.

<sup>2</sup> Uteley, R. J. (2004). *The Gospel according to Luke* (Vol. Volume 3A, Lk 7:37). Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International.

<sup>3</sup> Uteley, R. J. (2004). *The Gospel according to Luke* (Vol. Volume 3A, Lk 7:38). Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International.

were there – they would be all over this!

- Then she begins to kiss Jesus' feet and anoint them with perfume! She had with her an alabaster flask of oil. In biblical times, fragrant oil was considered of great value and was very expensive.<sup>5</sup> Women often carried this as a dowry around their necks on a chain. This may have been her "hope chest."<sup>4</sup> This woman, without thought for the expense of her gift, cracked open the flask of oil and anoints Jesus. We have to grasp the depth of this woman's love and gratitude for Jesus! Whatever he had done for her – she loved him!
- Let the scene soak in. This sinful woman loved Jesus! This most likely sexually broken and promiscuous woman loved Jesus! Body of Christ – is this the Jesus we are showing to sinners today? Are sinners falling in love with Jesus through the example of his church, or are they moving further away from Jesus from what they see and hear from us? This moment in the life of Christ can really guide us today!
- Now we need to bring in Simon's reaction to all this... His reaction to the woman was completely different than Jesus'... (**text at verse 39ff...**)
- 2 people. 2 totally different reactions to Jesus.
- The woman knew she was guilty of sinning against God, but Simon had no conviction of sin. The woman was so sin sick she found righteousness in Jesus. Simon's righteousness was in himself and in externals. He was outwardly religious but inwardly completely dead to what really matters to God. Which is a broken and contrite/repentant and humble heart. They were both lost sinners. One outwardly – sins of the flesh. One inwardly – sins of the spirit. Simon's lost spiritual condition caused him to be judgmental, uncompassionate, and unloving to both Jesus and the sinful woman.
- Simon's real problem was *blindness*: he could not see himself, the woman, or the Lord Jesus. It was easy for him to say, "*She is a sinner!*" but impossible for him to say, "I am

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<sup>5</sup> The tomb of Tutankhamen, packed with an array of breathtaking treasures, was ransacked and robbed more than once in ancient times. On at least one occasion the thieves took only the unguents (fragrant oils) and left the gold and silver. (*Treasures of Tutankamun*, p.110, ed. Gilbert, Holt and Hudson, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1976)

<sup>4</sup> Uteley, R. J. (2004). *The Gospel according to Luke* (Vol. Volume 3A, Lk 7:37). Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International.

also a sinner!” (see Luke 18:9–14) Simon said to himself, “She is a sinner”; but he needed to say, “I am a sinner.”<sup>5</sup>

- So are we ready now for the question? Church – are we more like Simon the Pharisee towards people like this woman, or are we more like Jesus?
- Jesus response to her is actually quite surprising. It is actually a non-response. He calmly lets this woman come to him and touch him. He gave her access and allowed her access. I get that none of us are Jesus, but would you let a stranger touch you like this? Jesus was completely open to her. He let her in. You see, Jesus saw her – her heart, her love, her state of repentance – he didn’t say or actually do anything at first. He just let her love him. He let her pour out a costly sacrifice upon him. Why? Because loving God is the first and greatest of all the commandments! What he does eventually say to her – changes everything! Luke 7:48 - “Your sins are forgiven.” Vs. 47 – her many sins have been forgiven = this is the perfect tense, i.e., have irrevocably been forgiven.<sup>6</sup> – for she loved much! ....“Your faith has saved you; go in peace.” This is also in the perfect tense, i.e., irrevocably saved you. What a Savior! <sup>7</sup> Jesus made a public and pointed issue of the fact that salvation comes through faith and that saving faith is preceded by repentance, and that the relationship between the sinner and God is a love relationship (v. 47).<sup>8</sup>
- When you are forgiven much – you love much!
- It struck me in this text. Jesus had more to say to Simon, the self righteous Pharisee than he did to the sinful woman! He said about 148 words to Simon. A total of 12 words to the woman. Maybe sinners need more of our loving, silent, presence than our words and propositions and arguments! Then at the right moment, in the presence of God, we can whisper the words that will penetrate and change everything: Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you – go in peace!

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<sup>5</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). *Wiersbe’s expository outlines on the New Testament* (p. 165). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>6</sup> Mills, M. S. (1999). *The Life of Christ: A Study Guide to the Gospel Record* (Lk 7:36–50). Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries.

<sup>7</sup> Mills, M. S. (1999). *The Life of Christ: A Study Guide to the Gospel Record* (Lk 7:36–50). Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries.

<sup>8</sup> Mills, M. S. (1999). *The Life of Christ: A Study Guide to the Gospel Record* (Lk 7:36–50). Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries.

- Only Jesus Christ has the power to change, heal, forgive, and transform a person from the inside out!
- Gentle Shepherd, may our response as a Church to the sexual brokenness and confusion around us, help people move closer to Jesus – instead of further away. Will we respond to the messiness and sinfulness of our culture like the Pharisee or like Jesus?
- Let's pray....
- Hymn....
- As we go to communion let's remember that Simon and the woman were both sinners. Simon was guilty of sins of the spirit, especially pride, while the woman was guilty of sins of the flesh (see 2 Cor. 7:1). Her sins were known, while Simon's sins were hidden to everyone except God. *And both of them were bankrupt and could not pay their debt to God.* Forgiveness is a gift of God's grace; the debt was paid in full by Jesus Christ! The woman accepted God's free offer of salvation and expressed her love openly. May we follow her example! <sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 198). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.