

Message #31**Luke 7:31-50**

When Jesus Christ was here on earth, He shocked the religious world when He started doing His greatest work in sinners. He did wonderful things for broken down, hurting, sinful people. These were the people who loved Christ. These were the people who became His family.

To be sure there were plenty of high-tech, polished professionals in the world of religion. There were many Pharisees and Scribes. These men had impressive credentials. They had been to school and through training. They thought they had most of the theological answers to most questions of life and religion. They knew the religious language. They could pray. If you listened to them publicly pray, you would have been impressed.

The problem is Jesus just didn't seem to pick them. Jesus went after religious nobodies. Jesus went after those who had sin problems and those who had sin addictions. These were the ones with whom Christ did His greatest work.

We cannot help but see that when we come to this passage:

THOSE WHO LOVE JESUS CHRIST THE MOST ARE FORGIVEN SINNERS, NOT PROUD PHARISEES.

Until we see ourselves for who we really are, we will never love Christ properly. We will never experience God's power; we will never fully appreciate God's grace and we will never be used for much of anything. If you want to walk through life proud of yourself, you will miss some great things of God.

Jesus Christ had just completed a wonderful discussion of the amazing grace of God that could put one into the Kingdom of God forever (Luke 7:28). The people got it (Luke 7:29), but the Pharisees and Scribes rejected it (Luke 7:30).

So what happens in this section is that Jesus is once again going head-to-head with the Pharisees. What Jesus does is to aim truth straight at these vipers. He is not about to back down and do the politically correct thing. Some people think we should just be pushovers. Never open our mouths and never defend anything. Jesus didn't operate like that.

REALITY #1 – It does not matter who God's messenger is, the Pharisees will not accept him or his teaching. **7:31-43**

What Jesus does here is compare "the men of this generation" to the "children who sit in the market place" (7:31-32). **In this comparison, the "men of this generation" and the "children in the market place" are John and Jesus.**

Both John and Jesus were sent by God to Israel to proclaim the truth of God. Both John and Jesus came to Israel and clearly proclaimed the truth, but very few would listen. In fact, just as people going to the market place do not respond to the children or take seriously what they are doing, so it was with John and Jesus.

Children would gather together at the market while mom did some shopping. They would call out to each other and they would talk to each other and sing songs and even at times play an instrument. None of the adults took this too seriously. None of the adults really zeroed in on what they were saying. They were just killing time.

That is the way it was for John and Jesus. They came presenting the truth of God that sinners can be made right with a Holy God and no one listened to them. There was no joyous response to their message. In fact, the people should have been rejoicing and singing realizing that all of their sins could be forgiven. There was no sorrowful repentance for their sin; there was no admission of guilt and no hint that they even sensed they needed salvation. They thought they were good to go.

In fact, according to **verses 33-34**, it even got worse than just ignoring them. They said John was demonic because he was too much of a radical and non-conformist. John refused to eat bread and drink wine and the Pharisees thought there was something wrong with him and said he was demonic.

Jesus was branded as a sinful liberal because He ate with sinners and drank wine with them. They called Him a glutton and drunkard.

These were the true messengers of God and both were rejected, both were verbally and physically assaulted. Those Pharisees did everything they could to discredit John and Jesus. William Kelly, a Biblical scholar of the 1800's, said it well in his commentary, in "every way Pharisees do not like God and despise grace" (*The Gospel of Luke*, p. 117).

Pharisees do not want to hear truth. They do not want to hear about God's grace. They do not want to hear that they need to mourn over their sin and receive Jesus Christ. Pharisees will always reject God's truth and God's teachers. They will reject the one sent by God. They will reject the instruction and they will attack the character of the instructor. They don't want God's truth for they are too proud to humble themselves to it.

REALITY #2 – God's children vindicate God's messengers and God's message. **7:35**

The verb "vindicate" means to deem as right and treat something in a right and just way. God's true children don't respond like the Pharisees. They see the true messenger of God and they accept the true message. They demonstrate the power and validity of the message and messenger by embracing the grace justification of God.

God's children realize the grace gospel is rooted in the infinite wisdom of God. They realize justification is by God's grace and not by their religious works and they became a living demonstration of God's grace and power.

Don't look to self-righteous religious Pharisees for anything; look at the sinners who have received God's grace. There is the vindication of truth.

REALITY #3 – Pharisees do not understand grace so they do not associate with sinful people.
7:36-39

There was a Pharisee whose name was Simon (7:44), who invited Jesus Christ to his home for a meal. Jesus decided to accept the invitation.

Some woman heard that Jesus was at this home and was reclining at a table and she decided to go to this home to see Him. Now this woman was a notorious sinner (**7:37, 39**). Many have speculated that she was a known prostitute. This would be the equivalent of Stormy Daniels showing up at our sandwich night. **Now this woman believed that Jesus Christ could forgive her all of her sins.** The Pharisees saw Christ as a prophet (**7:39**), but this woman saw Jesus Christ as her Savior.

According to **verse 37**, when this woman came to the house she brought with her an alabaster vial or box of perfume. This was a long necked bottle made from glass and the word "perfume" indicates that this was very expensive ointment perfume (**7:37, 38, 46**) (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 298).

A. C. Bouquet, in his book *Everyday Life of New Testament Times*, said that a formal dinner featured low reclining couches that sat around a table. Each person would lean in toward the table, usually on their left arm and their feet would be extended backward out from the table. So to have access to one's feet you did not have to crawl under a table or chair.

When the woman came into the room, she spotted Jesus Christ. According to **verse 38**, she recognized who He was and she recognized how sinful she was and she started to cry. Martin Luther said this was true "heart water." These were tears of sorrow and repentance. This woman realized Jesus was God and she just began to cry. She realized she had been a horrible sinner. The word "weep" is a word often used to describe rain showers. Tears are obviously flowing in great number.

Have you ever had a moment like this? Have you ever had a moment where tears were flowing down your cheeks because of your failure and depravity? Have you ever sensed the tremendous lack in your own life? This woman did. In fact, the participle "weeping" is present tense, which means she was continually weeping. As she was weeping, she performed three unusual actions, which Luke describes in great detail:

Action #1 - She washed His feet. **7:38b**

Here was one of those Pharisaical code things. It was unlawful for a woman to let her hair down in public. But this woman could not stand to see dirt on the feet of Jesus so she let down her hair and used her own tears and her own hair to wash His feet.

Action #2 - She kissed His feet. **7:38c**

Alfred Plummer, in his commentary, said this was a tremendous sign of humility and reverence. This was a very peculiar act.

Now you may think this is really strange. You may think, I would never kiss someone's feet. Let me tell you something, if Jesus Christ ever lets you get close to Him, you will be down on your face before His feet and I guarantee you, you will be happy to be there and you will be happy to kiss His nail-scarred feet.

Action #3 - She anointed His feet. **7:38d**

This woman took the expensive perfume and started anointing the feet of Jesus with it. She realized that Jesus was God from head to toe. She is so humble that she does not even anoint His head, she anoints His feet.

According to **verse 39**, when the Pharisee, whose home this was happening, saw this, he was very troubled and he is talking to himself, under his breath. Notice he is saying this "to himself." Pharisees do not have the integrity to handle things face-to-face. They just talk to themselves and to each other. Pharisees talk about people behind their backs.

Now what the Pharisee said to himself was this—if Jesus were the great prophet He is supposed to be, He would have revelatory data about this woman who is touching Him. He would realize this is a horrible sinner. **What Pharisees do not understand is that Jesus Christ came to save sinners.** This is a key point of Luke's gospel. **Sinners play a predominant role in the gospel of Luke because Christ came to save them (5:8, 30, 32; 6:32-34; 7:34, 37, 39; 13:2; 15:1-2, 7, 10; 18:13; 19:7; 24:7).**

Here is exactly the problem with a Pharisee—he sees the sin in others, but does not see it in himself. **The Pharisee is thinking if Christ knew how sinful this woman was, He wouldn't have let her get near Him. What he should have been thinking is since Christ knows how sinful I am, I am amazed He would be here in my house.**

REALITY #4 – Jesus tells a parable to show that sinners end up having the greatest love and devotion for Jesus Christ. **7:40-47**

Those who have had a terrible sinful background end up becoming some of the greatest servants of God. I have seen this many times. These are the people who love Christ, live for Christ and serve Christ.

This Pharisee has never come to terms with his own sin or with the truth about Jesus Christ. In **verse 39**, he thinks He is a prophet and in **verse 40**, he thinks He is a teacher. This woman sees Jesus Christ as her Savior and as God.

In **verses 41-42**, Jesus uses an illustration of a creditor who was owed 500 denarii (about \$100) by one man and 50 denarii (about \$10) by another man. Neither could repay the debt so the creditor decided to forgive them both. It was a pure act of grace. Now which one would love the creditor the most—one who owed \$10 or one who owed \$100?

According to **verse 43**, Simon said the one with the largest debt, which is the right answer.

Before we move on, let me say I don't know how sinful you have been in life. Maybe you are at the \$10 level or the \$100 dollar level or the 1 million dollar level. What I do know is that we all are indebted to the righteousness of God and cannot make the payment. We owe God a debt we cannot pay. This why Christ came to this world to pay the debt we could not pay.

Now Christ really aims this at Simon and gives him three rebukes:

Rebuke #1 - Simon did not humbly minister to Jesus Christ. **7:44**

Simon didn't even have the decency to provide water for His feet. This woman provided her own tear water and wiped His feet.

Rebuke #2 - Simon did not have a reverence for Jesus Christ. **7:45**

Simon did not honor Jesus Christ. He was too proud and too arrogant to do that. He did not kiss Him or bow down before Him, but this woman even kissed His feet.

Rebuke #3 - Simon did not acknowledge the royalty of Jesus Christ. **7:46**

Jesus says you didn't even anoint My head with oil, let alone put perfume on My feet.

In **verse 47**, Jesus says this woman has loved Me far more than you, who have done nothing for Me.

The best servants of God, generally speaking, have, before salvation, been the biggest sinners.

For three years (1983-86) I was involved in training men for ministry. The best ministers that I ever saw: 1) Had wild testimonies; 2) Had a profound awareness of their own sinfulness.

I saw men who had been brawlers and drunks. Some had been on drugs and some had been immoral. Some had served time in jail. They ended up loving the Lord, living for the Lord and serving the Lord. To whom much has been forgiven, there is much love for Jesus Christ.

REALITY #5 – Jesus Christ completely forgives this woman of all her sins. **7:48, 50**

This sinful woman had faith in Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ forgave her all her sins. Here is what Biblical salvation actually is. It is not about you following some Pharisaical codebook; it is seeing yourself as a sinner and believing totally and only in Jesus Christ to save you.

Pharisees love to point out the sin of others (**7:39**), whereas Christ loves to forgive the sin in others (**7:47, 48**). A Pharisee loves to hate sinners and Jesus Christ loves to forgive sinners.

REALITY #6 – Pharisees question the grace offered by Jesus Christ. **7:49**

These Pharisees had invited Jesus Christ into one of their homes because they wanted some theological discussion. They saw Him as a prophet and teacher. But they did not see Him as the God/Savior. They didn't believe that. But unless you do believe that, you will die in your sins.

The Pharisees said who is this one who can forgive sins? Jesus turned to the woman and said, "your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Who is Jesus Christ? He is your only Savior and unless you come to terms with that, you will die in your sins.