

Much Forgiveness, Much Love
Luke 7:36-8:3

Introduction

What kinds of answers to do you think you would get if you asked 10 people at random if they loved God? It is safe to say that you would get quite a variation. In our increasingly secular society, there would be one that might question the existence of God. Another might be honest enough to say that he hated God. A couple of people might be confused by the question because they think of God only in terms of fearing Him. It would be my guess that the majority of people would probably say that they loved God, but most of those would only be able to describe that love in terms of some positive emotion when they think about whatever concept of God they have. I would hope there would be one or two that know enough about the Bible that they would define their love in terms of their desire to worship God and walk with Him according to His will, and since we are in a Bible church, I would hope that is the answer that all of you here today would give.

Since all or most of you would claim to love God, let me ask a more pointed question. What determines the depth of your love for God? This morning we are going to examine a text of Scripture that contrasts two people that would claim to love God. It becomes clear very quickly that one of them loved God much more than the other and Jesus explains the reason for the difference. That difference is not in what God has done for them, but rather in what they perceived God had done for them. Turn to Luke 7:36-39.

The context for this passage flows out of Jesus' commendation of John the Baptist and His condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees for rejecting both John and Him (Luke 7:24-35). Jesus then rebuked the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum for their unbelief (Matthew 11:20-24) before changing His tone and giving His great invitation in Matthew 11:28-30. "*Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls, for My yoke is easy, and My load is light.*" In our text this morning we meet a woman that has taken Jesus' invitation to heart and responds with loving worship of Him.

The Actions of the Sinful Woman - Luke 7:36-38

Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table.³⁷ And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume,³⁸ and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume.

Jesus is still in the general area of Galilee. The last geographic reference was Nain which is about 6 miles south of Nazareth. That is the city in which Jesus raised the widow's son from the death (Luke 7:11-17). It would make sense that a very religious man such as a Pharisee would desire to have Jesus dine with him. Jesus' reputation as a teacher had spread throughout Galilee and Judea. The miracle of stopping a funeral and raising the young man from the dead would only heighten the interest of a Pharisee to have Jesus come to his home to dine as both a sign of honor to Jesus as a visiting Rabbi and to have a theological discussion with Him. I am sure the Pharisee had also sorts of questions about what Jesus was teaching and the miracles Jesus was performing. However, something happens that changes the focus of any discussion that was taking place.

Before we go on in our text, we need to know something about the dining customs at that time among those who were wealthy enough to put on the kind of meal described. This would not be a quiet dinner with just the Pharisee and Jesus sitting at a table. There would be many guests including friends of the Pharisee (vs. 49) and probably some or all of Jesus' disciples traveling with Him. In addition, unless it was a meal with many guests and servants, this woman would not have been able to get into the house to anoint Jesus' feet. She was known as a sinner and the Pharisee would not have knowingly allowed her in.

It is our custom to sit on a chair at a table with our feet under the table. That is not what was happening here otherwise the woman would have to be crawling under the table to get to Jesus' feet. The custom at that time in that culture was for the guests to recline when eating. Notice that the second phrase of verse 36 actually states, "*and He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined.*" An additional phrase such as "*at the table*" (NASB, ESV) or "*sat down to eat*" (NKJV) are added to give you the sense of what Jesus was doing by reclining. Typically, guests would recline on one of the three couches which were arranged to form a U with an open space in the middle of them. The couches were usually inclined sloping downward from the head area to the outside. The Romans called this a triclinium. The head area was usually raised or had cushions to make it more comfortable to rest on one arm while using the other to reach and eat. A typical Roman triclinium would allow nine guests to dine, but they could be larger or smaller. Individual couches could also be arranged in the same manner allowing for greater flexibility in the number being served.

There could be narrow tables at the border of the head of each couch on which the servants would set the food, or the couches could be closer together with a table in the middle on which the food was set. The servant would then access it from the open end. Regardless of the size of the triclinium, the guest's feet would be at the outside. This is why the woman had easy access to Jesus' feet.

A typical home of that time had small rooms situated around a courtyard, and in that hot climate, the courtyard and flat roofs would be used extensively for living activities including eating. The larger the home, the larger the courtyard could be. This area might also be open to the street, and in small town and villages people would greet each other as they passed by. A very large house might even have an area set aside for dining. Some of these were open to the outside.

The next thing I want you to note is that verse 37 specifically states that this woman from the city was a sinner. The text does not state the nature of her sin, but from the Pharisee's reaction to her in verse 39 it is obvious that it is something regarding her character that is well known in the community. There are many various sins she could have been involved in or a combination of many of them such as being an adulteress, a prostitute, a drunkard, a glutton, a thief, a gossip, a blasphemer, etc. Whatever the particular sins, she has a reputation in her community as a sinner.

Finally, note the particular actions of this woman. First, she learns that Jesus had gone to the Pharisee's home to dine. She goes there and finds a way to enter the dining area where she finds Jesus reclining to eat. We are not told how she was able to gain entrance into the Pharisee's home, but it is safe to assume that she has done so without the Pharisee's permission. If the area they were dining was open to the street, it would have been easy for her to just walk in. If there were a large number of people at this dinner, then between the guest and the many servants, she could have slipped in unnoticed. However she gained entrance in the Pharisee's home, she has come and found Jesus.

She has brought with her an alabaster vial of perfume. Alabaster is a fine-textured stone of gypsum, calcite or aragonite that was typically white or translucent. It could be easily carved and polished and so was used for making all sort of things including boxes, jars and vials used for holding things that were valuable including perfumes which could be very expensive. There were many types of perfumes of various qualities made from all sort of minerals, oils from plants, roots and other parts of plants. Since this perfume was in an alabaster jar, it was of high quality. Just like today, perfumes were used then for various purposes, one of which was to make it more pleasant for others to be around you since hygiene

at that time was usually lacking. The scent of the perfume would cover up the body odor. It would not have been uncommon at that time for a woman of means to even carry such a vial of perfume with her on a necklace.

This woman comes up to Jesus and stands behind Him. Since He is reclining, His feet are sticking out behind Him and she has easy access to them. It appears at this point that she is overcome with emotion for she begins to cry and to such an extent she is actually able to wet His feet with her tears. If this had been her original intention, she would have brought a towel. Instead, she starts using her hair to wipe her tears off Jesus' feet and in so doing clean them. She then carries out what seems to have been her original plan of kissing Jesus' feet and anointing them with the perfume.

The common custom of the time is that when a guest arrived, a slave or a servant would bring water and wash the guest's feet. Since they wore sandals and the roads were dusty, their feet could get very dirty and washing them would be very refreshing as well as practical in keeping dirt from being tracked into the home. Washing someone's feet was a very humbling position to be in which is why it was usually done by a slave or a servant. It is so humbling, it has been said that a Jewish servant in a Jewish home could not be compelled to carry out the task. How much more then an act of humility to wash someone's feet with your tears and hair, then kiss them and anoint them with expensive perfume? All of this is a great act of humility in honoring Jesus.

The Thoughts of the Pharisee - Luke 7:39

The Pharisee sees what this woman is doing to Jesus, but he does not recognize it as an act of humility. The Pharisees tended to be proud about their ability to keep a very strict set of rules to demonstrate their piety and personal holiness. We saw some of that in our study of the Sermon on the Mount. Included in their rules was keeping separate from sinners. We might say in modern times that they wanted to live a separated life, which is actually a good thing in general, but they carried that out in legalistic fashion and included separation from even interacting with sinners. Verse 39 exposes the Pharisee's thoughts. *"Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner.'"*

Some antagonism had already been developed by many Pharisees toward Jesus, though this particular Pharisee does not seem to have been affected by that to this point given that He has invited Jesus to dine with him. Now he sees something that causes him to question the identity and character of Jesus. It had been reported to him that Jesus was a prophet, but how could Jesus be a prophet if He could not recognize that this woman that was touching Him was a sinner? Notice first that the Pharisee assumes that a prophet would be able to immediately recognize the moral character of the people he meets or perhaps he had already been told about Jesus' miracles including being able to know things without being told about them before hand. Either way, he assumes Jesus should know the character and reputation of this woman without being told. Second, this Pharisee applies his own standard of separation to Jesus. He could not view someone as holy, such as a prophet would be, if he allowed a sinful woman to physically touch him anywhere including his feet.

A Pointed Illustration - Luke 7:40-43

Jesus' response to the situation that had developed reveals that He is indeed a prophet while also rebuking the Pharisee for his self-righteousness. *40 And Jesus answered him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' And he replied, 'Say it, Teacher.' 41 'A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 'When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which of them will love him more?' 43 Simon answered and said, 'I suppose the one whom he forgave more.' And He said to him, 'You have judged correctly.'*

Notice first in verse 40 that it says that *"Jesus answered him."* This Pharisee named Simon has not said anything to Jesus about what he was thinking. Perhaps his facial expression might have shown his

displeasure at the woman at Jesus feet, but the illustration here and the rebuke that follows it in verses 44-47 show that Jesus is answering Simon's thoughts. Jesus was more than a prophet for He went far beyond just being able to discern Simon's character. Jesus knew Simon's very thoughts.

Jesus begins by addressing this Pharisee directly by name which we find out is Simon. Do not confuse him with the many other men named Simon mentioned in the Scriptures. This is Simon the Pharisee and this is the only place in the Bible he is referenced. Jesus tells Simon that He had something to say to him. Simon's reply is not rude, but neither it is gracious. It is a curt response to speak on and he refers to Jesus as a teacher instead of a Rabbi. He recognizes that Jesus has gained a position by which He is instructing people, but Simon does not give Jesus the honor of the title given to religious teachers.

Jesus' illustration is very straightforward. Two men are indebted to a moneylender. One owes a great amount and the other a relatively small amount. A denarius was the average wage for a day's work, so one worker owed the equivalent of a year and half of labor and the other about two months. Neither man was capable of repaying their debt. Jesus is specific that the moneylender forgave the debt of both of these men based on his own graciousness. These men did not earn this action in any way. The moneylender did it from out of his own character in not only refraining from demanding what was due, but then extending a great blessing to these two undeserving men.

Jesus question based on this illustration is simple. Which of them will love the moneylender more? Perhaps Simon recognized there was going to be a point to this story for his answer is very hesitant. It is blatantly obvious that the one forgiven the greater amount would have the greater response of love, but Simon only supposes that to be true. He presumes that to be true but without any certainty. Jesus affirms that Simon had come to a correct conclusion. That conclusion would prove Simon was well deserving of the rebuke that Jesus now gives as He contrasts the actions of the woman who was a sinner with the lack of action by Simon the Pharisee.

Revealing Contrasts - Luke 7:44-47

44 Turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 "You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. 46 "You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. 47 "For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little."

Jesus rebukes Simon by contrasting him with the woman. She was forgiven much and so responded with great demonstrations of love. Simon was forgiven little and so responded with very little demonstration of love. In fact, Simon's only demonstration of love was inviting Jesus to come and dine with him, which could have been done for purely selfish reasons.

Jesus begins by pointing the woman out to Simon. It was obvious that Jesus was fully aware that Simon had seen the woman and had judged her and Jesus for letting her touch Him. Jesus points out the obvious to make the rebuke more pointed. He then contrasts everything she did with the absence of what Simon should have done.

I already mentioned that the custom was to have a slave or a servant wash a guest's feet when they arrived, or at minimum to provide water for them to wash their own feet as Jesus points out in verse 44. Simon had not even done that, yet the woman washed Jesus' feet with her tears and wiped them dry with her hair.

It was also customary to greet a guest with a kiss on the cheek and especially so those that you sought to honor. This is still the common greeting in many cultures around the world and even in many sub-cultures in America today where the handshake has largely replaced it. Simon did not do that and so bordered on being rude. It would be like inviting an important dignitary to your home and then not bothering to shake his hand when he arrived. This woman had not ceased to kiss Jesus' feet.

A final act of hospitality that Simon did not do was anoint Jesus' head with oil. While that may not make much sense to us in this society, it was very welcomed in that society. Israel is a warm country with low humidity which causes the skin to dry out. Oil then, like lotions today, helped restore moisture to the skin so it was both refreshing and healthful. Oil was used in the hair as part of daily grooming. If the oil was scented, then it was also pleasing to the sense of smell. Simon had not provided this hospitality, but the woman anointed Jesus' feet with perfume.

Jesus makes his point in verse 47 which explains both the actions of the woman and the lack of hospitality by Simon. *"For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little."*

I want to expand on this point a little, but before I do I want to make sure that you do not isolate this verse from its context and then conclude that the woman gained forgiveness by her actions of love. That would contradict both the point of Jesus' illustration and teaching in verses 40-43 and His declaration in verse 50 that the cause of her salvation was her faith. The context here is that this woman had been forgiven and her actions have demonstrated her reception of that forgiveness and response of love to it. This was a woman who was a sinner who had been burdened and heavy-laden. She had responded to Jesus' offer to come to Him and take up His yoke and she found rest for her soul. Her very response to Jesus is the evidence that she had met Him before and He had ministered to her.

Notice that Jesus is speaking to Simon in verses 44-46 and here he continues that stating, *"I say to you."* This is making a specific statement of rebuke to Simon. God grants forgiveness to sinners both great and small based in His own character which is merciful, gracious and loving. Nothing in this passage has excluded Simon from that forgiveness, and the contrast being made is between the response of those forgiven much and those forgiven little. The woman is the one who has been forgiven much and that is why she has responded with such a great demonstration of love to the one that has forgiven her. Simon is the one who has been forgiven little and that is why he has shown such little love toward Jesus. Jesus' words are as true today as they were then.

What exactly is the principle? To be forgiven much or little is not an evaluation of who was the greater sinner that was forgiven. While some sins are more serious in terms of the resulting damage caused in this life, God hates all sin and any sin separates man from God and brings about his condemnation. In addition, every human is characterized by sin so much so that even those deeds he believes are righteous are still as filthy rags before our holy God (Isaiah 64:6). No amount of human effort at being righteous can bring about forgiveness and salvation. And while there is evidence that there are various levels of punishment in Hell related to the degree of grace God has extended to an individual that has been rejected (Luke 12:48; John 15:22), Hell is still Hell and a place of terrible eternal punishment. Even in Jesus' illustration, not paying back a debt whether it was 500 denarii or 50 denarii could still put you in jail (Matthew 18:22-34). The woman was known as a sinner, but was her sin actually greater than that of Simon the Pharisee? What sins are considered to be greater by God? Proverbs 6:16-19 lists out seven things that are abominations to the Lord. They do not include being a harlot, drunkard, glutton or publican. They do include lying, causing strife among brothers and the haughty eyes of pride. Throughout the gospel accounts Jesus' strongest words are against the proud and self-righteous.

Both the woman and the Pharisee were sinners, and Simon's sins were just as serious. The real difference between the two is that the woman recognized her great sinfulness and therefore the magnitude of the forgiveness granted to her while Simon did not. He considered himself to be fairly good with only minor sins. Those of you who understand the depth of your sinfulness also understand the magnitude of what God has forgiven you and that is why you respond with great love for God. Those of you who minimize the depth of your sins thinking them to be minor or little compared to others also minimize the magnitude of the forgiveness that God has granted to you and that is why your love for God is minimal by comparison. If you want to increase your love for God, then you must begin by

coming to grips with the depth of your own sinfulness for which He has forgiven you. Do not compare your sins to others. Compare your sin to the holiness of Jesus Christ and consider the offence it is to the Lord.

How is great love of God demonstrated? Doesn't that go back to the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount. It begins with being poor in spirit and mournful over sin, then progress to being meek in submitting yourself to God's will and hungering and thirsting after righteousness not only in actions, but in purity of heart. From that extends the Christlike character of being merciful to others, seeking to be a peacemaker that brings others to reconciliation and being willing to suffer for it when the wicked persecute you for your righteousness. And remember that actions preceded emotions. You do not become poor in spirit by waiting for God to make you feel humble. You become poor in spirit by humbling yourself before God in light of truth.

Granting Forgiveness - Luke 7:48-50

In verses 48-50 Jesus declares the woman to be forgiven and the reason for it. *48 Then He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven." 49 Those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?" 50 And He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."*

Notice in verse 50 that Jesus clearly states that the basis of her being saved is her faith and that is why she can go in peace. No one receives forgiveness from God based on deeds of righteousness they have done. Salvation from sin comes by God's grace through faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ who paid the sin price at Calvary and then rose from the dead proving His identity, authority and ability to keep all of His promises including forgiving our sins and granting eternal life.

Jesus' actions caused Simon's other guests to be astonished. *"Who is this man who even forgives sins?"* It is a serious question because only God can forgive sins and it would be blasphemy for a man to claim that authority (Mark 2:6-7). The answer is that Jesus is the Messiah who is God in human flesh.

Response of the Forgiven - Luke 8:1-3

Before I close for today, I want to quickly call your attention to the next passage in Luke 8:1-3 where Luke extends the example of those who loved Christ greatly to many others. *¹ Soon afterwards, He began going around from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God. The twelve were with Him, ² and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, ³ and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who were contributing to their support out of their private means.*

Jesus leaves Nain and returns to His itinerant ministry in the region of Galilee of proclaiming and preaching the good news of the kingdom of God. As would be expected, the twelve are traveling with Him, but Luke mentions women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses. Remember that evil spirits are often described in Scripture as the cause of various physical and mental afflictions. Three of these women are mentioned by name.

Mary Magdalene was from the town of Magdala which was located on the western most edge of the Sea of Galilee about 5 ½ miles southwest of Capernaum. Luke specifically states that she had seven demons cast out of her. She is mentioned later in the gospels as being at Jesus' crucifixion and is the first one to see Jesus after He had risen from the dead.

Joanna is mentioned here and may also be the same woman who later went with Mary to the tomb of Jesus. She is the wife of a man named Chuza who is an official of some sort in Herod's court. As such, he would have been a man of some wealth.

Susanna is only mentioned here, but since Luke mentions her by name, she must have been well known in the first century church to whom his gospel account was first distributed. Luke also calls

attention to other unnamed women who had also been healed and who served Jesus and His those traveling with Him from their possessions.

Luke's point is simple. Those who had received much from Jesus responded with much love to Him which was demonstrated in many practical ways including becoming disciples who would at times travel with Him and the twelve, would serve them and would even provide from what they owned for the financial and physical needs of an itinerant ministry.

Conclusion

Those who recognize that God has forgiven them much will love the Lord much. That love will be manifested in becoming a disciple, a follower of Jesus, and serving Him. The nature of true love is that it turns from self and personal gain to the person who is loved and what can be given for their benefit. How much has Jesus forgiven you? It will be manifested in your love for Him. The path to increasing that love starts with humbling yourself, recognizing your sinfulness and need, then thanking Him for His forgiveness and provision.

Sermon Notes: *Much Forgiveness, Much Love*

Luke 7:36-8:3

Introduction

How would people answer the question, “Do you _____ God?”

How would you answer the question, “What determines the _____ of your love for God?”

The Context: Jesus’ invitation for the weary and heavy-laded to _____ to Him to find rest for their souls

The Actions of the Sinful Woman - Luke 7:36-38

Jesus is Nain and is asked by a Pharisee there to come and _____ with him

This meal will include not only Jesus and the Pharisee, but Jesus’ companions and the Pharisee’s _____

Jesus is not sitting at a table, He is _____

A _____ is an arrangement of sloping couches into a “U” shape with a table for food in the middle

An open court yard or dinning area would allow those passing by easy _____

Verse 37 - The woman was known in the community as a _____ - we don’t know the specifics

The woman learns Jesus will be at the Pharisee’s home and she _____ there to find Him

She brings an alabaster jar of perfume with her - an _____ commodity

She stands behind Jesus at His feet and begins to weep profusely, wetting His _____, drying them with her hair

She kisses Jesus’ feet and anoints them with the _____

Washing someone’s feet was a humbling task, even more _____ was this woman who also kissed His feet

The Thoughts of the Pharisee - Luke 7:39

The Pharisee began to doubt Jesus’ reputation as a prophet when He allowed the woman to touch Him

The Pharisee assumes a prophet should immediately know the character of a person without being told

The Pharisees applies his own personal standard of separation upon Jesus

A Pointed Illustration - Luke 7:40-43

Jesus answered what Simon had been _____ - showing He was a prophet

Simon the Pharisee is curt - acknowledging Jesus is a teacher, but not honoring Him as a _____

Illustration: A moneylender graciously _____ the large debt of one man and the smaller debt of another

Simon gives a _____ answer that the one forgiven the greater debt will love more

Revealing Contrasts - Luke 7:44-47

Simon did not even provide water - the woman _____ Jesus’ feet with her tears and hair

Simon did not give Jesus a kiss of _____ - the woman was kissing Jesus’ feet

Simon did not anoint Jesus head with _____ - the woman anointed Jesus’ feet with costly perfume

The woman was forgiven much and demonstrated _____ love - Simon was forgiven little and loved little

The woman did not gain forgiveness by her actions of love - that would _____ vs. 40-43 and 50

The woman had _____ to Jesus’ offer to come to Him and take up His yoke and find rest for her soul

Jesus speaks directly to _____ - who is not excluded from forgiveness - but is rebuked for his lack of love

This is not an evaluation and declaration that _____ sinners will be able to love more

All humans are sinful and deserve God’s condemnation and Hell - and no one can _____ God’s forgiveness

The woman’s sins were not greater than Simon’s according to _____ standards

The difference is that the woman _____ her great sinfulness while Simon did not recognize his own
Those who _____ the depth of their sin also minimize the greatness of God's forgiveness
Compare your sin to the holiness of Jesus Christ and consider the _____ it is to the Lord
Great love toward God is demonstrated by living according to the characteristics in the _____
_____ precede emotions - you become poor in spirit by humbling yourself before God in the light of truth

Granting Forgiveness - Luke 7:48-50

The basis of the woman's salvation - forgiveness - was her _____, not any works she had done
Salvation from sin comes by God's _____ through faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ
The other guests were _____ - questioning Jesus' identity for only God can forgive sins

Response of the Forgiven - Luke 8:1-3

Jesus returns to an itinerant ministry along with the _____
Luke mentions women who had been _____ of evil spirits and sicknesses
Mary Magdalene had _____ demons cast out of her
Joanna was married to Chuza, an official in Herod's court and so would have had some _____
_____ - only mentioned here, but would have been known in the first century
Other unnamed women who _____ for Jesus and the disciples out of what they owned
Those who had received much from Jesus responded with love for Jesus demonstrated in _____ ways

Conclusion

Those who recognize that God has forgiven them much will _____ the Lord much
Love for God is increased by _____ yourself, recognizing your sinfulness & need, then thanking
Him for His forgiveness and provision

KIDS KORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help.

Young Children - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. **Older Children** - Do one or more of the following: 1) Write down all the verses mentioned in the sermon and look them up later. 2) Count how many times the woman and the Pharisee (Simon) is mentioned. Talk with your parents about why the woman loved Jesus much and Simon loved only a little.

THINK ABOUT IT!

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. What determines the depth of your love for God? Where is Jesus? Why does the Pharisee invite Jesus to dine with him? Who would have been there for the meal? What were the dining customs of that time and culture? What were the specific actions of the woman? What did the Pharisee think about Jesus' response to the woman's actions? How did Jesus demonstrate that He was a prophet? Why does Simon answer Jesus' question as a "suppose" instead of with confidence? Contrasts the actions of the woman with the lack of actions by Simon. How did each match the customs of the time? Was the woman because of her acts of love? Why or why not? Jesus gives a direct rebuke to Simon - does Jesus exclude Simon from being forgiven? What is the specific rebuke? What is the principle taught? Will those that lived in flagrant sin be able to love God more than those who grew up as obedient children in a Christian home? Why or why not? Explain. What is the basis for receiving God's forgiveness? How is great love for God demonstrated? How can love for God be increased? What is the normal response of those who have been forgiven by God? Have you been forgiven of your sins by God? What has been your response? Give practical examples.