

Who Loves Much?

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Sarah, that song went better with our sermon anyway.

Let's turn to Luke 7. Our subject is "Who Loves Much?" The main point of my text is found in verse 47. Look there with me. Our Master said, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for which cause she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." To whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much, but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. Forgiveness is the tie that binds every believer to Christ and binds us to one another. This is what motivates us to obey Christ, it's what motivates us to love Christ, it's what motivates us to want to serve him and live for him, and it's what motivates us to love one another. We all together have experienced God's forgiveness of our sin. This is the tie that binds believers and the more you see yourself a sinner, and the more you see God has forgiven you, the more you love. The more you love.

It's knowing that our sins are many and that they're forgiven by Christ that makes us love more. That makes us love much but the opposite is true also: to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. Religious folks like Simon the Pharisee do not see themselves to be great sinners, they do not see themselves to be worthless sinners, and because they do not, they love not at all. They love not at all. I want to look at the woman and then at the Pharisee and then at the Lord Jesus.

In verse 36 we read, "one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat." Now our Lord had begun to attract some popularity. Before this he raised a man, a guy, a fella that was dead, he raised him from the dead and his fame went abroad and people knew about him so this Pharisee probably just out of curiosity had him to his house. Now in those days when they had a dinner, the important folks would sit at the table, they would recline at this table, and others would sit around the sides of the room and listen to them as they spoke, and this was an open house, people could come in and sit around the walls of the house and listen.

So this was a lot of people present here and it says in verse 37, "And, behold," all of a sudden, all of a sudden, this was to everyone's surprise, "a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash

his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment." This was a woman in the city which was a sinner, that means her trade was sin. That's how she made her living in the city and everybody there knew who she was and what she was and Christ knew it, but most vitally she knew it. She knew it. The Lord had taught this woman the gospel. The Lord had revealed to her Christ. He made her see her great great sin. She knew that beyond even her trade, that all she was was sin. When she breathed, she sinned and she knew this. She knew this, and she saw how much, how much the Lord had forgiven her of her sin.

Now brethren, only God can make a sinner know this. Only God can make us know how great our sin is and how great Christ has forgiven us our sin and that's the only way, that's the only way we'll love Christ and love our brethren. The only way. And in proportion to how much he reveals, that's how much we'll love. Joseph Hart said, he's a great songwriter and he wrote this,

"To understand these things aright,
This grand distinction should be known.
Though all are sinners in God's sight,
There are but few so in their own.
To such as these our Lord was sent,
They're only sinners who repent.

What comfort can a Savior bring,
To those who never felt their woe?
A sinner is a sacred thing,
The Holy Ghost has made him so.
New life from him we must receive,
Before for sin we rightly grieve.

This faithful saying let us own,
Well worthy 'tis to be believed.
That Christ into the world came down,
That sinners might by him be saved.
Sinners are high in his esteem,
And sinners highly value him."

Now first of all, we see in the woman, we see in the woman what our Lord taught here, to whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much. That's what we see in this woman. The greater sin that we see that God has forgiven, the more we see our sin, the more we see God has forgiven us our sin, the more we're willing to own Christ as our Savior, the less ashamed we'll be of our Lord Jesus, the more we'll own him to be our Savior.

She knew there was a host of people at that house. She knew that house was full of folks and she knew they knew who she was and what she was, and she didn't care. She didn't care. Verse 37, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, she came to

where Christ was. She didn't care. The person who does not see themselves a sinner, he's totally ashamed of Christ.

A person who doesn't know they're a sinner, they're ashamed of Christ. That's what it is that keeps sinners from coming to Christ, they can't admit their sin, they don't see their sin. They think they're righteous and they don't come to Christ, they're ashamed of Christ. They're ashamed to identify with his people. Who wants to identify with a bunch of sinners? Only a sinner. Only a sinner. The more sin we see that God has forgiven, the less ashamed we're gonna be to own Christ as our Savior, to own him as our Savior and the less ashamed we'll be to identify with Christ's people.

That's why the self-righteous, you see in religion where they have to have a law, the law of the Sabbath day, they have to have that to make them come to God's house where God's people are. Christ's people don't need that. You know what we need? We need to know our sin and how much it's been forgiven by Christ. That's what constrains us to come to the house where Christ is and it makes you know there's nothing worth forsaking the assembling of yourselves together with God's people where Christ has promised to meet us. It's because you love much. You love much.

2. We see here the greater sin that God has forgiven, the more we see it, the more precious Christ is to us and so the more sacrificial our love will be to him. The more we see our forgiveness, the greater sin we see, the greater forgiveness we see, the more we'll love him and the more sacrificial we'll be in our love to him because he's precious.

It says here she brought an alabaster box of ointment. That's precious ointment for her precious Savior. She saw, now she understood that her sin was put away by a great price, the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without spot and without blemish. The more precious Christ is to us, the more precious will be our brethren whom Christ redeemed. He's gonna be more precious to us and those brethren Christ redeemed will be more precious to us. God's free forgiveness is what makes us love one another. His free forgiveness. Believers are the closest thing we have to Christ and if he's precious to us, his people are gonna be precious to us and that makes us willing to give our very best for Christ and for his people, for the furtherance of his gospel, for the good of our brethren, for his house, whatever, we want to give our very best for Christ, sacrificially to Christ.

Now people who don't see their sin, people who don't understand forgiveness and aren't forgiven much, they need a tax, they need a tithe to make them give. God's people don't need that. We need to see how great our sin is and how greatly God has forgiven us for Christ's sake and that's what makes you sacrificially give the best for Christ.

The greater sin is the greater we see God's forgiveness, the more meek it makes us. It says here in verse 38 she stood at his feet behind him weeping. She stood at his feet behind him weeping. To every sinner that sees what a great great sinner they are, the more they see their sin and the more they sin his forgiveness, Christ's feet are that much more precious. His feet are precious. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good

that publisheth salvation, that sayeth unto Zion, Our God reigneth." The more sin is forgiven, the more you behold it, the more beautiful his feet are and the more beautiful the feet of them he uses to preach the gospel to you. His preacher and his people, it's not just his preacher he uses, it's all his people he uses and they become precious to you, their feet are precious because they brought the gospel to you.

She stood at his feet and she stood there behind him weeping. Weeping. The whip of the law won't create humility. You know this is so. If somebody has done something that offends you and you're harsh with them and you're hard with them and you let them know in no uncertain terms how wrong they are, most of the time you're gonna receive that same harshness right back. The whip of the law won't humble a person. What does it? Beholding you're a sinner, worthless, undone, worthy of hell and yet God in his great infinite mercy has forgiven you for Christ's sake. That's what humbles us down to Christ's feet. That humbles his people.

These were bitter tears that are sweet tears. They're bitter because she saw her sin and she knew her sin is what crucified Christ, what would crucify him, but they're sweet tears too because she knew he put them all away. Bittersweet tears. Our Lord said, "Blessed are those that mourn. Happy are those that mourn. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are those that hunger and thirst after righteousness." You see these things? This is what seeing your sin and God's forgiveness of that sin, that's what this works in his people. Those who don't see their sin are proud, they're self-righteous, they're arrogant, they're hard-hearted, but the more you see your sin, you know, you just can't, if you see your sin, really own your sin and see how terrible it is and you see that God sent his only begotten Son and Christ lay down his life, you can't be haughty and arrogant toward another sinner. Can you imagine the Apostle Paul being arrogant and haughty toward some other sinner when he saw what a great sinner he was and how great he was forgiven? That's what brings you down. That's what makes you meek before the Lord at his feet.

The more sin God's forgiven us, the more we want Christ to be honored, we want him to be glorified, we want him to be adorned. You picture her, she walks into this house and there she sees her Redeemer. She sees him who redeemed her and he's laying there reclined on a pillow at the table and she looks down at his feet and his feet haven't even been washed. That was the custom in that day. You traveled around and you're in sandals and your feet would get dirty and they would be hot and they would be hurting, and when you entered into a house somebody washed your feet. They had a servant there with water to wash your feet and they greeted you with a kiss and they welcomed you into the house. None of that had been done for Christ. The Lord of Glory is there, the Prince of Life, God Almighty, and nobody had done that for him and she sees him sitting there and sees his feet in that condition. That's one of the reasons she mourned. She wanted him to be honored so she began to wash his feet with her tears and wipe them with the hairs of her head and she kissed his feet and anointed them with ointment. She wanted her Savior to be honored. She wouldn't stand for her Savior to be disrespected by his feet not being washed.

She washed his feet with her tears. She wanted him to have the glory for her salvation. You know, the Scripture says a woman's hair is her glory and she took her glory and she laid it down at his feet and dried his feet with her hair. Do you see that? She wanted him to have the glory. She wanted him to be adorned. She kissed his feet. She put that precious ointment on his feet and that should be our desire toward our brethren who Christ redeemed. Remember what Christ told them that night? He bowed down and he washed the disciples' feet and he said, "What I've done to you, you do to one another." It doesn't mean literally you have to wash one another's feet, it means you do whatever's necessary. If their feet needs washing, you wash their feet, but whatever it is that we can do for one another. You want your brethren to be honored. You don't want the honor, you want them to have the honor. You don't want your brethren to be, for you to be glorified over your brethren, you want them to be glorified for whatever it is that they've accomplished or they've done. You want them to be adorned. Why? Because you see Christ in them. You see them as representing your Redeemer who did this for you and who you want to have the honor and the glory and the adornment. That's what happens when you see how great your sins are and how he's forgiven them.

Christ said, "To whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much." Now let's look at this Pharisee. Our Lord said, "To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." Now it doesn't mean that Simon was forgiven. He showed no love at all to Christ and he showed no love at all to this woman.

1. The person who doesn't see himself a sinner, especially a great sinner, that person who doesn't see himself a sinner thinks nothing of Christ. He doesn't think anything of Christ. Look at this, verse 39, "Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man," do you see the contempt in that? "This man if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner." He's saying Christ is a liar. He's saying he's an impostor. If he knew, if he was a prophet he'd know who this woman is and what she is. He had no love for Christ. He had no love for Christ because, why? He didn't see his sin. He didn't know what a wretched sinner he is.

He didn't know anything about forgiveness and that person who doesn't see himself a great sinner thinks nothing of Christ's people. Simon thought in himself, he said, "I know who and what manner of woman this is. She's a sinner." He would not have let her come in his house. Don't you know he was despised and he was so offended when this sinful harlot walked into his house, let alone let her kiss his feet and wash his feet? It makes you wonder how he knew who she was, doesn't it? How did he know who she was? What she was? Here he is a sinner and if she'd of tried to kiss his feet, he'd of said, "Stand by thyself. Come not near me. I'm holier than thou." Who does that? Who's hard-hearted? Who's unforgiving? Who's unmerciful? Who's unloving? The person who hasn't seen what a great sinner they are and the less we see of our sin, the more we'll be that way: the more hard, the more unforgiving, the more unloving, the more self-righteous, the more proud, the more arrogant. And that's what the Pharisee was.

Now let's hear the Lord Jesus speak in verse 40, "And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on." He's so hypocritical calling him Master, and he's thinking this in his heart, he's thinking in his heart, "This man's not a Master. This man's not a prophet. He's not God." And yet he answers, "Master, say on."

Christ said, "There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged." Now get this first: there are degrees of sin and there are degrees of sinners. Our Lord spoke here of one who owed a hundred pence and the other fifty. You and I who've heard the gospel preached, we've heard the gospel of God's electing grace, of his redeeming grace, his regenerating grace, his preserving grace, you and I who've heard the gospel preached, we will be judged by God as far greater sinners than those who've not heard the gospel if we reject the word of our Redeemer. Do you get that? To whom much is given, much is required.

But notice here they were both debtors. They both were debtors. All are guilty before God. All are guilty before God and notice no sinner can pay his sin debt either. We have nothing with which to pay. We're sinners. We're sinners. Christ alone is the sinless one. We can't pay because we're sinners. I can't pay my sin debt. I owe. I owe and I can't pay that, "The wages of sin is death." I can't pay eternal death but I can't even try to die for anybody's sin. Christ is the sinless one. He's the only one that had with which to pay and he bore the sin of his people and he bore the justice of God, and he paid everything his people owed to justice, and the only way any sinner is saved is because God frankly forgives us. Do you know what that means, he frankly forgave them? That means unconditionally, without a cause in them, and that's the only way any sinner is gonna be chosen and redeemed and saved is without any condition in you or me. It's by Christ alone.

But now listen, look who's saying this. Yes, there are degrees of sin, there are degrees of sinners, but look who's saying this. Christ is saying this. Not a sinner is saying this, Christ is saying this. You and I, brethren, we don't see our sin as lesser and greater. We don't go around looking at our sins and thinking, "Well, I'm not as bad as that person," because we're not as those who compare themselves with themselves. That's not who God's people are. He's made us see that we're sinners so we're not looking at lesser sin and greater sin, we're not attempting to justify our sins. That's not what God's child is gonna do, not by God's grace. We see all our sin is great, it's all great because it's against a great Redeemer, it's against our great God, our Father. It's all great sin to us because he's made us see it's great. This is the one who loved us and gave himself for us. We can't call some of our sin lesser sin. We see what a great price it cost our Redeemer.

Now what's sin? If you had to pick a sin and say, "Well, that's a lesser sin," would it keep Christ off the cross? No. So we're not the ones who are going around trying to determine, "Well, that's less. I'm gonna let myself slide on that one." No. There's sin that our Lord,

all sin, Christ takes all, God hates all sin and he hates the sinner, but there are some sins that Scripture says that he hates worse than other sin and one of those sins is the Pharisee right here, pride. Pride and I'm convinced, brethren, that's our greatest sin. It's pride. You and I have a Simon in all of us and that's our greatest sin, it's pride. We can't justify any of our sin because we see the grace and the love it took for God to forgive us in Christ.

Now this woman exemplifies that one who's forgiven much will love much, but as Simon exemplifies, one who does not see themselves a sinner, one who does not see their need of forgiveness loves little, or in Simon's case not at all. Not at all.

Now let's notice this: the Lord Jesus honors those who honor him. Our Lord honors. She came in there and she honored Christ. You think he's gonna stand there and let this Pharisee scorn her? He defends his people. Look here in verse 44, "And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet," he didn't even show him the common respect of washing his feet, "but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss," you didn't even greet me with a holy kiss, "but this woman hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with oil."

"Wherefore," he's saying, "Why did she do this? Wherefore why did she do this? I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for which she loved much." You get that? That's why she did this because she saw her great sin and how much it was forgiven, "but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." Simon's self-righteousness made him too proud to even provide water for our Lord. This woman came and washed his feet with her tears. Self-righteous pride kept Simon from seeing what a sinner he was. He thought nothing of the Savior. He thought nothing of this woman. But seeing her sinfulness, she came down to Christ's feet and loved him all the more. She wasn't pointing at sinners in that room, she didn't raise up and defend herself to Simon, she didn't point out his sin or anything. Why? She saw herself a sinner, a great sinner who had been greatly forgiven.

The more we behold our evil ways and the more we see God's free forgiveness of our sins, the more we'll hate ourselves in our own sight, we'll hate our iniquities, we'll hate our abominations, and the more we'll love Christ. In Ezekiel 36:31 God says, "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations." Let me tell you what will cure us looking at other sinners and being critical of other sinners: seeing what a sinner we are. Seeing what forgiveness we've been given. That's what will make us forgive others and if we don't see that, we won't do it. We won't do it.

You know, there's men and women who would never walk around and say this out loud, they'd never say, "You know, I'm so close to perfect that Christ just didn't have to, he didn't have to pay for many of my sin." Nobody would say that out loud, but when we won't love and forgive and be merciful to one another, we're screaming that to the top of

our lungs. That's what our Lord's saying right here. That's what Simon was saying right here, "I don't need forgiveness." That's what he was saying.

The Lord Jesus not only defends his child, he assures his child and he speaks peace to our hearts. Look here at verse 48, "And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven." Thy sins are forgiven."And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" They had seen him raise the dead and now they hear him say, "Your sins are forgiven"? They said, "Who is this?" "And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." Here's all these people in this house, here's this mighty Pharisee and the only one there who knew who Christ was was this notorious sinner that everybody looked down on.

Do you know who Christ is? I'll tell you who he is: he's the sovereign Savior who knows your sin and mine. He knew Simon's heart and he knows my heart. He knows your heart. He knew her heart. That's who he is. This is Christ who loved his people and came down and lay down his life for the sins of God's elect. This is the Lord Jesus Christ who purged all the sins of his people completely. This is Christ who comes and preaches the gospel to us in our heart and reveals to us what a great great sinner we are and then forgives with great forgiveness he's given us by his blood.

This is Christ, brethren, who defends his people. If you're ever in this woman's place where you have somebody who's been critical of you and who won't forgive you and who's looking down their nose at you like she was, wait on the Lord. Do you see who defended her? You see who defended her? Christ defended her. Christ defended her and Christ will defend his people.

He will defend his people and he will make you to know in your heart with assurance, "Thy sins are forgiven." "What did I do? What did we do to have forgiveness of sin?" "Thy faith hath saved thee." Your faith apart from any works in you, your faith apart from any value in you whatsoever, that faith God gave, that faith that lays hold of Christ alone, that's how we're saved. That's how we're saved.

And Christ said to her, "Now go in peace. Go in peace." You reckon she left that house that day too concerned about what Simon the Pharisee said about her? You reckon that was what was a concern to her? I doubt it. She probably left there that day praying for him, "Lord, I pray you'd make him see his sin, make him know what a sinner he is. Break his heart. Make him merciful. Make him forgiving. Make him to know what great forgiveness you've given your people."

That's what forgiveness will do, "To whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much." Much. "But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." I pray God will bless it.

Our great God and our Father, we thank you for this word. We pray you bless it, pray you make us to understand what sinners we are and what forgiveness we have in Christ. Don't let us forget this, Lord. Don't let us. Every time we become proud and that old Pharisee in us raises his head, bring us to see, Lord, how great our sin is and how

greatly you've forgiven us. Keep us at your feet. Keep us loving you, adorning you, honoring you, glorifying you, and keep us loving one another. We pray it in Christ's name. Amen.

"How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrow, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear,

It makes the wounded spirit whole,
And calms the troubled breast;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary rest."