

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

"WHEN GRACE GRIPS ONE AND GRIPES ANOTHER"

For individual study or group discussion

Continuing our studies in the *Gospel of Luke*, we return to Chapter 7 and encounter the narrative concerning a Pharisee, a prophet, and a prostitute. This story follows closely after Christ is reproached for being a friend to publicans and sinners (v. 34). Repeatedly throughout *Luke*, we see Jesus reaching out to the marginalized of his day, fully restoring them to himself through the healing power of forgiveness. And again in Luke 7:36-50, we witness Jesus' restorative grace as it grips a prostitute and gripes a Pharisee.

- Read Luke 7:36-50. Should we, like Jesus, associate with sinners? Why?
- The kinds of people who were attracted to Jesus often feel rejected by the church today. Why do you suppose this is?

In verses 36-43, we note that Jesus has something to say to sinners. When a prostitute crashes the party of Simon the Pharisee, her extravagant love is met by a judgmental and guarded response from Simon. Using the *Parable of the Two Debtors* (vv. 41-42), Jesus asks his audience to face their haughty hearts and plead for a heart that loves like the harlot. Only then can they face the enormity of their debts and receive the extravagant forgiveness Jesus offers.

- What were the three cultural expectations of hospitality that Simon ignored? What did his inaction reveal about his heart? (v. 47)
- The acts of extravagant love by the prostitute shocked the guests. What did her actions reveal about her heart? (v. 47)

Contemptuously, Simon thinks to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner" (v. 39). Observe how Jesus responds with a parable (vv. 41-42). Jesus turns toward the woman and asks Simon a rhetorical question, "Do you see this woman?" Rhetorical because you can be sure the eyes of everyone in the room were on the prostitute. But Jesus states the obvious, because he has something for sinners to see, as Matthew Henry summarizes: "Those whom Christ hath something against, he hath something to say to, for his Spirit shall reprove."¹

- What was the point of the parable, and how does Jesus lead Simon to face his haughty heart? (vv. 41-42)
- What made it so difficult for these religious leaders to actually see Jesus? What made it easier for the woman to see Jesus?

New Testament scholar and educator, J. Gresham Machen wrote, "It is a strange thing that when men talk about the love of God, they show by every word that they utter that they have no conception at all of the depths of God's love. If you want to find an instance of true gratitude for the infinite grace of God, do not go to those who think of God's love as something that cost nothing, but go rather to those who in agony of soul have faced the awful fact of the guilt of sin, and then have come to know with a trembling wonder that the miracle of all miracles has been accomplished, and that the eternal Son has died in their stead."²

- I John 1:8 states, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." We, like Simon the Pharisee, can deceive ourselves about our need for God's forgiveness. Are you ignoring any God-given heart convictions? Read and meditate on Psalm 32 Hebrews 8:8-12.
- The following verse, I John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Have you confessed to God your sins and found the freedom that John describes? Read and meditate on Psalm 51 today.

Jesus turns our normal approach to religion upside-down, as he shows us that the only cure for sin is his forgiveness that comes to us through the unmerited, undeserved grace of God.

DATE: April 24, 2022

SPEAKER: Chad/Brian

SERIES: Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 7:36-50

Family Dinner Table

"I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will remember your sins no more. (Isaiah 43:25)

The demeanor of the church of God should be characterized by forgiveness. Its message should tell the world of God's undeserved forgiveness for outrageous sinners, because the message is spoken by a people who love much, for they have been forgiven much.

In his commentary on *Luke*, Philip Ryken adds, "It is our calling as Christians to share the love of Christ with people who need his grace. In the same way that Jesus came to save lost sinners, and in the same way that he has touched our own lives, we are called to reach out with his love. The love of Christ is to govern our response to the girl at school who has a reputation for sleeping around, to the homeless man addicted to crack cocaine, to the openly gay couple in our apartment building, to the inmate with the violent record, to the family member who scorns the gospel, to the pastor who denies fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. The love of Christ leads us to build relationships with the obvious sinners we know. Too often, we do not have relationships with them at all, or if we do, our contempt for their sin shows through. They can tell what we really think of them, and this hinders them from ever hearing the gospel we want to give them."³

- Discuss as a family how you can cultivate a heart of love for those in your community who need to hear God's message of forgiveness and grace.

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

East Lake Expression Engine

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

David, supported missionary partner, is serving in a sensitive region in East Africa through mission, education, and evangelism.

¹Henry, Matthew. *Complete Commentary on the Whole Bible*. <https://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary/mh/luke/7>.

²Machen, J. Gresham. *What the Bible Teaches About Jesus*, in *Selected Shorter Writings*, ed. D.G. Hart. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2004. 31-2.

³Ryken, Philip G. *Luke*, Volume 1. Phillipsburg, NJ, P&R Publishing, 2009. 345