



## **“Tears, Debtors, and a Block of Ice”**

### **Luke 7:36-50**

August 7, 2022

#### **August Meeting Schedule**

- Aug. 14 – EPCC not available
- Aug. 21 – Class
- Aug. 28 – Pending
- Sept. 4 – No class – Labor Day
- Sept. 11 – EPCC not available

#### **Luke 7:36-50**

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- 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.
- 39 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.”
- 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.”

#### **36 Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table.**

- Pharisees = “separated ones”
- “requesting Him to dine” – not unusual as Jesus was popular and may have just finished speaking at the synagogue.
- No doubt this “separated one” had ulterior motives than just being hospitable. “Have you ever been invited over to dinner & then find out “you” were the main course?”
- If he could trip up Jesus, get Him to blaspheme, or show in some way that He could not be the Messiah, he would be lauded by his fellow “separated ones.”
- “reclined at the table” – this was the custom of the first century.
- Others could come into the house and stand around the perimeter and listen to the discussion.

#### **Luke 11:37-38**

37 Now when He had spoken, a Pharisee asked Him to have lunch with him; and He went in, and reclined at the table.

#### **Luke 14:1-2**

14 It happened that when He went into the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on the Sabbath to eat bread, they were watching Him closely.



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- Literally, "and behold". "Would you look at this" or "check this out"
- "woman who was a sinner" – "sinner" is a synonym for prostitute. She worked Galilee's "Red Light District"
- She was a sinner by profession.
- **Note:** But then again aren't we all sinners by profession? – we are hard at our profession 24/7/365.
- So she is a woman that is a prostitute – big strike against her in this setting.
- She finds out that Jesus is at the "separated one's" house. So she is determined to see Him.
- She brings a alabaster vial of perfume.

**Perfumes** were made from roots, blossoms or leaves of henna, cinnamon, turpentine, iris, lilies and roses. Oil was added to produce liquid perfumes. **It was very valuable and expensive, costing up to a year's pay for an average laborer.** They had several uses: as a cover-up deodorizer, as an expression of thankfulness or appreciation to someone, and as a pleasant fragrance filling the air. Perfume was part of the trade of being a prostitute.

**Alabaster** is fine-grained gypsum that has been used for centuries for statuary, carvings, pottery, and other ornaments. It normally is snow-white and translucent but can be artificially dyed; it may be made opaque and is similar in appearance to marble. It was made from a stone found near Alabastron in Egypt. The vials usually contained about a half a pint of perfume.



- 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,**
- At this point, you would guess there is going to be trouble if she goes in and “crashes the party”.
  - Simon is thinking they are going to have some serious discussions.

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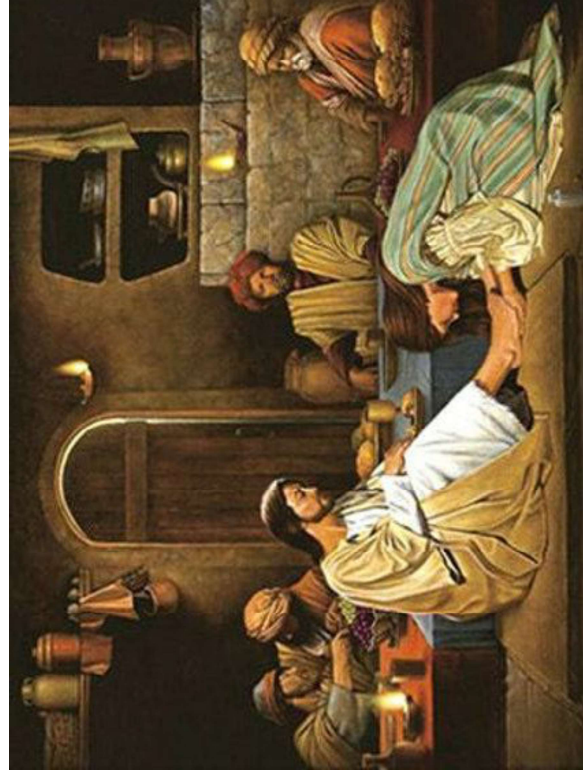
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- She finds her way in, somehow.
- **She breaks rule #1:** No prostitute shall enter the house of a “separated one.”
- She spots Jesus and makes her way to His feet. “But how do I get to His head?”
- She realizes she can’t so she stays at His feet.
- **“weeping”** – to sob. For a prolonged time (present active participle).
- The thought of standing by Jesus just causes her to lose it – she begins to weep uncontrollably. She is overwhelmed by her own past sins and the forgiveness she has found in Jesus Christ.
- The tears flow from her eyes, down her cheeks, off of her face and onto Jesus’ feet.
- **“wet”** – **βρεξω** – a shower, to rain
- **She breaks rule #2:** She takes down her hair to wipe His feet. Jewish women were required to wear their hair on top of their head when in public.
- **She breaks rule # 3:** She touches Jesus with her hands and with her lips, which would make Him ceremonially unclean. She kisses and embraces His feet. This could bring all kinds of speculation.
- She doesn’t care. She just wants to be with Jesus.
- She anoints Jesus feet with the expensive perfume (a year’s salary), as an act of sacrificial love for Him.
- **Note:** There is no record of her saying anything. She just wants to be NEAR HIM. Her actions speak louder than her words ever could.



### Ps 51:17

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;

A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.



Do we act this way toward our sin?

"Sometimes as I sit at the Lord's Supper, I have to ask myself, "What is the matter with me? How can I sit here and contemplate the passion of the Savior and not be melted in tears?"

Why am I such a block of ice? Is it that I have been brought up in a culture where it is considered unmanly to weep? If so, then I wish I had never known that culture. It is not a disgrace to weep in the shadow of Calvary; the disgrace lies in not weeping."

- William MacDonald

"She did it out of devotion to Jesus. She did it because she loved him. Her heart was full of affection and devotion to him. She understood who he was. He was the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world. He was going to give his life for such a worthless trashy woman as herself, and in fact this was the only anointing he would ever get. The question is, do you understand what this woman was doing? Do you know anything about this? Do you realize what it was that motivated this woman to fall at his feet, weeping, kissing, drying with her hair and pouring out this costly perfume? Is there anything in your heart that sympathizes with her?"

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- Simon is a "block of ice."
- What is the "separated one" thinking? I got Him.
- This is the moment he has been waiting for – a slip-up, a misstep, something that would show Jesus is not the Messiah who would fulfill the office of prophet, a priest, and a king.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> class conditional "if" – "if and it is not true."
- Here, Simon states, is the breaking of the ceremonial law – she was touching him.

"The trouble with being good is that the better we get the worse we might become. Keeping all the rules, going to all the right places, and saying all the right things has a nasty way of making us feel smug about ourselves."

- Joseph Stowell

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- The denarius was worth about a day's wage for a laborer.
- One owed 500 denarii = 1 3/4 year's pay (20 months) based on a six day work week.
- The other owed 50 denarii = two months' pay.
- "graciously" – χαριζομαι – to show grace.
- Grace offers forgiveness when a debt cannot be paid.
- "I suppose . . ." – Simon was maybe a little hesitant to answer, knowing how Jesus may catch him in something.
- But Simon gets it right.
- Whoever gets forgiven the most is going to be showing the most love.

**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."*

- "Do you see this woman?" Notice He doesn't turn toward Simon, which makes Simon look straight at the woman while Jesus is talking. "You look at her real good and long, Simon."
- Simon saw her but he really didn't see her. He was blinded by his self-righteousness, his hypocrisy, and his religion.

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**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."*

**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."

Can you see her? Will you let God show you?

Her face instead of her clothes?

Her eyes instead of her body?

Can you see her? Will you let God show you?

She has a name instead of a label,

A broken heart instead of a hard one

Can you see her? Will you let God show you?

The image of God instead of an object of scorn

Her worth to the Savior instead of her worthlessness to the world

Can you see her? Will you let God show you?

His heart of forgiveness instead of your heart that judges

His blood that covers instead of your rules that condemn

Can you see her? Will you let God show you?

And when you do see, what then?

- Lisa DePalma

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- And while you are looking at her, Simon, think about this – 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.**

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- In the course of life Simon and this woman would never meet. He would not go near a woman like her; she would not go near a man like him.

- The commonness they share here in this setting is that they both want to be with Jesus, but for totally different reasons.

Simon – to find fault

Woman – to find favor

Simon – to accuse

Woman – to adore

Simon – to condemn

Woman – to commend

Simon – looking for a sinner

Woman – looking for a Savior

"The atmosphere at Simon's house (no water, no kiss, no oil) was just as disgusting to Christ as the atmosphere of a brothel."

Simon knew about religion, the temple, the sacrifices and the law. She knew none of that. Simon missed the whole point. She got it.

**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."

- "have been forgiven" – perfect tense – it happened in the past and is having continuous results. She was already saved and forgiven before this encounter with Jesus.
- All of the shame, and guilt, and bondage to sin is gone.
- Because her sins were many, she therefore loved much.
- "So Simon, you are looking at one who loves much."
- Those who see themselves as "little sinners", love little.

### **If you were saved at a young age:**

- There is no other way to know the exceeding sinfulness of the depth your sin than to see it revealed by God in his word.
- Realize that you were born a "wretch" an "enemy of God", "dead in your trespasses and sins", separated from the life of God, condemned to an eternity in hell. That was you at 5 or 10 years old.
- Think of how many sins He has covered for you. Think of the punishment you deserved that did not happen to you because of God's grace.
- You can stand beside a former prostitute, a former drug addict, a former murderer, and sing "Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me", with as many tears streaming down your face as the vilest of sinners, because you are one.

"Your love for the Lord is directly related to your estimate of how greatly you have sinned and how much he has forgiven you. It's not how much you sin, but how deeply you feel it, that matters. If you figure that you are a "little sinner," then all you need is a "little Savior." If you are a "moderate sinner," then what you need is a "moderate Savior." But if you are "big sinner," you need a "big Savior." And those who have a "little Savior," will love him very little. But those who have a "big Savior" will love him greatly. Many of us who were raised in the church struggle precisely at this point. We don't love Christ very much because we have forgotten what we were and what we would have been if Christ had not found us. When our sin seems small, our love cannot be very great."

- Ray Pritchard

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50 And He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

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- **"have been forgiven"** – perfect tense.
- Jesus is just confirming what has already taken place.
- **Note:** Jesus is the one granting forgiveness, which makes Him God.
- The evidence of her salvation is her love for her Savior.

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**49 Those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?"**

- The people at the table understood what was going on.
- They should have been able to answer their own question.
- This question has been asked before in Luke . . .

### **Luke 5:20-21**

20 Seeing their faith, He said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you."

21 The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?"

**49 Those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?"**

- You can't see forgiveness, but you can see a transformed life.
- Your love for God that you demonstrate before the world, is a powerful testimony that your life has been transformed by Him.

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- Make no mistake, it was her faith that saved her – not her love, not her tears, not her service of washing His feet, nor her giving of perfume.
- It was her faith in the fact that God had forgiven her sins.
- Peace is the result of justification.

## Conclusion

1. It is not the quantity of sin in our lives, but the realization of the depth of our sin that determines our love for the Lord Jesus.
2. Religion can turn you into a cold "block of ice" that will blind you to the reality of lives that have been transformed by the power of Jesus Christ.
3. Those who are labeled "sinners", in the self-righteous religion of the "separated ones", have no place within it's walls, but in contrast, every single sinner who has been saved by grace is a part of the family of God.
4. Where are you on the spectrum of spiritual life? Are you more like Simon or are you more like the woman?

## Rom 5:1

1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,