

Small Group Questions | March 17, 2019

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The Great Explorers — Jesus at Table with a Pharisee – The Manner of Forgiveness

Focus Passage: Luke 7:36–50

Context:

Other Passages Referenced:

Sermon Recap: Jesus' experience at table with a Pharisee and a "sinful woman" reveals that another of His table manners is his readiness to forgive. Alignment with Jesus happens when we recognize our need for forgiveness, understand the cost of our forgiveness, and forgive others. We respond in freedom—freedom from sin, shame, and how others may judge us. Jesus stated that the extravagance of our love and thanks to God is proportionate to how much or how little we understand the magnitude of our debt He forgave.

Background Helps

4 Different Anointing Accounts – “Each of the Gospels has an anointing story (also Matt 26:6–13; Luke 7:36–50; John 12:1–8). Despite differences in detail, it is reasonably certain that the ones in Matthew, Mark, and John reflect the same event. It is much less certain that the one in Luke does, not merely because he placed it much earlier in Jesus' ministry but because of his description of the woman as a prostitute.”¹ Luke's account is the only one that doesn't mention the price of the ointment and the disciples' concern that it was wasteful. Instead, Luke emphasizes that the Pharisee did not have enough insight to recognize Jesus as a prophet and more, as the Messiah.

Significance of Anointing – “Procedure of rubbing or smearing a person or thing, usually with oil, for the purpose of healing, setting apart, or embalming ... The Hebrew verb *mashach* (noun, *messiah*) and the Greek verb *chrio* (noun, *christos*) are translated “to anoint.” From ancient times the priests and kings were ceremonially anointed as a sign of official appointment to office, and as a symbol of God's power upon them.”² “It was also a kind gesture to anoint the head of one's guest with olive oil.”³

A Woman With Hair Showing in Public – “Letting down one's hair in public was shameful and even a ground for divorce, but in her deep gratitude toward Jesus the woman forgot social propriety and used what was available to wipe Jesus' feet—her hair.”⁴

Love/Thankful – “Since there is no specific word for ‘to show gratitude’ or ‘to thank’ in Hebrew or Aramaic, such words as ‘love, praise, bless, glorify’ were used to express thanks or gratitude. Thus ‘love him more’ probably means ‘was more grateful/thankful.’”⁵

Hook: *Pick a Question to Help Ignite Conversation*

¹ James A. Brooks, *Mark*, vol. 23, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 221.

² Mike Mitchell, “[Anoint, Anointed](#),” ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 70.

³ Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 237.

⁴ Ibid. 236. Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 236.

⁵ Ibid.

If you could have dinner with anyone in history, other than Jesus, whom would you choose?

Would you rather have a prostitute come to a church dinner and begin washing and kissing your feet or would you rather get food poisoning from the meal?

Look—Observing and Interpreting:

READ Luke 7:36–50

1. What two assumptions does the Pharisee make about Jesus' interaction with the woman who anoints Jesus' feet that lead him to conclude that Jesus is not a prophet?
2. How did Jesus confront the Pharisee's inaccurate assumptions?
3. How did Jesus compare the woman's extravagance with the Pharisee's less-than-overwhelming hospitality?
4. Jesus declares to the Pharisee, "Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much." Was Jesus saying she was forgiven because she loved much (or perhaps "was very grateful") or that she loved much (was very grateful) because she was forgiven?

Illustrations:

Illustrations and quotes can be found on the "Sermon Slides" link at the bottom of www.wcchapel.org

Took: *Applying the message to our lives.*

1. With which of the three elements of alignment discussed in the sermon do you most need adjustment in order to align yourself with Jesus—recognizing our need for forgiveness, understanding the cost of our forgiveness, or forgiving others?
2. Jesus stated that the extravagance of our love and thanks to God is proportionate to how much or how little we understand the magnitude of our debt He forgave. How do you tend to respond to the forgiveness of Jesus?
3. Is there something for which you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to ask forgiveness? ... Is the Spirit bringing someone to mind that you need to forgive or ask forgiveness?
4. Although God doesn't sin, that doesn't mean we like everything He does. In fact, we can sometimes find ourselves getting angry with God or resenting what He has allowed to happen in our lives. When that happens we are less likely to want to be close to Him. Have you ever needed to "forgive" God and trust that His plan is best even if it is painful and the very opposite of what you would have chosen?

Prayer: Please spend time praying for one another.