

Lost and Found: The Prostitute

by C.J. Mahaney

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing our many sins, receiving God's forgiveness, and exercising faith in the Savior's substitutionary sacrifice, as exemplified by the sinful woman's actions in Luke 7.

Duration: 48:21

Scripture: Luke 7:36

Topics: "Forgiveness Of Sins", "Gods Love"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses a parable about a moneylender who freely forgives the debt of his debtors, which is shocking and unexpected. The preacher emphasizes that God is eager to forgive our sinful debt and wants to impress this upon our hearts. The sermon focuses on the example of a woman who shows great love and affection for Jesus, contrasting it with the negative example of Simon the Pharisee. The preacher encourages the audience to emulate the woman's example by realizing and acknowledging their sinfulness and receiving total forgiveness, which will determine the measure of their love for God.

Transcript

Now please turn in your Bibles to Luke chapter 7. What a privilege it is to preach to the church I love the most. Luke chapter 7 and I will begin reading in verse 36. One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table.

And behold, a woman of the city who was a sinner when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house brought an alabaster flask of ointment and standing behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wipe them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this he said to himself, if this man were a prophet he would have known. He would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him for she is a sinner and Jesus answering said to him, Simon I have something to say to you and he answered say it teacher.

A certain money lender had two debtors one owed 500 denarii and the other 50. When they could not pay he canceled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more? Simon answered the one I suppose for whom he canceled the larger debt and he said to him you have judged rightly.

Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon do you see this woman? I entered your house and you gave me no water for my feet but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil but she has anointed my feet with ointment.

Therefore I tell you her sins which are many are forgiven for she loved much but he who is forgiven little loves little and he said to her your sins are forgiven. Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves who is this who even forgives sins and he said to the woman your faith has saved you go in peace. Let's pray.

Lord Jesus Christ you who came to seek and save the lost I pray that you would continue this mission this morning through our consideration of this passage and through the proclamation of your word by your spirit and through your word lord seek by your spirit and through your word save seek and save everyone present here. I pray as an expression of your grace and mercy and all for the glory and pleasure of God alone. Father give me grace now to serve those I love in this holy task I pray and thank you in Jesus name amen.

The title of this message this morning is forgiven much loving much and this morning through this passage in holy scripture we in effect receive our own invitation to this historic and memorable dinner party. A pharisee has invited the savior to his home for dinner. Now this is a most unusual and unexpected invitation in light of the growing hostility of the pharisees against the savior.

Jeff's excellent message last week we encountered the pharisees charging the savior with speaking blasphemies and it would be that charge that charge would ultimately culminate in the savior's crucifixion. The charges against the savior have continued and the hostility has escalated. Please just look with me in your bibles in chapter six chapter six for just a sampling of the charges and growing hostility.

In chapter six we read in verse seven and the scribes and the pharisees watched him watched him to see whether he would heal on the sabbath so that they might find a reason to accuse him. Verse 11 but they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus. If you turn back to chapter seven you will note that beginning in verse 24 concluding in verse 35 Jesus indicts the entire generation pharisees included pharisees in particular he indicts the pharisees and that entire generation for their lack of discernment and their rejection of john the baptist and himself.

And then we read after verse 35 after this indictment concludes then we read in verse 36 one of the pharisees asked him to eat with him. What's up with that? What a surprise. Now we aren't informed why this pharisee has invited Jesus for dinner but what is obvious what is obvious is the absence of common customary expressions of hospitality and courtesy by the host when the savior arrives and the savior would draw attention to this later in the evening.

Verses 45 and 46 he draws attention you gave me no kiss you did not anoint my head with oil i entered your house and you gave no water for my feet.

In effect pharisee had invited the savior over to his house for dinner provided no parking there was no greeting at the door and in effect the food was served on paper plates there was an absence of even common courtesy toward the savior and there is the presence of a discernible tension and so had you been invited that evening had you been present that evening you would have discerned the absence of even common courtesy the savior was the guest should have been the honored guest and yet even

common courtesies were not extended to him you would have discerned the absence of common courtesy and you would have discerned the presence of tension and hostility and you would have anticipated that before this meal concludes there will be a confrontation at some point in time between the host and

the savior no one no one present that evening expected what would take place next verse 37 and behold a woman of the city who was a sinner she was not invited her name did not appear on the guest list though she was immediately recognized by all present she arrives unexpectedly and she arrives with a well-known reputation most likely as a prostitute and no doubt all present were surprised by her arrival and no one no one is prepared for what she does they were reclining at table not sitting at a table so all those present all guests present were laying on their side with their feet away from the table and though uninvited and though unwelcome by all present except for the savior she finds her way to the feet of the savior and in her hands is an alabaster flask of ointment but as she

stands at the feet of the savior she is overwhelmed she weeps tears don't simply fill her eyes and she's not merely whimpering she's weeping and the volume of her tears is evident they cover the savior's feet she lets down her hair this would be a major no-no in public but she has to she must wipe his feet and so with her hair she wipes his feet and then she anoints them and pours perfume on his feet and she doesn't utter a single word not a word not a word and yet this is humble this humble display of affection and passion and emotion and service could not have been louder and she does it all unhurriedly she's unhurried she's unashamed and it would also appear she's unaware and unaffected by the host or the dinner guests in his fine commentary on the gospel of luke darryl bach writes

luke's depiction of the wiping kissing and anointing with imperfect tenses which he often uses allows the narrative to run in progression from one act to the next she was wiping kissing and was anointing the impression is that each step took some time one can imagine one can imagine the impression it made at the meal yes one can one can imagine what impression it made at the meal that day but what is the intended impression for us what is the intended impression for those of us present today what does god want to impress upon our hearts today from this passage martin luther described the bible as unique he said of the scriptures the bible is alive it speaks to me it has feet it runs after me it has hands it lays hold of me well i want you know something this passage is after our hearts

today god is after our hearts today and through this passage he is running after us and through this passage he intends to overtake us this morning lay his hands on us and transform us what does he intend to impress on our hearts this morning from this passage well god intends to impress the compelling example of this woman upon our hearts and the implications of this encounter with the savior for our lives we are this morning going to consider her example we are going to evaluate our hearts in relation to her compelling example and by the grace of god we are going to emulate her example how how can we love the savior like she loved the savior how can i how can we experience affection for the savior and express our affection for the savior like she did and how how can we avoid the example

and influence of simon the pharisee well here's the good news the savior is going to tell us how the savior is going to tell us how number one here's how here's how to emulate her example here's how to avoid the example of simon the pharisee number one recognize your many sins recognize your many sins look at me again in verse 47 therefore i tell you her sins which are many her sins which are many she she had lived a sinful life she had lived a shameful life her sins were many and emulating her example involves recognizing your many sins the after her very holy display of gratefulness affection and worship the savior tells a parable in verse 41 now if i'm a pharisee my goal if i if i'm a pharisee and i invite the savior over to

dinner my goal is to get through the evening without a

parable okay to get through the evening without doing anything that provokes a parable but simon did not get through the evening without becoming the merciful object of a parable now the parable in verse 41 and verse 42 it's not complicated we're introduced to two individuals and they both have considerable debt even though one was 10 times the debt total of the other neither neither can pay off their debt and the parable in effect serves as a commendation of the sinful woman and a rebuke for simon the pharisee and this parable serves as a sobering reminder to us all of our sinful debt to god prior to our conversion it serves as a reminder of our many sins prior to conversion and through this parable one is to feel the weight of one's sinful debt to god and through this parable we are

reminded that the debt we owe because of our sinful offenses toward god is a debt no one can hope to repay john stott wrote that it must be said that our evangelical emphasis on atonement is dangerous if we come to it too quickly we cry hallelujah with authenticity only after we first cry oh it's me for i am lost see emulating her example involves recognizing your many sins prior to conversion number two emulating her example involves receiving god's forgiveness for your many sins not only recognizing your many sins prior to conversion but receiving god's forgiveness for your many sins again verse 47 therefore i tell you her sins which are many are forgiven her sins which are many are forgiven so emulating her example means recognizing our sins prior to conversion but it also involves

receiving god's forgiveness receiving forgiveness from god for our many sins be it prior to conversion or after conversion see it is possible to increasingly recognize your many sins without receiving forgiveness from god for your many sins and merely acknowledging our many sins alone apart from asking forgiveness of god and receiving forgiveness from god doesn't please god doesn't ultimately glorify god we must not only acknowledge our many sins we must not only feel the weight and debt of our many sins we also must receive forgiveness from god for our many sins exercising faith in the savior's substitutionary sacrifice for each and every one of our sins just like this sinful woman just like her why do you think she's weeping she's weeping why do you think she's weeping here's why she's

weeping because she knew that her many sins her sinful shameful life she knew that her many sins were forgiven she knew she was forgiven forgiven of many sins the tears being shed that evening the tears that are falling on the savior's feet are tears of joy they are not tears of grief they are not tears of condemnation they are tears of joy falling on the savior's feet she wasn't crying because she was convicted of her sin she didn't do this in order to earn forgiveness for her sin no this display of affection was because she was forgiven of her sin her life has already been transformed by a previous encounter with the savior you see this scene presupposes a previous encounter with the savior that is not recorded for us in scripture she had some previous encounter with the savior where

she heard about the forgiveness of sin where she turned from her sin and received forgiveness from the savior for her many sins this woman is no stranger to the intrigued as she saw perhaps she made her way to the periphery of a multitude and over her maybe she couldn't see him initially and it was a voice like no other voice with content that was foreign to her ears and heart and perhaps she encountered him individually let's imagine that for a moment what that must have been like for her to look into his eyes this would be a woman who was very familiar with the base selfishness of men the lust of men this was a woman who was familiar with the look of lust in the eyes of men but these eyes were different she heard a message of hope yes she had offended god oh her sins were many and all

serious but there was an offer of forgiveness from this man whose eyes were like no other whose heart was like no other there was a proclamation of forgiveness she turned from her sins she trusted him for forgiveness of sins and so it's no surprise that when she found out he was going to be a guest at simon the pharisee's house she was going to be there she was going she had to go because her life had been transformed she was no longer paralyzed by guilt she was no longer tormented by a fear of future wrath she was forgiven of her many sins and therefore when she heard word on the street that he would be at simon's house there was no absence of courage in her heart to go to his house though not invited oh she would be very aware of what simon the pharisee would think of her but she walked

into that house unaware because of who was there there he was there he was and there she stands at his feet she cannot compose herself oh understandably so she's been forgiven of her many sins and so there is this passionate affectionate display of gratefulness and worship and there's nothing erotic about it which no doubt would be a new experience for her as well those were tears of joy because her life has been transformed transformed and the savior acknowledges her and assures her that her sins are indeed forgiven and commends her for her faith question for us this morning would be are we like this woman trusting god for the forgiveness of our sins are you have you received forgiveness for your many sins see over the years over the years i have met individuals who appear to be aware of

their sin but there's an absence of this gratefulness to the savior an absence of this affection for the savior that is displayed by this woman and i've wondered why often i think these individuals aren't so much convicted by their sin as they are discouraged because of their sin and their discouragement reveals the presence of self-righteousness and the false hope that they can eventually achieve forgiveness through their obedience and so in this regard they are more like simon the pharisee than they are the sinful woman you see simon the pharisee he was self-righteous he was seeking self-justification through self-atonement simon simon did not think he was in debt to god because of his sin and simon considered himself morally superior to this woman and i think to anyone present in the

save possibly the savior simon was blind to his own sin and and when he looks at this woman he could see nothing but her sin all he could see when he looked at her was her sin and so it really is a form of rebuke when the savior says to him in verse 44 do you do you see this woman he didn't oh he observed her but he didn't discern what was taking place he didn't discern the compelling example that appeared before him do you see this woman he didn't he didn't have a clue he didn't have a clue about his sin and he didn't have a clue about her compelling example oh by the grace of god let us emulate the example of this sinful woman let us recognize our many sins both prior to conversion and after conversion and let us humbly receive forgiveness for our many sins and let us cease any and

all attempts to satisfy god's wrath and righteousness and justice through self-righteous attempts to earn what only he can provide through the death of his son for our sins and let us recognize god's eagerness to forgive our many sins which is revealed in this parable in verses 41 and 42 here's here's the good news and good news would be a serious understatement here's what is shocking here's what is startling about this particular parable the money lender is god and god is revealed here as eager to forgive our sinful debt now listen this is shocking to the original hearers this is unexpected it's shocking it's striking it is it is the striking feature of this parable rather than forcing the debtors to pay the money lender freely forgives the debt who present had a category for that if

tomorrow you received a call from your bank and you were cheerfully informed by somebody your mortgage no longer exists you can throw your book of payments away the joint is yours well you would

assume this is a prank by a friend who is lacking a creative gift of humor you you would you would you would not assume there is authenticity money lenders don't just forgive debts no they are money lenders and they stay in business by requiring payment for the money they have loaned and yet what we read here is rather than forcing the debtors to pay the money lender freely forgives the debt so the act described here by the money lender is just uncharacteristic of those who lend money this doesn't happen this is extraordinary but here's here's what the savior is revealing the extraordinary is

reality because the god revealed in scripture and through his son jesus christ does forgive sinful debt and scripture is absolutely full full full of verses which reference and reveal god's eagerness to forgive as well as the extent of his forgiveness actually you you can take your bible at any time during any part of this day open to any part of your bible and not far from wherever you open will be some promise revealing god's eagerness to forgive as well as the extent of his forgiveness the lord is compassionate and gracious yes he is slow to anger oh indeed he is this is all on display right right here in this dramatic evening he is abounding in love oh yes he is he is abounding in love slow to anger toward this sinful woman and toward simon as well he does not treat us as our sins

deserve or repay us according to our iniquities for as high as the heavens are above the earth so great is his love for those who fear him as far as the east is from the west so far as he removed our transgressions from him verses like this simply take my breath away and the only appropriate question in response to a verse like this is how how how how is he able to do this here's how only only through his son's sacrifice on the cross for sinners like me is he able to remove our sins as far as the east is from the west which is obviously an immeasurable distance dick lucas wrote one time i hope you don't underestimate the forgiveness of sins he said for many years i did i'd gotten the impression that forgiveness was rather preliminary rather than preliminary this is truth the forgiveness

of sinners providing reconciliation of god and man and man with god is the most exciting thing of which the bible speaks and we never get beyond it folks we never get beyond this we never get beyond this in this lifetime and we will never get beyond this throughout eternity how can i love the savior like she loved the savior well one recognize my many sins to receive forgiveness for my many sins and the effect the result well you like this woman will love the savior much verse 47 again therefore i tell you her sins which are many are forgiven for she loved much you see those who've been forgiven much love much now please don't misunderstand her love her love is the consequence not the cause of her forgiveness jesus is not saying here that her forgiveness is conditioned upon this display

of love that would well that would contradict the parable and it would contradict the entirety of scripture her love is the fruit of her experience of forgiveness her love is the evidence that she had received forgiveness of her many sins and she she didn't merely love the savior no she loved the savior much she loved the savior much don't don't you want to feel like she felt about the savior when was the last time you felt like this about the savior when was the last time you responded like this to the savior do you love him what would you say honestly and in integrity the quiet recesses of your heart right now that you only love him a little you love him much or do you love him little and if you love him little how can you love him much here's how you can love him much you can emulate

the example of this woman it is so simple and yet it is so profound listen i can't improve upon these words from our good friend jerry bridges he says he wrote to the extent to which we realize and acknowledge our sinfulness so that's recognizing our many sins and to the extent to which we realize total forgiveness that would be receiving forgiveness for our many sins will determine the measure of our love for god so the

extent to which you realize your many sins acknowledge your many sins the extent to which you realize and receive total forgiveness for sins well that will determine the measure of your love for god this is what i've discovered when i love the savior little it's normally because normally for me because i have grown less aware of my many sins less appreciative of the

forgiveness of sins and therefore less affectionate for the savior so why does it appear that so many have so little love for the savior well it's because they have never realized what great sinners they are you see we will never apologize here for teaching you the doctrine of sin for reminding you the doctrine of sin that the doctrine of sin is essential not optional it is critical and the doctrine of sin is a means not an end the doctrine of sin is the means by which you are made aware of your debt before god because of your sin that you cannot pay so if you're going to be a member of covenant life church we are going to work hard to convince you you are a great sinner and we're going to work to convince you that you are a worse sinner than you presently think you are that's what we're

going to do but the purpose of convincing you that you are the worst sinner or should be the worst sinner you know is so that you will recognize your need for a great savior that's why that's why see the more you recognize you're a great sinner the more you will realize your need for a great savior and as you flee to this great savior recognizing your need is a great sinner you will be amazed you will be amazed by the grace of god and you will love this savior not a little but you will love him much so when i feel like i only love him a little this is what i do this is this is the specific action i take this this is the practice i employ in order to transition from loving him little to loving him much here's what i do i spend time contemplating my many sins before conversion and i'm very

specific in my contemplation of those sins and contemplation of those sins is not for the purpose of ultimately being paralyzed by condemnation we don't have time but if we did and i would commend this study to you if you just went to first timothy chapter one you would find listen you would find that 30 years after paul's conversion he is still very specific about his sin prior to conversion very specific 30 years later the memories are vivid a blasphemer persecutor an insolent opponent those are the categories so one of my practices is to contemplate my many sins before conversion second i spend time contemplating my many sins after conversion not simply before conversion but after conversion and again here i'm following paul's example as well for just two verses after he acknowledges

many sins prior to conversion he informs us that at present he is the foremost of sinners not i was the foremost of sinners i am presently the foremost of sinners paul only became more aware of his sin after conversion not less aware of his sin and his increased awareness of his sin served him well for it did not result in condemnation it did not result in a return to legalism what it resulted in is a man who was amazed by the grace of god so i spend time contemplating my sins before conversion i spend time contemplating my sins after conversion and most important most important i spend an extended period of time surveying the wondrous cross on which the prince of glory died for my many sins i follow the very wise counsel of my historical hero charles spurgeon in addressing his

congregation on a particular sunday he was addressing this whole area of little love for the savior he was addressing those who found in their hearts at present little love for the savior and passionately and compassionately he said to his church and it would be wise for us to review these words this morning in closing little love to our own dying savior well if that's present spurgeon counsels hold a true lent in your soul while you sorrow over your hardness of heart recognize your many sins but don't stop at sorrow don't stop at sorrow receive forgiveness for your many sins remember where you first receive salvation and go

at once to the cross there and there only can you get your no matter how hard how insensible how dead we may become let's go again in all the rags and poverty and

defilement of our natural condition let's clasp that cross let's look into those languid eyes let's bathe in that fountain filled with blood this will bring us back to our first love this will restore the simplicity of our faith and the tenderness of our own heart the more we dwell where the cries of calvary can be heard the more noble our lives become nothing puts life into men like a dying savior let me ask you how often do you dwell where the cries of calvary can be heard how often do you dwell there let's just take just a moment and dwell there just a moment do this for the purpose of concentration close your eyes listen carefully let's take just a moment to dwell where the cries of calvary can be heard listen again to these cries of the savior from the cross for your many sins father

forgive them for they know not what they do i tell you the truth this day you will be with me in paradise dear woman here son why have you forsaken me i am thirsty it is finished father in to your hands i commit my spirit those cries and that death were all necessary because of our many sins because of our debt which we could not pay and those cries and that debt were sufficient for all our sins and as you dwell where those cries can be heard and contemplate your sins prior to conversion and your sins after conversion and receive forgiveness for each and every one of those sins because of those cries uttered on that day by the savior you won't love him little you'll love him much let's pray father thank you for this passage thank you for this woman thank you for her example thank you for

preserving this thank you for providing this as a fresh provocation and reminder today we are great sinners oh but you have provided a great savior so protect us lord from the influence and example of self-righteousness in our lives may we emulate this woman's example as a result may we love you not little but much amen

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