

(Luke) 22 - Doubts of John the Baptist

by Ed Miller

The sermon explores the doubts of John the Baptist and emphasizes the importance of bringing our doubts to Jesus for understanding and reassurance.

Duration: 49:28

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 7:1-20, Luke 7:36-50

Topics: "Doubt And Faith", "Jesus Authority"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by discussing a verse from the Bible, specifically verse 31. He compares the men of this generation to children in a marketplace who refuse to play along. The preacher suggests that John the Baptist, who had initially believed in Jesus, may have been experiencing doubts while in prison. The preacher emphasizes the importance of sending doubts to Jesus and not judging based on outward appearances. He also highlights Jesus' response to John's disciples, where instead of simply saying 'yes' to being the Messiah, Jesus performs miracles to demonstrate his power and authority.

Transcript

We had two different conferences, they were both men's conferences. The first one about 150 men gathered and we've been meeting for about 12 years. Every year we meet with this particular group and just had a wonderful time in the Lord and He did refresh us.

And then the very next week we had another men's conference with about 100 men, different men. And again the Lord visited, He always does. And we thank you, we knew that you were praying.

And then in between, and then in the middle of those two conferences, we received a call from a four month old, which my son is, and so they wanted to start with it and then we'll break for the summer at that point. There is that one change in April on the previous calendar, we were not scheduled to meet on the 30th, but our schedule, so you had that. Well, as we come to the study, the meditation of God's word, I remind you again of that, and that is total reliance.

He's the one that inspired the Bible. So I'll ask you to bow with me and again remind you, you're not coming into His presence, you're already in His presence. You acknowledge that.

Our Father, we thank you for this privilege you've given us. So many weeks and months and even years to gather in this place. Just to focus on you, just to meditate on your precious word and trust your Holy Spirit

who lives in our hearts to refresh us and to establish us in the great truths of our faith.

And we just ask you again to guide our meditations as we look in the gospel of Luke. We thank you for every part of the Bible, but in a special way this morning, for Luke chapter 7. Will you instruct us and teach us in the way that we should go and guide us with your eye upon us. We ask in Jesus' precious name.

Okay, I'll ask you to turn please to Luke chapter 7. In our discussion, we've been meditating on the Galilean ministry of our Lord Jesus. And what that means practically is that all the way through chapter 9 verse 50 we'll be studying this Galilean part of our Lord's ministry. The distinctive emphasis in this section we've called attention to and that is action.

In other words, this is where Jesus did. He said a lot, but mostly He did. It was a section on miracles, a section on doing He healed, there were many healings in this particular section.

He was doing these redemptive miracles and so on. When we stopped 3 weeks ago, we had just examined the 6th and 7th miracle, redemptive miracle that Luke recalled. In the first 10 verses of chapter 7, we looked at the healing of the centurion's servant.

And then in verses 11-17, the raising of the only son of the widow of Nain. In one sense, this morning we're in a little bit of a parenthesis and we'll continue that through next week. And by that I mean this is the action section.

Jesus is working, He's doing. But at this point, He's going to be teaching. It doesn't mean that He's not doing, as you'll see.

It's in the middle of all of His miracles. But the two stories that we'll touch upon this morning, we'll still see His compassion. He's the son of all mankind, the friend of all mankind.

He's still reaching out to the... But this morning He deals personally in verses 18-35 with the doubts of John the baptizer. And we'll look at that section. And then the second story, which we'll only introduce this morning, is chapter 7 verse 36 through the end of the chapter, verse 50.

And that is the anointing of the feet of the Lord Jesus by the woman who was called the sinner in the house of Simon the Pharisee. And we'll just introduce that. In the first story, then, if you'll turn to chapter 7, verse 18.

In the first story, this takes place in the midst of all of the miracles. And in the middle of all of the miracles, Jesus settles the doubts that rise in the heart of John the baptizer. Now Luke could have told us that any old place in his gospel, but he told us that in the middle of the miracles.

And I'm glad he did. Because to me, when God settles doubts, that's a miracle. And it's as much a miracle as cleansing a leper or healing the blind or anything like that.

I'm going to ask you to follow along as I read verses 18-20 to introduce us to this section. And the disciples of John reported to him about all these things. And these things refer back to, he had just raised that boy, remember, on the way to the funeral and all.

They had seen many things. And summoning two of his disciples, John sent them to the Lord, saying, Are you the expected one, or do we look for someone else? And when the men had come to him, they said, John the baptist has sent us to you, saying, Are you the expected one, or do we look for someone else?

Now if all you had was Luke's account of this, you'd have no idea where John is when he sends this embassy to find out if Jesus is really the Messiah. But listen to Matthew chapter 11, verse 2. Matthew 11 says, Now when John was in prison and heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said, Are you the expected one, or should we look for someone else? So Matthew tells us John was in prison.

And you can read the records and you can see, you remember the occasion that he was thrown into prison. He took a rugged stand right in the face of King Herod. And he rebuked him for taking his brother's wife.

And he said, That's not lawful and it dishonors God. And Herod got angry and threw him in prison. And there he was, as you know, until the day that he died.

Now there have been several views as to why John sent these two disciples to the Lord Jesus to say, Are you really the one? A lot of folks want to protect John. And they don't want us to believe, or anybody to believe, someone as great as John could ever have doubts. And so they try to cover it up.

And they say, Well, he was just looking for information. He really knew that Jesus was Messiah, but he wanted collaboration and he wanted to know what's next on the program. And such as this.

Now those who claim that use the great eulogy that Jesus gave in this very chapter, in verse 24 to 28, he said some marvelous things about John the baptized, that he was greater than all the prophets, that he was the forerunner. And he actually said this, Of all those born among women, no one has been greater than John. That's what Jesus said about him.

So he said some wonderful things about John. And so some would say, If he said that, he wouldn't say that about a doubter. And so John probably didn't doubt.

Others say that John saw his friends, and they were doubters. And so John sent his friends, not for John's sake, but so that his friends would know that this is truly the one. And many believe that's what John was doing.

But excuse me for being old-fashioned, but I think the most natural way to understand this passage is to believe that John, the Baptist baptizer, was entertaining some personal doubts. He had begun well. He knew his cousin.

He said, Behold the Lamb of God. He saw the dove descend on him. But now, things are a little bit different.

Here he sits in a prison cell. Remember when John was baptizing, when he began his ministry? Listen to Luke 3. It's a little backflash here. What John said about Jesus.

In Luke 3, 16 and 17, John answered and said, As for me, I baptize with water. But one's coming after me who's mightier than I, I'm not unfit. I'm not fit to untie the thong of his sandal.

He will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. And his winnowing fork is in his hand to thoroughly clear his threshing floor and gather the wheat into his barn. He'll burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

That was John's vision of Christ. When Christ comes, you better duck. Right now, you've got a chance to repent.

But when he comes, he's going to baptize with fire. He's going to clear his floor. So turn or burn.

And that was John's strong message. But it wasn't happening. Where's the fire? Where's the Holy Spirit? Where's the cleaning of the threshing floor? Where's the winnowing fork? John had an expectation of Christ that Messiah would come on a white horse.

And that Messiah, as all the Jews expected, Messiah would be a political Messiah. He would overthrow Rome. He would set all the people free.

He would reestablish the house of David. Israel again would become a nation in the land. And so John's expectations were political expectations.

And they believed that Messiah would come and set up his kingdom and reign on the earth. But he looks out the window of his prison cell and what does he see and what does he hear? Jesus helps a crippled man. Jesus gives sight to the blind.

He gives hearing to those who are deaf and he loosens the tongue of those who are dumb. And Jesus is helping the oppressed and healing the sick and befriending the homeless and the helpless and so on. And that's not what John expected.

And all of the Jews, as I said, had this idea, this political Messiah would come. And now John begins to entertain doubt. I wonder if he's really the real Messiah.

I wonder if he's the one. Well, I hope I wasn't mistaken. I hope I didn't lead people astray.

And so John, because he had certain expectations for Messiah and God did not fulfill what he expected God to do, therefore these doubts began to rise in his heart. There's another reason John could have had these doubts and that is he's sitting in jail. And Jesus is not coming to his rescue.

He was in prison and his cousins didn't even come to call on him. And he had heard about the messages Jesus was preaching. In fact, you remember when Jesus started his ministry in Luke chapter 4, he opened the scroll to Isaiah 61 and he began reading the passages about Jubilee.

And in that he said, He has come to set the prisoner free. And then he closed the book and he said, This day, this scripture is fulfilled in your ears. John scratches his head and says, Really? He's come to set the prisoner free? Hello? I'm here.

I'm in prison. And then someone came and brought him word, Oh, he should have heard Jesus preach today. He says, You were in prison and I visited you.

Really? Where is he? How come he doesn't visit me? He didn't even send me a car. And because John not only had expectations that were not fulfilled, his idea of what God should do, he's not being visited. It's almost as if Jesus doesn't care about him.

And so these doubts rise in his heart. I don't think you have to be too experienced in the Lord to know that doubts can rise in a believer's heart, even if this believer is someone like John the Baptist. I don't know how you feel about something like this, and maybe I'm wrong to feel that way, but sometimes I get encouraged when I see these great men go through things I go through.

I don't want to say I'm glad John doubts, but I am in my heart, because if that could happen to him, and same thing with David and Bathsheba and all that kind of thing, you don't want to see any man of God fall into sin. But it's tremendous to know that people like that face the same things that I face and have the same struggles that I have. And when you read what Jesus said about him, notice in verse 26, he's more than a prophet.

And in verse 27, this is the one about whom it's written, Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare the way before you. He's not only more than a prophet, he's a prophet that was prophesied. And so he came to fulfill a prophecy.

And then of course verse 28, that will just blow you away. Among those born of women, there's no one greater than John. That is quite a tribute.

From the lips of the Lord Jesus, quite an encomium to have someone like Jesus say that. Now, if someone that high and that godly, and especially in the estimation of the Lord Jesus, there's hope for Ed Miller. And there's hope for you when those doubts come.

Now, if we take those same facts, there have been times in my life when God just didn't do what I expected Him to do. You know, we have our own expectations. We think, here's what God's going to do.

And when He doesn't do it, we're tempted to doubt Him. And especially if He doesn't come to our rescue. If He doesn't, here we are, we're sitting in prison, now it might not be prison, and we pray, and we trust, and we look to the Lord, but He doesn't heal us.

Sometimes He heals someone else, but not us. And He doesn't deliver. And we have this need, and He doesn't provide.

And sometimes, when He doesn't meet our expectations, and when He doesn't come to our rescue, but just lets us sit there, we begin to entertain suspicions. I wonder if He really loves me. I wonder if He's really the one.

Now there are several lessons or principles we can learn from this story of John's doubts. I've sort of narrowed them down to five simple truths. Let me just share those, and then we'll move on to the next story.

The first thing I learned is just by standing back, looking at the story as a whole, and I learned this. When I have doubts, not if, I will have doubts. And you will have doubts.

All Christians have doubts. When I have doubts, I should do with my doubts what John did with his. Send them to Jesus.

That's what he did. He sent his doubts to Jesus. But in all of the Bible, not one time did God ever get angry with someone who was honest with God.

And it's fun to read. I did a study one time on some of the boldness people had before God and what they did. For example, remember Jeremiah, when he was in a pit and up to his chin in mire, and with what was left of his body, he looked up to heaven and screamed, You duped me! And he just cried out to God that he was duped by the Lord.

God was tender. God didn't get mad when He said that. You see, when He expressed His doubts, because God's unrighteous.

How could He use a nation more wicked than them in order to punish them? And he'd had a controversy with God and he yelled at God and then he said, I'm going out on the ramp and I challenge God. And God dealt so tenderly with him. In every case, with Job and Jonah and Elijah and everybody who expressed their doubts, the Lord was tender.

Thomas, remember Thomas. The Lord didn't rebuke him. He had doubts and Jesus just stretched forth His glory scars and invited that doubter to see for himself and to touch.

He's very tender. And so John has doubts, but he sent his doubts to Jesus. And I think there's infinite wisdom in that.

When you have doubts, just send them to the Lord. Be honest. Pour out your heart.

Just say, I feel this way. If you're angry, don't try to suppress it. Just say, Lord, I'm angry, I'm mad.

It's never wrong to pour out your real heart to the Lord because He knows in any way. And you'll be amazed when you do that and you live in honesty before God, how God will come and minister. And so you see that all through the Scripture.

Godly men and women have their doubts, even those who are as great as John the Baptist. And if they send them to Jesus, then they're going to find relief. Second thing I learned from this story is that we should never judge the reality by outward appearances.

You can see a great illustration of that here. Because with these eyes, it certainly looked like Jesus had forsaken John. That he was all by himself in prison and locked in a dungeon.

And he never did get out. And even when, because of the rash vow, when that woman danced John's head off, Jesus didn't rescue him. And that was unchopped.

And even then, Jesus just ignored it as if it weren't there. During those times when it seems like God doesn't care and God's not involved and he's ignoring me and he's not listening. Even in those times, behind the scenes, Jesus is bragging about John.

Now John never heard that. John's in prison. And Jesus says, what a man this John is.

He's a prophet and more than a prophet. Jesus waited until those two disciples left and went back to John before he started bragging on John. And then he began to tell what a great man he was.

He's solid. He's not like a reed shaking in the wind. This man is not worldly and living rich in this world.

This man is a prophet of God, a forerunner of Christ, greatest born among women. Now wouldn't John have loved to hear that? Just imagine John in prison. If the disciple came back and said, you know what he said about you? Of all the people ever born on the earth, you're the greatest.

That would have thrilled his heart. But I have an idea. It might have made him a little proud, too.

Don't expect to hear, down here, well done, good and faithful servant. Save that for the life to come. You'll hear it and God feels that way about you.

But he's going to wait for that. The point is this. John is entertaining doubt.

Jesus didn't do what he expected him to do and he felt forsaken and all. John has doubts. But that didn't change God's opinion of him.

And when I have doubts, that doesn't change God's opinion of me. And when you have doubts, it doesn't change God's opinion of you. And even when you feel forsaken, I'll tell you the reality.

God's up in heaven bragging about you. And God's up in heaven bragging about me. It's easy to doubt His love.

It's easy to doubt His presence when He doesn't meet our expectations or He doesn't rescue, when He doesn't come to our deliverance. When you have those doubts, send them to Jesus. And may God help us all not to judge by outward appearance.

Sometime, and we're going to later on, we're going to look at that parable of the unjust judge. And sometime God does think it looks the exact opposite. We're going to have to learn to trust and not to faint.

The third lesson I get out of this is not only to send my doubts to Jesus and not to judge by outward appearance, but I learned something very precious. I won't tell you right away. Let me just sort of build it up.

What if someone came to you and made this comment and said, Jesus told me that you are the greatest person that was ever born. And it was real. What if He said that about you? As He said about John.

How would you feel about that? Of all the people ever born, you're the greatest. Would that make you feel good? He said something, He said something higher than that about you. He said something higher than that about you.

Look at verse 28. I say to you, among those born of women, there's no one greater than John. Yet, he who's least in the kingdom of God is greater than him.

So He already said that about you. He said, John's the greatest one that ever lived and you're greater because you're in the kingdom of God. That's how God feels about us.

And many think that the reason is because John was sort of the transition between the old and the new and he was the last prophet and the grace is greater than law and so those under God are far more wonderful than this. The context is privilege. Why was John the greatest of all the prophets? And the answer is because he had the highest privilege.

He was the last prophet and the one that introduced Jesus to the world. That's why he was the greatest. No one else had that privilege, only John.

He was John's cousin and he got to introduce Christ. Why? Why is it true that you're greater than John? And the answer is your privilege is higher than John's privilege. See, John was his cousin.

You're his child. John went before him. He lives inside you.

He lives inside me. That's the glory of it. And he said, now the least in the kingdom of heaven has a higher privilege than even John the baptizer.

And so one thing I get out of this is what a vision God has of his people. The least in the kingdom of heaven and he sees us in such a wonderful way. The fourth thing that I learned is that there's a difference between doubting and disbelieving.

In this story, John is held in contrast with the Pharisees. John is a doubter. The Pharisees are disbelievers.

Notice please in verse 29. And when all the people and the tax gatherers heard this, they acknowledged God's justice having been baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees, now notice verse 30, the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John.

The Pharisees were rejected. John had struggling faith. The Pharisees had unbelief.

It was at this point that Jesus gave the parable of the spoiled brat. You remember that parable? Now let's read it, verse 31. To what shall I compare the men of this generation? What are they like? They're like children who sit in the marketplace and call to one another.

And they say, we played the flute for you, you did not. And the Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, behold a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax gatherers and sinners. Yet wisdom is vindicated by her children.

In other words, he compares the generation to children in the marketplace who don't want to play the game. You know, children, what do you want to do? Do you want to play ball? No, I don't want to play ball. Do you want to go skating? No, I don't want to go skating.

What do you want to do? Do you want to just walk apart? No, I don't want to walk apart. So he takes the extreme. And he says, here's the kids come out and say, do you want to play funeral? And so, he said, they tried to play funeral and yet no one would mourn.

He said, okay, let's play wedding. Anybody want to play wedding? And he says, John came as an ascetic. He came with a rugged message, almost like a funeral, and you rejected him.

And Christ came, friend of sinners, helping everybody, like a wedding. You didn't want to play funeral. You didn't want to play wedding.

You're not having trouble believing. You're rejecting the truth. And so he said, you're like spoiled brass.

You just don't want to play the game. The difference between struggling faith and unbelief is this. Struggling faith wants to believe.

Struggling faith has a will to believe. Unbelief doesn't want to believe. You see, these people were rejecting.

That was the difference, by the way, between Judas' betrayal and Peter's denial. You know, in one sense you look at that and say, what's the difference? Judas betrayed him. Peter denied him.

Here's the difference. Jesus said to Peter, the spirit is willing. Can you finish it? But the flesh is weak.

Peter had a willing spirit. The spirit is willing. Judas did not have a willing spirit.

And John, he had doubts, but he had a willing spirit. He wanted to believe. And the thing that's so important is this, that God looks at struggling faith as if it were strong faith.

Struggling faith is faith. And if you have struggling faith, that is, if you want to believe. You say, I don't believe.

Do you want to? That's faith. God accepts struggling faith as faith. And so the difference that he's showing here is that wisdom's children, wisdom is vindicated by our children and wisdom's children have this desire to believe.

See, these Pharisees were so glad. They were all standing around when these two disciples came. And the Pharisees heard these disciples say, John has doubts.

Are you really him? And the Pharisees said, Oh, good. John has doubts. And they said, yeah, he has doubts.

But you are brats. You children, you don't want to believe. And he says, I'm voting for the one that has doubts.

And because he has the will to believe. Now let me make one more application of this story before we leave it. Not only send your doubts to Jesus.

Not only don't judge by outward appearances because God has a dear regard for you. Believe with all your heart, your high privilege and God's estimate of you. And know the difference between doubt and unbelief.

The fifth principle is this. Did you notice the answer that Jesus gave John's disciples? They came saying, Are you the one? Now the simple way to answer that is to say, Yes. He didn't say yes.

What did he do? Notice verse 21. At that very time, he cured many people of diseases and affliction and evil spirits. He granted sight to many who were blind.

These two guys come up to the Lord Jesus and say, Are you really the one? The answer is not a word. He heals the blind. This probably took all day.

He heals the blind. If you read on a little bit more, He cast out demons. He presented sight to the blind.

And by the way, in the Greek, that's very precious. Because it says, He gave as a present sight to the blind. That's the Greek.

He just gave as a present sight to the blind. And he cleansed lepers. And he raised the dead.

And there's several places, by the way. Don't just count the individual story where Jesus raises the dead and says, There's six times he raised the dead. No, there's many times.

Because in these group miracles, He also raised the dead. In fact, when he sent out the 70, He gave them power to cleanse, to cast out, and to raise the dead. So there's a good chance the disciples also had that miracle.

The point is this. Jesus did not answer by answering. He answered by doing.

He answered by working. And I call attention to this because of a truth I'm sure you already know. And that is, A tree is known by its fruit.

And by their fruit ye shall know them. I am not a Christian because I say so. Watch my life.

I invite you to watch my life. That's how he answered. Not by what he did, I mean by what he said, But by what he did.

His life showed the answer. Now you go back and tell John what you've seen. Don't say yes.

Just show him what you've seen. Because if my life, Which supposedly according to this record, If my life doesn't manifest something that only God can do, It's not going to help to say so. If you can't see in somebody, It would be foolish for me to say, God told me to tell you this.

That's foolish. If you don't know in your heart that it's from God, If you can't see by someone's life, And so Jesus answered, And I just call attention to that, Because it's the same way he said we're to do it. Let our light shine before men, That they may see our good works, And glorify our Father which is in heaven.

So it's not our word, It's our life. And so that's how Jesus answered the question. I can just see those brothers going back to the south.

John said, what did he say? He didn't say anything. He healed the sick, He raised the dead, He cleansed the leper, And John said in his heart, That's it. That's it.

And so that became the answer. Oh by the way, There was another reason that was so powerful to John, Because he quoted Isaiah in that. Remember when John first went out with his mission, And they said, who are you? Are you Elijah? Are you Messiah? Are you Moses the prophet? And he said, no, there's a prophecy in Isaiah, And I'm the voice of one crying in the wilderness, And I go to prepare a place.

Jesus quoted the same passage, Only quoted the next part of that passage. And he said the blind see the lame hear. In other words John, If you know who you are, You'll know who I am.

You claimed that first part, And said that was you. Well the second part says it's me. And so if you know who you are, Then you're going to know who I am.

All right, let me just introduce this next story, And I won't finish it this morning. The sinner woman, In the anointing the feet of our Lord Jesus, Verse 36 please, And now one of the Pharisees was requesting him to dine with him, And he entered the Pharisee's house, And reclined at the table. And behold there was a woman in the city who was a sinner, And when she learned he was reclining at the table, In the Pharisee's house, She brought an alabaster vial of perfume, 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.

And 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 a person this woman is who is touching him, That she is a sinner. Now let me make a few clarifications, So that we'll all be running together next week when we look at this. Because there are four anointing accounts, In other words, four different times we read about anointing.

Matthew 26, Mark 14, John chapter 12, and here in Luke chapter 7. Because there's four accounts of someone anointing Jesus, Some have tried to pull those accounts together and say they're all the same

story. But the reality is they're not the same story. They're in different places at different times.

Luke's account takes place early in the Galilean ministry of the Lord Jesus. Some of the accounts take place the last week before the cross, When Jesus was anointed. And so we need to know which accounts go together.

Part of the problem arises because, for example, Matthew says, They went to the house of Simon. Luke says they went to the house of Simon. But Matthew is Simon the leper.

Luke is Simon the Pharisee. Not the same Simon. And just because there's the name Simon, There's the alabaster box, There's the anointing of the feet, Don't mix these up and think it's all the same account.

They are different. Glance at chapter 8, verse 2. Mary, who was called Magdalene, From whom seven demons had gone out. I think, I speak as a fool, But I think it's unfortunate that that verse is there.

I think it should be in the Bible, but someplace else. And the reason I say that is because it follows the story of the sinner woman. And so because it follows the story of the sinner woman, Some people think Mary Magdalene was the sinner woman Who poured out the ointment on the feet of the Lord Jesus.

And so, because of that, they've pinned a lot of stuff on Mary Magdalene. She's a harlot, she was a fallen woman, a prostitute, And they've got Magdalene houses and everything else for fallen women, Based on the fact that that comes after this story. I don't think it was the same woman.

I'm not suggesting, don't get me wrong, Any woman who has seven demons, Who knows what she's capable of doing. And I'm not saying that was beyond her, I'm just saying the Bible does not say that this woman was Mary Magdalene. And so we need to just sort of see these things in context.

Now let me introduce this with one principle, And then we'll wrap it up for this week. It's clear from Luke's account, That this wonderful woman who is unnamed, In fact, here's a woman that made history, Her name is not given and she never said a word. The only reason we know her is because of this Lavish outpouring of love on the Lord Jesus.

And we know from Luke's account, That she did not come to Simon's house to find forgiveness of sin. We know that a hundred percent. She did not come to find forgiveness.

And notice verse 48, And he said to her, Your sins have been forgiven. Verse 50, Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.

It looks like she came to find forgiveness. I'm not going to develop it now, But in the parable Jesus told, The parable of the two debtors, Look at verse 47, For this reason I say to you, Her sins, which are many, Have been forgiven, For she loved much. He who is forgiven little loves little.

Why did this woman come, Weeping at his feet, And kissing his feet, And pouring out oil? Why did she come, Loving much? And the answer is, Because she had been forgiven much. He that's forgiven much, Loves much. She didn't come to be forgiven.

She came because she was already forgiven. She came loving. She came pouring out.

And Jesus illustrates in the parable, She's already been forgiven. And that's why she has this amazing love. These are the acts of one already forgiven.

I love to relate this to Matthew's account, Because Matthew tells about John the baptizer in prison, And his doubts. And he tells about this meal at the Pharisees house, But he puts something in between, That Luke doesn't tell us. What happened in between John's doubts and the banquet? And the answer is, Our Lord Jesus stood up, And he said, I praise thee, Father of heaven and earth, That thou didst hide these things from the wise and the prudent, And reveal them unto babes, All ye who labor and are heavy laden, Come unto me, And I will give you rest.

You shall find rest unto yourselves. That comes right before the banquet. And there's good evidence, I think, That this immoral woman was there.

And she heard the Lord Jesus say, Come unto me, All ye that labor and are heavy laden, I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, And learn of me. I am meek and lowly, And you shall find rest unto your souls.

And evidently, This woman whose need was so great, Whose shame was so overwhelming, This woman whose sin was deplorable, A great debtor, Trusted in the Lord, And now she comes because she's forgiven. Her heart is full, And she comes to express this great love. It was a great thing for a woman like this To come to the Pharisees house.

Don't forget who the Pharisees were. They were these religious people. And this was a notorious sinner.

She had a reputation. Because of chapter 7, verse 39, Simon knows who she was. In fact, one of my commentators say, He knows who she was because he was playing around.

I don't know if that's true or not. You can read that in between the lines. But I know she had a reputation.

It was love. Verse 37, She heard Jesus was there. That's why she came to his house.

It's not an easy thing on the level of earth To cross the tracks In the lines of social prejudice and all. But she's been forgiven a great debt. Love is the byproduct.

Sometimes it makes me weary When I hear people using as an appeal, If you love the Lord, You would do this and do that and the other thing. And if you really love Jesus, You'd be doing such and such. Love doesn't come first.

Love is a byproduct. People who don't love the Lord, Who struggle with loving the Lord, They haven't entered fully into their salvation. The more you see how much you've been forgiven, He that's forgiven much, loves much.

If you have struggled loving the Lord, Don't work on loving the Lord. You can't love the Lord. Ask God to show you all that happened When he saved you.

Enter into your salvation. And the more you see, the more you'll love. The same thing is true If you have trouble forgiving somebody.

The reason you'll have trouble forgiving somebody Is because you don't really know How much you've been forgiven. And the Bible says If you could enter into your own forgiveness, If you knew you were forgiven Ten million dollars worth, You wouldn't have trouble, as the parable says, Forgiving someone \$17.50. And that's the price that was there. The worst anybody could ever do to me Is \$17.50 worth of harm.

And I've been forgiven millions of dollars. And the more I enter into that, And so he that loves much, I mean he that's forgiven much Is going to love much. We're going to look more at this wonderful woman.

Now, don't get the idea That this immoral woman Came kissing the feet of Jesus. When she kissed his feet, She was not an immoral woman. She had already been forgiven.

This was a pure saint of God. A precious, precious thing. And we're going to see the contrast With Simon the Pharisee and the woman.

But we'll look at that next time. But I wanted you to see right at the beginning She's coming because love. Love doesn't think.

Love just responds. Love acts. Love does some wild things, really.

And this woman is just coming now. And she's going to pour it out Because she's already been forgiven. But we'll pick that story up next time.

Comments or questions? Will, thank you. Will, let's just bow before the Lord again. Our Father, we call upon you.

Confess again. We're clay. We're just mortals.

Sometimes doubts rise in our heart. We wonder if all these things are real and true. Even if the Bible's true and all of that.

And if you really love us. Thank you that You're not angry when we feel that way. Sometimes you don't meet our expectations.

Sometimes because in your wise purpose You don't deliver us or heal us or provide for us. We just wonder if you're there. Lord, forgive us for our doubts.

Thank you that we can send our doubts to you. Thank you, Lord, that in your high view of us We're greater than John the Baptist Who was the greatest one ever born of women. Thank you for the privilege we have.

And Lord, help us to enter into our salvation. To know how much we've been forgiven. That we might love much.

Love you and love others. We work it in our heart. And to any degree whatsoever we lack in love Will you unveil for us The greatness of our salvation.

Thank you that you're doing it And you're going to continue to do it In an ever increasing tide of blessing in our life. Not because we deserve it But because we belong to you And Jesus deserves it And we claim it in his name. Bring us back again, we pray To meditate on your word And I pray for everyone here That you give them the most blessed Easter They've ever had.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

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