

Gospel Meetings s.h.c.- 04 the Forgiveness of Sin

by Stan Ford

The sermon emphasizes the importance of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ for forgiveness and redemption, and highlights the contrast between the hypocritical Pharisee and the repentant woman in the story.

Duration: 46:01

Scripture: 1 Samuel 1:17, 2 Samuel 12:13, Luke 7:37-50, Romans 3:23

Topics: "Forgiveness Of Sin", "Personal Conversion"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal story about a rough man who had recently been converted to Christianity. The man attended a prayer meeting and was moved by the expressions of praise and gratitude from the other believers. He couldn't contain his joy and shouted, 'Cheers for Jesus!' The speaker reflects on the transformative power of encountering Christ and emphasizes the importance of being true to oneself before God. The sermon also touches on the story of Simon the Pharisee and the forgiveness of sins through Jesus.

Transcript

Thank you for being with us tonight. We're going to turn into the seventh chapter of the Gospel of Luke. Please, the New Testament, the seventh chapter of the Gospel of Luke.

We will commence reading a little down the story, down the chapter, into the thirty-sixth verse. As soon as I said that, you knew what was on my heart, didn't you? So please, the thirty-sixth verse of the seventh chapter of Luke. And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him.

And he went into the Pharisee's house and sat down to meet. And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meet in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him, weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with ointment. Now when the Pharisee, which had bitten him for it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who, and what manner of woman this is, that toucheth him, for she is a sinner.

And Jesus answering, said unto him, Simon, I have some what to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor, which had two debtors.

The one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose he, to whom he forgave most.

And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet, but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss, but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

My head with oil thou didst not anoint, but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

And he said to her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee. Go in peace.

O please God, someone may go in peace from this service this evening. The Lord will bless the reading of his word. Amen.

If there is one thing that writes down the avenue of time men have been concerned with, it is that thing that tonight, with God's help, I want to talk about. It was Plato who long, long ago cried, or Socrates rather, who cried, O Plato, Plato, maybe the gods can forgive sin, but I don't see how. Right through the avenue of time, this problem of sin and its forgiveness has tormented men and women who think.

But right at the beginning of the service tonight, I would like to take upon my lips the words of the Creed. And I would like to say to you, I believe in the Holy Ghost, in the Holy Catholic Church. I believe in the communion of saints.

And I believe in the forgiveness of sin. Jesus said to a woman that he met in the home of Simon the Pharisee, Thy sins are forgiven thee. And then he used a word that Eli used to Hannah.

Then he used a word that Nathan used to David. For he dared to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee. Go in peace.

Have you peace in your heart tonight? Have you peace in your life tonight? I'm going to suggest, whoever you may be, young or older, there can be no peace until you know the forgiveness of sin. No peace. As we look at the seventh chapter of Luke, it seems to me that there are three characters.

There are more than three, because you don't have the sort of peace they had in Simon's home with just three. There are more than three, but there are three major characters in the story of the seventh chapter of Luke. First of all, there's a religious Pharisee.

Simon the Pharisee. There is not only a religious Pharisee, but there is a repentant woman. Do you know, I feel that I could shout hallelujah, and I really mean that, when I have to confess to you, I don't know her name.

Isn't it wonderful that when you meet a woman like this, so vile of herself, that when Jesus permitted the story to be told, He didn't tell her name. He wasn't going to embarrass her. How different are most people I

meet? Most people I meet, they come to me and they say, I say, have you heard the story about? And they tell His name.

They tell her name. But Jesus is going to tell or permit an ugly story to be told. And He never permits her name to be mentioned.

What a wonderful Savior. Whoever you are tonight, friend, let me tell you this. My Lord won't embarrass you.

He's willing to bless you. But if it's the story of one that I would call a religious Pharisee, and one that I would call a repentant woman, it is the story of a redeeming Savior. And I thank God that right in the middle of this story is the only one who can send us forgiven and in peace.

And I want to say something more to you, young man. Are you listening? That Savior is with us here tonight. With us here tonight.

He is willing to say to you, thy sins are forgiven. He's the only one that can say it. But He can say it and is willing to say it.

I said first of all it was the story of a religious Pharisee. I cannot go into minute details concerning the life of Simon. Because again, the Lord has not recorded it.

But He has said this, that he was a Pharisee. And there is open to me such a panorama of thought. I know not where to finish when I begin.

A Pharisee. The first thing I must say about him, as I have already said, he was religious. Now whoever we are, I hope that you do not contribute to that sort of preaching that speaks in a belittling fashion of religion.

I chugger when occasionally I hear a preacher stand up and say, I don't preach religion. Well I want to tell you something, I preach religion. And I'll preach it till I go to glory.

My Bible says pure religion is this, it is the visiting of the fatherless and the widow. It is the keeping yourself unspotted from the world. If we don't preach that, it's about time we did.

If I don't tell men and women that around them there are those in need, around them there are men and women who indeed have dire need, and there are women who are widows who need to be cared for, then I am not representing my God. Never you forget this, that you can't casually read the Old Testament without realizing how careful our God is to care for those in need. When it comes to the great commercial laws of life, Jesus doesn't forget those in need.

He told the Jew that when he went out into his field to reap the corn, he mustn't cut the corners, he had to leave them standing. If the corn had got overripe, and as he swan his scythe to cut it, ears fell to the ground. Of course, he's speaking of corn in the fashion we speak of it in our country.

A corn of wheat, not this, you know, what do you call it? Not that. But he says, if in reaping the corn, ears fall to the ground, you mustn't gather it up. It has to be left for those that are widows and those that are in need, that they might be able to come and gather it for them, that they might be able to live.

That's how careful our God is of those in need, and if we don't preach to visit the widow and the fatherless, then, sir, we don't know much of our God. When it comes to keeping yourself unspotted from the world, that's what's wrong today. We look around and I see young people and older folk, and they tell me they love the Lord, and I observe their life and I find they're more in the world than they're out of it.

And my Bible says, keep thyself from this evil world. All I want you to understand, I believe in religion. But please, please, I don't believe that religion will save a man.

Remember that. You can keep yourself unspotted from the world. You can visit everyone in need in your street, and be on the board road that leads to hell.

Simon the Pharisee, a religious man. But he wasn't saved. Are you religious? Ah, but are you saved? Are you forgiven? I remember that he not only was religious, but, please, please, and isn't this a wonderful thing, he was hospitable.

Isn't that nice? I had supper tonight with Brother Slim and his wife. By the way, is Slim your name? Anyway, I had supper with them. Do you know, I'm glad they're hospitable.

Ah, oh. I look back over this week, and as night by night I have been out in your homes, enjoying your hospitality, I am glad, so glad that you've been so hospitable. The Lord bless you, for the dear friends with whom I'm staying, thank you.

This man was hospitable. The Lord Jesus was the despised Nazarene, and yet this Pharisee said, would you come and dine in my home? Isn't that wonderful? Hospitable. And hospitable is a good trait, to be hospitable.

He was not only religious, he was not only hospitable, but remember this, he was friendly. Because not only was the Lord invited, but there were friends of his that came in, and they that sat at meat with him, we read. They that sat at meat with him.

Isn't it wonderful to have friends? The older I get, the more I appreciate friendship. I think friends are just lovely, I think they're great. To have a friend by yourself.

Oh listen, I sometimes meet Christians, and you'll not misunderstand me. They're my brethren, they're my sisters in the Lord. But sometimes they're not as friendly as they should be.

And maybe I'm not as friendly as I should be. But I want to tell you this, to have friends is a wonderful thing. And this man was friendly.

And as we look at the story of this man, there is bound to come to our mind other stories in the Bible, of men similar to him. Because sir, if you forget everything I say tonight, but you remember this, I'll be glad that you remember this, I'll be sorry that you forget the other, but I'll be glad you remember this. A man is what he is before God, and nothing else.

Sir, I am not what I am before you. You may think what you will of me, but I am what I am before God. That's what I am.

And this Pharisee, before his friends and neighbours, was religious, hospitable and friendly. But there was someone who looked right into his heart. The story of the third chapter of Zechariah comes readily to the mind of almost every one of us who know our Bible.

We are told his name, of course. He had a position. He was Joshua, the high priest.

Because he was a high priest, he read his Bible. He said his prayers. He attended his then church building.

He ministered to the needs of others. He was Joshua, the high priest. But the third chapter of Zechariah tells us that there came a time when he stood before God.

And God said, take the filthy garment from off him. That was all that he was, religiously, When he stands before God, God says, take the filthy garment from off him. My friend, I know little of you.

I'm going to love you in Jesus Christ, but I know little of you. I only know this, that my Bible still says there's no difference all of sin that comes short of the glory of God. And maybe tonight we are represented by this religious Pharisee.

But then maybe we're not. Maybe we're represented by this repentant woman. The Bible said, the village said, she was a sinner.

She was a sinner. And there is no doubt whatsoever as to what was being spoken of. She was a woman that was immoral.

Irreligious. And I suggest to you, by the attitude of others to us, she was the opposite to the Pharisee. She was friendless.

Immoral. This is an adult audience. It's not a children's audience.

I don't have to watch every word I say. But I have a strong feeling that none of us in this service tonight will get away from this fact. That one of the great problems of our modern age is the problem of immorality.

As a preacher of the Gospel, I have again and again and again, I'm sorry to say, to try and help, to counsel, some whose marriage is breaking up. And I regret to say this, but it is the fact of my experience and so I can only say that most frequently immorality is the break-up of marriage. Now that has not always been so.

I do keep a few records. And if I look through my records, I would say that the first thing that broke up marriage twenty years ago were money problems. They still have a long way to break up marriage today.

But nowhere near as bad as the other today. And here was a woman, and she was immoral. Please, please, isn't it lovely that the Lord doesn't go into all the detail? Isn't it grand? He couldn't, could He? If He did, He'd have to bring the man.

Oh, I wonder if the man is there. Don't read me out of fellowship, please. But I have a great difficulty to read this story and come to a real understanding about it if I forget that.

You see, there was a feast. The friends were gathered at the banqueting table. At the far end of the room, at the head of the table, sat the Pharisee and sat Jesus.

And suddenly a woman came in. And I don't know how she got in. And she not only got in, but she got to the head of the table without anyone saying, what are you doing? She not only got there, but she took an alabaster box and she broke it and she anointed the Lord.

And no one stopped her. I want to tell you something. If someone was to come into my house uninvited and march into my dining room and come to someone that was my guest, he wouldn't have opened the door before I'd have said, like you, who are you? What are you doing here? And I've got a feeling it wouldn't be long before I... How'd he go? I wonder how this woman got in and never got put out.

Maybe it wasn't the first time she'd been there. Maybe Simon the Pharisee couldn't say anything. She might have exposed him.

I don't know. This is pure imagination. And if you want to read me out of fellowship, read me out of fellowship.

I only know this, that when I look at this story, I remember Jesus said, it's not everyone who says, Lord, Lord, who will enter the kingdom. It's what we are before God. But as I look at her, I have to say this, that here was not only a woman, but here was a repentant woman.

Now when the Apostle Paul summed up the message of the Gospel in the 20th chapter of Acts, he said, this is the Gospel, repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus. We're always preaching faith in the Lord Jesus, and I'll preach it tonight. Thy faith has saved thee.

But don't forget the repentance. You see, when I look at the story, there are one or two things that are a little strange to me. And the thing that is strange to me, or one of the things that's strange to me, is that she bought this alabaster box of precious ointment.

This perfumed ointment. It no doubt was the thing that she used. She placed upon herself that she might be attractive to men, that she might invite them for the purpose that was evil and vile.

And suddenly she says, I'm finished with that. There's only one person who has the right to attract anyone to Him, and that's Jesus Christ. I'm not going to use this for the purpose for which I've used it before.

And she takes the alabaster box, and it was filled with precious ointment. And she says, Lord, all that I've used for evil purpose, I'm giving it. Isn't that repentance? What is repentance if that's not repentance? Your moody-fed repentance isn't saying I've sinned.

Double-minded Balaam said that. It's not even saying I'm sorry I've sinned. That's not repentance.

Judas said that. But your Mr. Moody-fed repentance is hating your sin long enough to give it up. And this woman said, I'm finished with the life I've been living.

I'm coming to Jesus Christ. Oh, please. Please.

I'm not suggesting that anyone's living a life like that. Of course I'm not. But the principle's the same, isn't it? If there is anything that is attracting men and women to ourselves, if there is anything that makes us ignore Christ, if there is anything that turns our back upon His claim, all that we might be able to say, let the wicked forsake His way, and the unrighteous man his course, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy, and unto our God, and He will abundantly pardon.

Isn't that great? I was telling them the story, you know, down at Ben Lippitt, you know, down the road there. Yeah. I was starting a crusade in Rugby in England.

By the way, you must forgive my stories being English. I don't know any American ones now. But there it is.

But I was starting a crusade in Rugby. We started with a day of conference meetings, so I had to be there Friday night to be in time to speak in the sessions during the Saturday. When I arrived at the house where I was staying, the lady of the house said, Mr. Ford, Tom, her husband, is round at a prayer meeting.

They've got a prayer meeting. They've had a week of prayer meeting. Oh, I said, I'll walk round.

Round I went. When I got there, there were not many, maybe 20 at the prayer meeting. But amongst them was a fellow who, to say the least of it, was rough.

He was rough. But he'd been converted the week before. Saved the week before.

He went every night to the prayer meeting, and he heard these brethren saying, Amen, Amen. You know, that strange word to most of you. Amen.

And sure enough, he heard them say Amen. And he thought, well, this is the thing to do. And suddenly, in the middle of the prayer meeting, he jumped to his feet, and he shouted, Three cheers for Jesus.

Hip, hip, hip. And I was the first one who shouted hooray. Boy, I was.

Oh, please. If he said it today, I'd take him aside, have a little word with him. But the whole point was this.

That he'd come in contact with Christ who changed his life, who transformed him. And he just wanted to say, Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord.

That's what she wanted to say. I'm finished with them. The alabaster box, you have it.

Thank you, Lord. And she took the alabaster box, and she broke it and anointed him. Oh, but please, please.

Not only do I see the religious Pharisee, do I see the repentant woman, but I see the redeeming Saviour. He not only forgave her, He not only redeemed her, but He had a message of redemption for everyone. Isn't that wonderful? A message of redemption for everyone.

You see, when Simon the Pharisee thought within himself as to what was happening, the Lord knew, I think that's important, don't you? I cannot think of anything more that I would stress tonight than this. But Simon the Pharisee said to himself, if this man were what he claimed to be, he would have known she was a sinner. He would have known she was a sinner.

But oh, friends, although Simon the Pharisee didn't say it aloud so everyone could hear, he said it in his heart, and Jesus knew what he said in his heart. He knows what you're saying in your heart. He knows every word you're talking about in your heart at this moment.

And he turned to Simon and said, Simon, I've somewhat to say unto thee. Isn't that wonderful? I have somewhat to say unto thee. No one else had anything to say to Simon.

They were all silent. They wondered what was going to happen. But when everyone else was silent, Jesus had something to say.

And I want to tell you that's what Jesus was always like. He has something to say when everyone else is silent. When in the house of Jairus they were silent at the death of a little girl, Jesus had something to say.

Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. When the widow of Nain was dumb with grief, Jesus had something to say. As he placed his hand upon the beer, the young man arose.

I have a Lord that always has something to say when other people are silent. Maybe there are men and women who have nothing to say to your problems, to your difficulties, but Jesus has. I have somewhat to say.

Master, say on. It always strikes me as well, you know, that Jesus not only has something to say when everyone else is silent, but he has something to say to people who are both near him and far away from him. Now, Simon the Pharisee was sitting next to him, but he was further away from him than it's possible to imagine.

Whenever I think of this story, I remember an occasion during the war. I was home and called round to see my mother. And as we sat by the fireside and we talked, mother wasn't listening.

Every now and then she would say, oh yes, yes, and sometimes she said at the right place and sometimes she wouldn't. And I knew that mum wasn't with me. And I looked to her and said, mum, I'm talking to you.

Oh, sorry son, what did you say? But I knew why. We were sitting in a little kitchen in a wee little working class home, but my mother wasn't in that kitchen. My mother never left the shores of Britain, didn't even go to the Isle of Wight.

But my mother was miles away, for it was Dunkirk, and she had a boy at Dunkirk. And her other boy was sitting by her side, but she wasn't with me. She was away on the battlefield with her other boy.

You parents know something of what I'm talking about, don't you? You can sit next to someone and be as far away from them as it's possible to be. And Jesus sat next to Simon the Pharisee, but Simon the Pharisee was as far away from him as possible to be. And yet Jesus had something to say to him.

Simon, you're miles away. Spiritually, you're lands away. But I've got something to say to you.

And he tells a wonderful story. He tells a story of people that were in debt. There was one of them that owed 500 pence, and there was another that owed 50 pence.

But this was the problem. The 500 pence debtor and the 50 pence debtor, when the bill was presented to them, the accounts was given them, none of them had anything to pay. They had no money to pay at all.

So you see, there was not only a debt, but there was a difficulty. They had nothing to pay. As I look around this service this evening, you won't mind me saying, will you? I've got a strong feeling there may be a few 50 pence debtors.

Please, I'm not trying to... What's the word you use over here? Not flatter. Flammable, isn't it? Isn't that the word I've heard you use? Oh, it's not. Oh, well, it must be somewhere else I heard it.

But I'm not trying to flatter you in the slightest way. I believe that most of you here are decent folks. Yes, you're a 50 pence debtor.

If none of us here today would say we've never been, if God was to look in your face tonight and present the account to you, thou shalt have no other God before me, how much would you be in debt? I know not. I can only say with some shame that the man that's speaking to you was a 500 pence debtor. I wouldn't cross the street to listen to a man tell you how bad he's been.

When God forgave my sin, He forgot it. And my Bible says, let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. I only know this, that I was a 500 pence debtor.

But I was exactly the same as a 50 pence debtor. I had nothing to pay if God had presented the bill to me. I was in difficulty.

But if Jesus tells the story of debt and Jesus tells the story of difficulty, hallelujah, Jesus tells the story of delivery. When they had nothing to pay, He frankly forgave them both. Frankly forgave them both.

He did it. Oh, Simon, don't you realize this? That this woman, who has given so much to me, this woman who's proved that she's come to love me, this woman, may have been in your estimation a 500 pence debtor, but she's been forgiven. And don't you realize you're a 50 pence debtor and you can be forgiven as well.

The tragedy of this story, you know, is not the tragedy of the woman. No. It's the tragedy of the fact that the Pharisee never came and got forgiven as far as we know.

Though it was offered there. You can be forgiven. Jesus said of the woman, thou seest this woman, let me say something to her, thy sins are forgiven.

And all his friends did was to talk amongst themselves saying, What sort of fellow is this who says he can forgive sins? What Jesus wanted them to do was to say, Not her alone, Lord. Don't forget me, please. Don't forget me.

They never did. Jesus said to the woman, Go. Go in peace.

Go in peace. God has been merciful to you. I said a moment or two ago, I believe, that these were the words that Eli used to Hannah when she came to him.

He thought that she was drunk. Mustn't talk about Eli and Hannah, must I? I mustn't do that. But there's something about that story that always strikes me, doesn't it, you? When he saw a woman that he thought was drunk, a woman, you know, a woman, the weaker vessel, when he saw a woman he thought was drunk, oh, he's going to give it to her.

I wonder why he didn't say anything to his two boys who were drunkards, and because of him, he lost his position as the priest. When I first had to do a little study in psychology, one of the things that I was reminded of was this, that if you see a person that's always shouting about one thing, you can rest assured that's his weakness. Now, that's a principle of psychology, and I'm not trying to support psychology, but I know old Eli had a great shout, but that was his great problem.

Nevertheless, when Hannah prayed and Eli prayed, God blessed her. And because God blessed her, Eli could say, go in peace. When David sinned and the dark, tragic story of Bathsheba and Uriah, the tragic story of a child that was born that should never be born, when David confessed his sin, Nathan said, go in peace.

When the woman came to Jesus, thy sins are forgiven, go in peace. Isn't it wonderful that tonight with firmer, stronger, more lasting words, or tones rather, should I say, we can say, go in peace. You know why? Because we have a Savior who died for our sins.

We have a Savior of whom the Scripture says, having made peace through the blood of the cross. And tonight He's saying to you, I'll forgive you. You can have peace with God.

You can have the peace of God because you can come to know the God of peace. May I say it? I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church. I believe in the communion of saints.

I believe in the forgiveness of sins. Hallelujah, I do. Do you? If you do, have you been forgiven? She had to come and be forgiven.

Will you come? In the words of our closing hymn, number 221, once again please. Number 221. Oh, what would her reaction be if we had sung it to her? But in the words of 221, if you are tired of the load of your sin, let Jesus come into your heart.

If you are tired of the load of your sin, let Jesus come into your heart. If you desire a new life to begin, let Jesus come into your heart. If you desire a new life to begin,

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