



## *Jesus Forgives, Love Like Him*

(Luke 7:36-50)

Jesus showed us **Agape** or unconditional love so that we, too, can love people unconditionally. We are able to genuinely love God and people when we know and understand how deep and wide God's love is for us, as demonstrated by Jesus' death on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. In CCF, our working definition of true love *is an enduring commitment towards imperfect people seeking their highest good which often requires sacrifice.*

### **Worship of a sinner (v. 36-38)**

Jesus Christ was invited by Simon, a Pharisee, to dine with him at his home. And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner (v. 37), who saw her opportunity to see Jesus in person. It seemed that Simon did not extend the customary courtesy to Jesus such as giving him water to wash his feet or greet Him with a kiss. On the other hand, the woman had the humility to wash, dry, kiss and anoint the feet of the Lord Jesus. Facing humiliation and rejection from the Pharisee and other people, the woman's yearning to see and to worship Jesus was greater than her fear of others. It was her act of worship and it was all worth it.

### **Jesus actively pursues all who are lost (v. 39-47)**

The Pharisees looked down at Jesus for spending time to talk with drunkards and tax collectors and being the friend of sinners (Luke 7:34). The Pharisees wanted to project a clean image so they would not associate with sinners. But not so with Jesus. Jesus came to save sinners (Luke 19:10) and He equally wanted to be a friend of the Pharisees.

The opportunity Jesus gave to Simon by dining with him shows his commitment to offer the gospel to all sinners, regardless of their past, background or stature in life. He showcased his unconditional love and His power to forgive sins to a "religious" Pharisee by using the very person the Pharisee despised the most - the immoral woman.

The woman was not forgiven because she loved much. Forgiveness came first, then love was the result. The woman's external actions reflected her faith towards Jesus. Her humility echoed a broken, repentant heart. Therefore, she received forgiveness and Jesus accepted her worship. To love because you are forgiven is a natural response to grace.

### **Absolute forgiveness brings real peace (v. 48-50)**

While we live in this world, we will still struggle with our sin and brokenness. Allowing the peace of Christ to rule our hearts means we must confess our sins when the Spirit of God convicts us through his Word. Unconfessed sin hinders us from experiencing the peace of Christ. Remember His promise that *if we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness* (1 John 1:9). Genuine confession requires a 100% admission of sin.

God knows everything about us, and yet He offers us absolute, 100% forgiveness as a gift. When we come into His presence and say "Lord, I'm sorry," we receive it. When God has forgiven you, you know you're completely forgiven.

### **Reflection and Application**

**True Worship is a matter of the heart. True Worship delights in offering all that we are and all that we have to Jesus.**

Who is the object of our hearts' affection? Who are we worshipping? Money and self are the gods that many worship today. For some, God is just a "filler" for these two. Many call on God to provide for them. He is a "go to person." But He is just that: a filler. How do we know that money and self are the objects of affection of our hearts? There are many indicators and our giving in tithes and offerings is one of them.

## Jesus Forgives, Love Like Him (continued)

In the case of the woman in our text, she offered and gave to Jesus her treasure: the perfume which she lavishly poured on Jesus' feet. How many of us give back to God our tithe? Our giving reflects the state of our hearts and who or what we truly worship.

### 2) **Pride and self-righteousness blind us from seeing our need for God's mercy and forgiveness.**

Selective obedience to God's commands is a sign of pride. We are conscious of some sins but tolerant of others. But the Bible is clear in Romans 3:23: *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."* Whether we view our sins as atrocious or petty, shameful or tolerable, the cost to Jesus was the same - He paid for our sins with His life. The deeper we understand and appreciate the fullness and greatness of God's forgiveness to each of us, the more we respond to his grace with love. The more we love like Jesus, the more we are able to forgive others.

## Sharing

What main point[s] spoke to you the most from this week's sermon? Discuss ...

## Going deeper in the Word

1. The Israelite worship in the Old Testament included burnt offerings and sacrifices. But does burnt offering per se please God? Read Psalm 51:16-17 and Mark 12:33. According to these passages, what does God look into when we approach Him in worship? What word best describes us when we go through external acts of worship but our hearts are cold toward Him?
2. Read Mark 2:17. This verse suggests that it is to those who recognize their sinfulness and need for a Savior that Jesus draws to Himself. Do we see ourselves hopeless in our sins without Him? As we continue His work through the empowerment of the Spirit, are we sensitive to those who seek salvation for their condition? What mindset can we learn from Jesus in our interactions with different kinds of people?
1. Read Romans 8:1-4 in conjunction with Galatians 5:16. In Christ, we are no longer condemned but forgiven. The guilt and shame of sin must no longer rule us. Moreover, "the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death." How can we keep ourselves from falling into sin again (Gal. 5:16)? What shall we do when we fall into sin? (1John 1:9). What does unconfessed sin do to the follower of Jesus who has been given the peace of Christ?

## Applying God's Word

Ponder the statement: "The deeper the pit they have been saved out of, the greater the love they'll have for him (who saved them)."

What hinders you from loving God the most? What are the signs and how can we guard our hearts from the deceit of pride and self-righteousness? In what practical ways can we demonstrate the love and forgiveness of Jesus in our homes and communities?

Praying for one another. (Take time to pray for one another.)