

"THE ONE HE FORGAVE MORE"

MAIN POINT.

Jesus forgives us when we humbly come to Him in faith.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Our sin created debt, a payment so extreme that we could never repay it with our own good works or sacrifice. Instead, Jesus willingly surrendered Himself as the sacrifice for our sin. He paid our debt with His blood and covered us permanently.



FORGIVENESS AND GRATITUDE

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to read all of the content on the timeline as you prepare to teach.

Luke 7

JESUS IS WILLING TO FORGIVE US

LUKE 7:36-39

36 Then one of the Pharisees invited him to eat with him. He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. 37 And a woman in the town who was a sinner found out that Jesus was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house. She brought an alabaster jar of perfume 38 and stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to wash his feet with her tears. She wiped his feet with her hair, kissing them and anointing them with the perfume. 39 When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "This man, if he were a prophet, would know who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—she's a sinner!"

FORGIVENESS PRODUCES GRATITUDE

LUKE 7:40-50

40 Jesus replied to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." He said, "Say it, teacher." 41 "A creditor had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 Since they could not pay it back, he graciously forgave them both. So, which of them will love him more?" 43 Simon answered, "I suppose the one he forgave more." "You have judged correctly," he told him. 44 Turning to the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she, with her tears, has washed my feet and wiped them with her hair. 45 You gave me no kiss, but she hasn't stopped kissing my feet since I came in. 46 You didn't anoint my head with olive oil, but she has anointed my feet with perfume. 47 Therefore I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; that's why she loved much. But the one who is forgiven little, loves little." 48 Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." 49 Those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?" 50 And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

BEFORE YOU TEACH

MAIN POINT.

Jesus forgives us when we humbly come to Him in faith.

Leaders: Consider when you've been like the woman, spilling out your sin and receiving forgiveness; consider when you've been the Pharisee, comparing your sin to someone else's.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

JESUS IS WILLING TO FORGIVE US

LUKE 7:37-38

"In Jewish society at that time, it was scandalous and indecent for a woman to let down her hair in public. It seems probable that she was a prostitute or perhaps an adulteress (7:37), so perhaps she was callous to the cultural norm, but it is more likely she was overcome with repentance and thankfulness (2 Sam. 6:16-23). Accordingly, Jesus passed over the scandal and emphasized to her and to those around him the forgiveness and salvation available to all who repent and believe (7:48,50). Christian women were later instructed to dress modestly and decently (1 Tim. 2:9)."⁸

LUKE 7:39

"With relationship to others, man is a fellow-debtor whose pretensions of moral and religious superiority are completely irrelevant. . . . All are hopelessly in debt, but some delude themselves into believing that theirs is not so great by comparison with others. The parable also teaches that God is not like men, harshly demanding his pound of flesh. He freely forgives men their debts."⁹

FORGIVENESS PRODUCES GRATITUDE

LUKE 7:44-46

"It would have been expected that the host would have provided water for his guest's feet (Gen. 18:4; Judg. 19:21). Jesus had not received this courtesy, but he had had his feet washed with the woman's tears. Similarly in place of the kiss of welcome that might have been expected from the host (Gen. 29:13; 45:15) he had received kisses on his feet. And finally, whereas Simon had omitted to anoint Jesus's head (Pss. 23:5; 141:5), the woman had anointed his feet (oil is olive oil, which was plentiful and cheap; there is a contrast with ointment, which was rare and expensive perfume)."¹⁰



CONTEXT

When we invite people over, we follow certain steps to prepare our home so guests are comfortable while they're visiting. We call this hospitality. People in Jesus's day showed hospitality by offering specific things when guests entered their homes too. For example, people wore sandals and traveled mostly by foot on dirt roads, so hosts usually offered guests water to wash their feet. Failure to do so would've been considered an insult—which is exactly what happened when Jesus entered the home of Simon the Pharisee. But that wasn't the only common courtesy Simon ignored: He didn't greet Jesus with a kiss (elsewhere called a "holy kiss"; an affectionate but not inappropriate or romantic greeting that shows respect), and he failed to anoint Jesus's head with oil (to show honor). However, the woman, only described here as a "sinner," did all these things for Jesus: She washed Jesus's feet with her tears and wiped them clean with her hair, and she kissed His feet and anointed them with expensive perfume. Scripture doesn't tell us Simon's motive for inviting Jesus into his home, but his lack of hospitality tells us he probably didn't hold a high opinion of Jesus. Though Simon believed he was a prime example of righteousness, this woman proved him wrong. She humbled herself before the One who deserves our honest worship, and He forgave her sin.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

Faith

Biblical faith is the resting, or trusting, in Christ alone for salvation (John 3:16-21). More than being simply a mental agreement of historical facts, genuine faith begins with a recognition and confession of the truth of the gospel (1 John 4:13-16), followed by a receiving of Christ as Lord and Savior of one's life (John 1:10-13). Biblical faith is not blind faith, for it rests on the historical life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

LEADERS' PRAYER

LORD JESUS, YOU ARE OUR PERFECT SAVIOR. THANK YOU FOR HUMBLING YOURSELF TO DIE ON THE CROSS FOR US. MAY WE HUMBLE OURSELVES BEFORE YOU IN WORSHIP AND TEACH OUR STUDENTS TO DO THE SAME.



KICK STARTER

♥ HEART CHECK

Let's check in on how you're doing spiritually. Last week, we talked about some heavy things. How has the truth that Jesus has power over life and death helped you feel more hopeful about death, loss, and grief? What opportunities have you had to walk with others and point them to hope?

These optional activities are designed to help your students interact. You'll find a Discussion Activity and a Cultural Connection, which touches on a relevant topic in today's teen culture. Each group is different, so adapt these activities to fit your group's needs. The goal is for students to connect more to the lesson as they connect to the topic and to one another.

1

GIVING THANKS

SUPPLIES LIST: NONE

Ask the following questions, allowing time for students to share responses:

- **WHAT'S THE MOST UNUSUAL THING SOMEONE HAS THANKED YOU FOR?**
- **HOW WOULD YOU EXPRESS YOUR GRATITUDE TO SOMEONE WHO HAS DONE SOMETHING HUGE FOR YOU?**
- **WHEN DO YOU STRUGGLE TO SHOW GRATITUDE? WHY?**

Showing gratitude isn't always easy—whether an unexpected gift leaves us shocked or speechless or our thanks feels forced because the gift didn't live up to our expectations or come from the right person. But Jesus deserves all our gratitude and worship. Despite our sin against Him, He willingly died to offer us forgiveness, salvation, and a restored relationship with God forever. Today, we'll see what it means to humble ourselves and be forgiven.

2

CULTURAL CONNECTION

When people hurt us—even people we don't know—letting go of the hurt isn't easy. We might vent to our friends or even share a post on social media. Our temptation is to hold nothing back, to give up every detail. Maybe our goal is to shame the other person or to justify our feelings or responses; maybe we're just looking for sympathy on a bad day. Over time, maybe we cool down and offer forgiveness. Or, maybe we double down, and bitterness grows into a grudge. But here's the whole, tough truth: We have no right to hold grudges or withhold forgiveness. If anyone had a right to hold a grudge, Jesus did. But He did the opposite; He withheld nothing from us, giving His very life to bring life to us when we were dead in our sin (Eph. 2:1). Certainly, we might need to set boundaries for physical and emotional safety, but forgiveness can exist within those boundaries. Forgiveness heals our hearts and sets us free; unforgiveness holds us captive. Just as Jesus forgave us and set us free, so we must be willing to forgive others.

DISCUSSION

MAIN POINT.

Jesus forgives us when we humbly come to Him in faith.

JESUS IS WILLING TO FORGIVE US

READ LUKE 7:36-39

DESCRIBE THE WOMAN IN THE PASSAGE. WHAT DO HER ACTIONS REVEAL ABOUT HER HEART?

Labeled a sinner, this woman demonstrated great courage by visiting Jesus in the home of a Pharisee. She approached Jesus humbly, recognizing her sin, His holiness, and her desperate need for forgiveness. With tears, she mourned over her sin and held on to the hope Jesus offered. She didn't put on a show for others; she showed love and commitment to the One who would save her from her sin. **May we recognize our brokenness and sin, and may we also kneel at Jesus's feet with humility and hope, admitting our desperate need to be forgiven.**



WHAT DOES OUR VIEW OF PEOPLE LIVING IN SIN REVEAL ABOUT OUR HEARTS? HOW DOES JESUS TEACH US A DIFFERENT WAY?

The Pharisees were rigid rule followers who looked down on people they considered more sinful than themselves, and Simon was no different. He couldn't believe Jesus would allow such a sinner to touch Him. This woman was caught up in a darkness she couldn't defeat on her own, and Simon condemned her for it. But Jesus didn't; He invited her into His light. **So often, we find ourselves sitting in Simon's seat, judging people who don't know Jesus for not knowing any better or writing off people who do know Jesus when they stumble.** But Jesus's way—the way of humility and grace—is better.



WHY DO THE *THOUGHTS AND MOTIVES* BEHIND OUR ACTIONS MATTER? CAN WE TRUST JESUS TO REALLY SEE US? EXPLAIN.

Leaders: Share context on hospitality. Luke doesn't tell us why the woman washed Jesus's feet with her tears. Maybe she recognized the host's failure to provide water for Jesus to wash His feet as an insult. Maybe she knew no other way to show her love for Jesus. Whatever her reason for her action, her heart was set on honoring Jesus—and He saw her. Jesus doesn't want empty worship; He wants humble, repentant hearts set on honoring Him. What we fill our hearts and minds with matters because all of it will spill out in our actions. Others might not notice when we're faking it, but Jesus will. He knew Simon's thoughts, after all. **Jesus isn't like anyone else; He sees our hearts clearly. He knows when our love and repentance are real, and to offer Him anything else is empty worship.**

FORGIVENESS PRODUCES GRATITUDE

READ LUKE 7:40-50



HOW DID JESUS CONFRONT SIMON'S THOUGHTS? HOW DOES HE CONFRONT US ABOUT OUR THOUGHTS TODAY?

Simon was clearly unhappy about the woman coming into his home and making such a grand gesture of love toward Jesus. He probably thought no one would know his feelings about the woman or Jesus. But Jesus doesn't look at what's on the outside—He looks at our hearts. Jesus used a story to make His point about what was going on in Simon's heart—and it wasn't love or gratitude. **For believers today, Jesus speaks through His Word and the Holy Spirit. Both convict us and help us see which of our thoughts honor Jesus and how to “take captive” (2 Cor. 10:5) the ones that don't.**



WHY DOES JESUS DESERVE OUR GRATITUDE, REGARDLESS OF OUR PAST OR HOW GREAT OR SMALL OUR SIN SEEMS?

Simon mistakenly assumed that he was set because he was a law-following Pharisee and that only the woman was a “sinner” because she'd been caught in a sinful lifestyle. But both deserved death because their sin made them enemies of God; Jesus offered both life instead (Rom. 6:23). **Here's the thing: No sin is so great that God's grace can't cover it, and no sin is so small that it doesn't need God's grace.** All of us have every reason to be grateful for Jesus's offer of salvation because even one seemingly tiny sin condemns us to death. Thankfully, no one who accepts Jesus's gift of salvation is condemned (Rom. 8:1).

WHY DO WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE DEPTH OF OUR SIN AND HOW IT HURTS OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD? HOW DOES THIS UNDERSTANDING MAKE JESUS EVEN BETTER?

Imagine what the woman in this scenario might have been remembering when she came to Jesus to wash and anoint His feet with perfume. It's not fun to think about when we've messed up—or to look at Jesus's holy perfection and see our mistakes clearly for what they are: rebellion against a good and loving God. **But the more clearly we see our sin, the more we realize our need for a Savior. The more we see that we are powerless to save ourselves, the more we lean into Jesus and see that He is better than anyone or anything else we might trust to save us.** So, we can come to Him with confidence, trusting that He has already paid the price for our salvation.

WRAP-UP



WHEN HAVE YOU SEEN OTHERS AS TOO SINFUL TO BE WORTH YOUR TIME? WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE FOR YOU TO SEE THEM AS JESUS DOES?

Jesus made people a priority, and He didn't discriminate because of people's different cultural or religious beliefs. Jesus went to the people who needed Him. Period. We need to be wise about who we approach—and when and how we approach them—but seeing people as Jesus saw them starts with our hearts. We have to turn our gaze inward to examine ourselves—false beliefs, prejudices, unforgiveness, misunderstandings, and all—before we can ever turn our gaze outward with love and compassion for others. Jesus offers salvation to those we see as “big” sinners just as freely as He offered it to us. **When we start with humbly remembering our own need for Him—with remembering the great depths Jesus brought us from—then we remember that we did nothing to deserve salvation. Jesus freely offered it. He paid for our sin with His blood.** Like Jesus, we must see those who need Him, approaching them with compassion and leading them to His feet, where they'll find all the mercy and grace—and ultimately the salvation—they need.