

The Pharisee And The Feet

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[0 : 00] Well, if you could turn back to our that chapter Luke chapter 7 verses 36 to 50 Let me just read again from verse 44 Jesus says turning towards the woman he says Simon do you see this woman? I entered your house. 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 Well our passage this morning is one of my favorite passages in the Bible and it's a striking passage because it's a wonderful display of God's love. I don't know what your first thoughts were Of the woman's actions as you read this passage As she soaks Jesus feet with her tears and wipes them with her hair as she kisses them and then breaks this expensive bottle of perfume on them

What were your first thoughts? I wonder if maybe you thought wow, that's an amazing expression of love and devotion Maybe you just thought wow, that's that's a bit weird Why would someone start kissing someone's feet? Maybe it's all right for her. I Wonder if anyone thought I love Jesus like that. I Don't necessarily mean the kissing feet thing. That's a particular expression of love But did anyone look at the woman's love and think I share her passionate love?

Excuse me love for Jesus Well, I hope that some of you might I suspect most of us see this woman's An extravagant devotion for Jesus and think either I don't I don't love Jesus like that And maybe as well I want to love Jesus like that probably both So here's the question for all of us. Why why don't we love Jesus this much?

It's a question. We all need to face up to you might be just looking into Christianity Maybe you're tuning in for the first time online or you're visiting and you've never Been to a church and you wouldn't call yourself a Christian I said you're probably thinking well, why would anyone love Jesus like that? It might seem a bit extreme Or maybe you're on the fringe. You wouldn't say that you're a Christian But you wouldn't say that you're opposed to all of this you wouldn't say that you hate Jesus But you're still wondering maybe that's a bit much I respect Jesus, but that kind of thing maybe not Or maybe you are a new Christian and you just feel that love for Jesus bubbling up and that's that's wonderful. I suspect many of you though I know many of you though our believers and have been for a while and there can be times in life when the ups and downs when you just feel maybe You're growing a bit cold And you're feeling like you wish you loved Jesus as you used to And maybe you look at this woman to think I

Want to love Jesus like her Wherever on that spectrum of love we might be the question is how can we grow to love Jesus more? And to answer that question. I want to ask one simple question of the passage itself Why didn't the Pharisee kiss Jesus feet?

[3 : 26] Why was it the woman? Why didn't the Pharisee kiss Jesus feet? What didn't he understand? You see there's three main characters in this passage you'll have noticed there's three main characters in this passage There's Jesus there's the woman and there's this Pharisee called Simon and the whole tension in the narrative comes from the way that the Pharisee and the woman interact with Jesus this compare and contrast in how they treat and respond to Jesus So let's dive in why doesn't the Pharisee kiss Jesus feet?

I suppose if you want a title for this sermon or you could a title for the children's book you could call it the Pharisee in the feet I think that's that gets out there So why didn't the Pharisee kiss Jesus feet first the Pharisee didn't understand who Jesus was?

The question of who is Jesus really dominates the first nine chapters really of Luke's gospel It's the section that some people have described as the Savior CV If you're to read through the first few chapters of Luke's gospel if you haven't I'd encourage you to You'll notice that again and again this

question of who is Jesus comes up as you read the genealogies about his birth where he's come from The whole the whole Christmas narrative His teaching the miracles it's all homing in on this question of who exactly is Jesus Who exactly is this man who's appeared this baby this man who's appeared?

You'll notice that question is even asked at the end of our chapter in verse 49 and the onlookers say who is this? Who even forgives sins? Maybe that's a question you've asked yourself who who is Jesus?

And it's a question that Luke our author expects us to be asking Whether we're Christians or not we can't just leave Jesus on the shelf We have to decide what we're gonna do of him what we make of him You see at the very start of Luke's gospel. He says that he's writing so that we can have Certainty about the things that we've been taught and everyone needs that certainty if you're looking in to Christianity You're thinking do I want to follow Jesus?

[5 : 28] Well, you need to have some kind of certainty about who he really is We're not just gonna follow a nobody who really is this Jesus I'm thinking about and if you are following Jesus You also need certainty to keep growing as a Christian. You need ongoing confidence about who Jesus is And we see both those kind of needs for certainty just in chapter 7 if we were to read the chapter more broadly John the Baptist Clearly a Christian Jesus's cousin who's been telling everyone to look to Jesus He sends messages to Jesus saying can I just be super sure about who you are?

And now in this passage, we've got a Pharisee who's like Maybe Jesus the teacher maybe is a prophet. He also wants to know who Jesus is is So in our Pharisee that in our passage then the Pharisee invites Jesus for dinner He wants to work out who exactly is this man and You can say you can see that lots of people thought that Jesus was some kind of prophet and The Pharisees kind of bought into that side here. He wants to test it out So he has Jesus for dinner you can have a closer look at him see how Jesus interacts And now when we hear prophet we might think someone who kind of foretells the future And what we need to be thinking of is that prophet in the sense of the word that it was here Was someone who called people back to obey and to follow God's law And so the Pharisees wants to look at what exactly is he gonna what exactly does this guide Jesus relate?

And his opinion of Jesus begins to rapidly change when this woman walks into the room and when she starts to weep and Kiss Jesus feet and anoint his feet And he thinks just Jesus really know who is doing this Twice we're told in verses 37 and 39 that this woman was a sinner Many commentators think that she was probably a prostitute or some something else that she did that made her notorious in the community Either way the Pharisee figures that if Jesus really cared about the God's law if he really was a prophet sent by God He would want nothing to do with this person. He would certainly not be letting her touch his feet this much But Jesus doesn't just rebuke her Jesus doesn't just send her away We'll come back to what he does The Pharisee though Why does he act towards Jesus like that? Well, he thinks that Jesus is a prophet by the end of this interaction He says in verse 40 teacher

His opinions kind of gone down That's the most he really thinks of Jesus And the Pharisee in many ways is like people today at best Jesus is a good teacher. Maybe that's how you think about Jesus today. So no wonder he doesn't kiss Jesus feet Think he's just a teacher Let's turn to the woman though now contrast that with the woman before we even get to her actions Just think about the fact that she turns up in this place You know, this was a private party. She was notorious. Just put yourself in her shoes Imagine it's today imagine she goes. She's walking down Stornaway High Street Imagine the heckling the crude jokes being made from the men in the park But imagine someone spits in her path mothers turn their children away People look down Galera And she carries on walking she goes to one of the biggest houses around Where one of the most religious people that lives and she doesn't even knock on the door. She just walked straight in Now I imagine the room would have gone quiet at that point. I Suspect the Pharisee himself. It had been any other occasion would have immediately Chucked her out or someone else to chuck her out, but he wants to see how Jesus interacts So he waits Skip down there, what does Jesus do?

[9 : 25] Skip down to verse 48 He says to her your sins are forgiven Your sins are forgiven and Then those who at the table begin to say among themselves who is this who even forgives sins and Jesus says to the woman your faith has saved you go in peace Why did this woman come so boldly to Jesus?

Why is it this woman that kisses Jesus's feet rather than the Pharisee? Why did she break down in tears? Well because she believed unlike the Pharisee that Jesus was far more than a prophet That he was far more than a good teacher But he was the one who could deal with her biggest problem He was the one who could forgive her sins When Jesus says to her your faith has saved you That's what he means this woman had faith this woman believed that Jesus really could deal with her sin problem And by forgiving sins Jesus himself is making a bold claim He wasn't just saying he was a teacher. He wasn't just saying he was a prophet Only God has the authority to forgive sins so when Jesus says your sins are forgiven. That's as good as him saying I'm equal with God. I have the privileges the authority of God himself The Pharisee had no such high opinions of Jesus did he he didn't kiss his feet because he thought well

This guy might be a prophet probably not just a teacher And he thought many many ways like I said many people today Maybe like you I Don't know I can I can say that as long as long as we have a small opinion of Jesus We're never gonna want to love him as long as we think that Jesus is a teacher just a good guy Maybe a guy who did some great things Might admire Jesus You might respect him like the Pharisee did But we're never gonna love him like that woman That woman's love come came first of all because she understood who Jesus was He was the one who could deal with her biggest problem. He was the one who could forgive sins It's possible as Christians as well to drift into lovelessness It's very easy in the left in the letters to the seven churches in Revelation Jesus warns the church in Ephesus that despite all their hard

Work for the gospel all of their endurance of suffering All of their guard against false teaching That they've lost their first love It's possible to be like that as an individual or as a church When we lose sight of who Jesus is when we lose sight of the heart of the gospel that Jesus is the one who can forgive sins If we just start to treat Jesus just as Someone who said some great things Just as a good teacher we lose sight of who Jesus is We lose we begin to lack our love for him It was the woman not the Pharisee who kissed Jesus feet because she understood who Jesus was first of all The forgiver of sins but second the Pharisee second the Pharisee didn't kiss Jesus feet Because he didn't understand his own need for forgiveness He didn't understand exactly what Jesus could do See Jesus being the forgiver of sins means nothing if you don't think that you need to be forgiven If you don't think that you've got anything on that whiteboard that needs rubbed off And that's that key lesson is drawn out in the story of the two debtors that Jesus tells in verses 41 to 42 let me just read them again a Certain money lender had two debtors one owed 500 Denarii and the other 50 When they could not pay he cancelled the debt of both and Jesus says now which of them will love him more Simon answered the one I suppose for whom he cancelled the larger debt and he said to him you have judged rightly In today's money adjusting for inflation We've got a situation where one person owes 70,000 roughly and one person owes 7000 think almost two years wages and roughly two months rages on some kind of average salary At least that's what people said that's what someone else's worked hours But now imagine you're the person who owes that 70,000 you've defaulted on three months worth of payments

[14:00] You're unemployed. You know that you can't pay this back anytime soon The money lender knows that as well and you're called to the office and you're filled with dread You know that the car might fetch something but not enough You can just imagine the bailiffs walk knocking on the door bursting in Imagine your wife's face or as they burst into the house and they start picking up the TV the sofa the kitchen appliances and Carting them all out you imagine a sign being hammered in the front lawn as the house is repossessed by the bank and you've got nothing And out you go you go into the guy's office the man's on the other side of the desk He's got this long list of all the things you owe And he takes out a red pen you think this is it?

And he starts crossing them off one after the other right down the list gone gone gone When he gets to that big 70,000 at the end he puts the line through and writes next to it paid in full I can't be certain but I imagine if that was you you might well kiss the money lenders feet even today I wouldn't be surprised if we would do that as well if suddenly 70,000 was just cancelled straight away That's how the woman felt She didn't need a reputation to realize what her heart was like What what she had done in her past or in the present?

She knew that better than anyone else. She knew her record. She knew every single line on her record And so to have her sins forgiven meant the world to her She knew that that crushing load that was on her shoulders was just lifted off as Jesus said your sins are forgiven On the other hand the Pharisee though is like the person you owed 15 dinari or 7,000 the person owing 7,000 is also in

debt. They can't pay it But they wouldn't feel nearly as bad as the person owing 70,000, you know, I'm pretty sure they'd be pretty happy when their debt is cancelled They might send the money lender a box of chocolates. Maybe a thank-you card. I doubt they'd kiss their feet though The Pharisee doesn't think he needs to be forgiven much if at all he calls the woman a sinner He doesn't call himself a sinner. You notice that in the passage He doesn't think he needs forgiven and so he doesn't think he needs Jesus So let me ask you

What do you see in your own life? When you look at your own life when you look at your own heart, do you see your need for Jesus? Do you see the debt that you owe God?

Do you see the sin in your heart? You see we all find ourselves somewhere on the spectrum probably this morning of how much how clearly we see our sin It's there for all of us. It was the Pharisee just the Pharisee had his own massive list of sin. He just didn't recognize it Now some of us will come this morning very very aware of all the wrong things we've done And I'll be weighing on us other of us will be here this morning perhaps thinking It's just a few potholes in my life. I know I've done a few things Or maybe just thinking I don't even know if sin exists. Well, that's not even a concept I agree with Well forgiveness from God has no value if we don't recognize our sin the first place that means nothing On the other hand though if you've come without feeling a burden of sin if you come recognizing and seeing that you've got a big sin problem The more you recognize your need for forgiveness the more you'll love Jesus love for Jesus is

[17:48] Is it a fruit of forgiveness you might say? Forgiveness is the root for love is the fruit great forgiveness Produces great love and that's Jesus point there in verse 47 He says therefore I tell you her sin which sins which are many are forgiven for she loved much But he who is forgiven little loves little Now just as an aside You might have noticed you might be reading along in verse 47 and if you haven't fallen asleep and you've got and you're reading sharply You might be thinking wait a second. Isn't the first part of that verse saying the opposite?

On first reading it can sound like Jesus is saying that the reason that she's forgiven is because she loved much And that's a good question because that would completely change the meaning of the reading and the whole meaning of the passage So just a 30-second Grammar lesson if I may the first rule of interpretation is always read things within their context So we know that Jesus isn't saying that she's forgiven because of her love well first rule because the whole point that would take That would contradict the whole point of the parable Jesus is told The whole point of the parable was that the more the person is forgiven and their debt the more they love the money lender They would also contradict what's the second half of the verse That which is meant to parallel it he who is forgiven little loves little in other words big forgiveness big love little forgiveness little love and So why the four why does why is the four there?

Well, just very quickly words second lesson of interpretation as you could say that words can be used in different ways So the four there isn't a cause Like used as in because so we might say I'm soaking wet because it's raining outside That's one way of using the word for oh, sorry. I'm soaking wet wet for it is raining raining outside But you can also use the word for as in as for explanation or evidence And so the window is wet for it is raining That's the way that the word is being used there Her sins are forgiven for she loved much her love just like rain on the window as evidence of it raining outside Her love is evidence of the fact that she has been forgiven much So grandma lesson over if you're confused Just remember this that love for Jesus is the fruit of forgiveness great forgiveness produces great love and This woman loved Jesus because she recognized just how much she had been forgiven

And brothers and sisters if you're trusting in Jesus You've been forgiven far more than you can imagine You know this morning you might feel you might feel a burden on your shoulders The actual extent of our sin is far more than we can imagine We only see a fraction of our sin 70,000 is nothing compared to the debt that we owe God But the forgiveness that Jesus offers completely drowns out that debt and the more we recognize the sin the more we repent and recognize How much we've been forgiven the more that will overflow in love for God as one person puts it the soil of repentance Produces the fruit of love And maybe up to now you've just Respected Jesus as a good teacher. Maybe that's where you're at this morning Well, do you want to love Jesus?

Why should you love Jesus? Well take an honest look at yourself at your heart ask God to show you who you truly are Ask him to show you your debt And then ask him for forgiveness and look to him I can guarantee that when you know the forgiveness that comes from God that will overflow in a love for him Maybe you've been a believer for a while you recognize that your heart you feel like

your heart is growing cold But you want to love Jesus more Well ask God to help you see your sin more clearly. It's very common. It's very easy to be acutely aware of our sin when we first become a Christian and then For that awareness to drift away maybe sometimes It's easy to develop blind spots in our life to become complacent even to become content with certain areas of our sin we sometimes talk about Respectable sins sins that just become normal because we see it often in our lives or in others or in the church

[22 : 21] Maybe it's like things like anger or pride or jealousy Or self-sentence or grumbling. I don't know what you would add We need to learn to see even the smallest of our sins as they really are As Matthew Henry says there's no such thing as a small sin Because there's no such thing as a small God to sin against When we view our sin as a small problem then the forgiveness Jesus offers us could become less valuable As one writer puts it we reduce Jesus to just a band-aid savior and I know that's in a you can tell the writers was American because it's a band-aid rather than a plaster but you get the what he's saying So like imagine you're walking along the beach and maybe you cut your toe on a bit of glass and your friend offers you a plaster And you put it around your toe or whatever like that. You'll be grateful, but I doubt you're gonna be overflowing in love for them Imagine instead you're pulled out to sea by that rip tide and down more maybe you've gone a bit too deep And just as you're sinking under the surface you feel your hand friend grab you and drag you back to shore and do CPR and

Save your life Then you might love them then you might overflow in gratitude and love Many of us have a band-aid view of Jesus. We've got a small view of our sin And so we've got a small view of what of Jesus forgiveness of what he does for us We need to see the depth We need to see the breadth of Jesus forgiveness It's more like dragging us to shore and it's not a band-aid It's very easy for our love to go to grow cold for Jesus and just as one of the sure ways to Grow cold is to lose sight of our sins. So one of the surest ways to grow in our love for Jesus is to recognize our sin To confess it That's not we often pray at the end of our prayers forgive us our sins. We need to be doing more than that We need to daily be recognizing where we've fallen short and Confessing our sin to God confessing our sins to one another bringing them to light so we see our ongoing need for Jesus forgiveness

Love is the fruit of forgiveness the more we understand how much you've forgiven the more we're going to overflow in love for Jesus We've talked about this woman's love for Jesus. However as we draw to a close. I just want us to notice Jesus's love for this woman Don't you just love how Jesus treats this woman?

He knows her reputation. He knows her history. He knows our heart, but he doesn't recoil He doesn't send the woman back out to sort her life out first and then come to him He accepts her devotion. He forgives her not only that he holds up this woman in this room of self-righteous religious men. He holds up this woman as an example of How to come to him all the mess of your life and ask for forgiveness And then he sends her away in peace That woman was overcome with grateful love. However, I don't think she even understood a fraction of how much Jesus loved her You see forgiveness doesn't come for free Jesus's story of cancelling debt is a good illustration of that when someone cancels the debt. It's not that the debt just disappears The person who the debtor no longer has to pay it But the debt falls on the money lender They're the one who has to take the brunt of all of the money that they don't isn't returned

Well, the woman is forgiven. She doesn't pay that cost But this cost still has to be paid Jesus could only forgive that woman because he wrote the check that paid off her debt and he paid off that debt on the cross On the cross you could say that woman's whiteboard was wiped clean Because Jesus took on himself all of that sin. He wiped to clean with his own blood shed on the cross Every sin past present of future was wiped away The only reason he could tell her go in peace was because he bought for her peace with God through his death on the cross When Jesus said your sins are forgiven he already had one eye on the cross because he knew that in order to In order to guarantee what he had said to that woman he would have to go and die even if it was just that one woman Jesus would have gone to the cross Jesus would have had to go to the cross for her to be forgiven

[26 : 59] Love is the fruit of forgiveness. That's why the Pharisee didn't kiss Jesus feet. He didn't understand that He didn't understand who Jesus was. He didn't understand who he was. He didn't understand his need And whether you want to love Jesus for the first time or want to grow in love the Answer is simple. The key is simple. You need to grieve and gaze You need to grieve. You

need to recognize your sin, but don't stay there That'll be don't keep gazing inwards and don't despair Even as we grieve we need to gaze we need to look at Christ and see the full forgiveness that he offers Praise God for his forgiveness in Christ and as we close in prayer, we're gonna grieve and gaze I'm gonna Pray for us and I'm gonna leave some space for us to confess our sins in private And then I'm gonna pray once more. So let's pray