

06/07/25 - Luke 7:36-50 - "Don't Forget Your Funeral"

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Date: 08 June 2025

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[0 : 00] Please turn with me to Luke chapter 7. We're going to be reading from verses 36 to 50.

! And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment.

And standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner.

And Jesus answering said to him, Simon, I have something to say to you. And he answered, Say it, teacher. A certain moneylender had two debtors, one owed 500 denarii, and the other 50.

[1 : 28] When they could not pay, he canceled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more? Simon answered, The one, I suppose, for whom he canceled the larger debt.

And he said to him, You have judged rightly. Then turning toward 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 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. And he said to her, Your sins are forgiven. Then those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, Who is this who even forgives sins?

[2 : 32] And he said to the woman, Your faith has saved you. Go in peace. This is God's word.

Thanks be to God. As we go into this series, into this sermon today, it made me think of Revelation chapter 3.

We just went through a series, a Bible study series in Revelation for our evening service. And Jesus addresses a church that had everything.

Everything except Christ. The church of Laodicea was thriving by all worldly standards. They had it all together.

They were wealthy. They were successful. They basically had self-sufficiency to the max within this church.

But Christ devastates them. In Revelation chapter 3, verse 17, he says, You say, I am rich. I have prospered.

[3 : 38] And I need nothing. Not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

Talk about needing a trigger warning, right, youth? They no longer saw their need. They had everything.

And they had forgotten their condition. They had forgotten their funeral. The funeral that Paul speaks about a chapter later from when we did our corporate reading in Ephesians chapter 2.

That we were dead in our sins. Not struggling in our sins. Not sort of just a little bit off course from our potential.

Dead. Stinky dead. And the moment you forget you were dead is the moment you stop loving the one who raised you.

[4 : 46] Looking at even just the past 19th century, not too long ago, 19th century offers us this recent reflection of the same danger regarding the Industrial Revolution.

As smokestacks began to rise. As smokestacks began to rise and just the area was booming with industry. Western culture, especially Europe, America, began to thrive, materially speaking. And this Industrial Revolution brought prosperity. Brought great prosperity. But it also came with creeping pride.

Many churches in this century began shrinking in their brokenness. As people who no longer feared God. And there was a growing spiritual concern in that area.

Historian David Bemington, he's a historian of evangelicalism. He noted that during the late 19th century, respectability became the hallmark of the middle class churchgoer.

[6 : 01] But this often substituted outward propriety for inward transformation. Spurgeon also, in his 25th volume of his collection of sermons, he echoes the same sentiment.

He says, I fear that many are content to be respectable, but are strangers to the brokenness which is the beginning of true religion.

Church, how easy is it for us to fall into that same rhythm? Religious. Religious. Comfortable.

Detached from grace. But we're actually clean on the outside, but cold on the inside.

Unmoved. Completely detached from grace. And so we come to Luke 7 here. Where we meet two people coming in Christ's presence. Here. We've got Simon the Pharisee who invited Jesus to an assumed table.

[7 : 10] Here. But forgot his need. And then comes in an uninvited woman. And she's just a straggler from the city.

She comes in. Broken. A weeping mess. Scandalous. But yet fully alive in Jesus Christ. Now the story isn't about them.

It isn't about the patterns that repeat throughout history. This is about us here today. It's not just about pointing the sins in the pages. It's about pointing the sins in the pew.

In the chairs you sit in. This comes personal, close to home. Because where grace is truly found, gratitude must follow. And that's the point we're going to see today.

I invite you to keep your ears and your heart open this morning to this little story, but profoundly impactful for our Christian walks.

[8 : 17] And the sermon title today is Don't Forget Your Funeral. And we're going to break this up into three different sections, as I think will be helpful to kind of be attentive to the words of the Scripture.

And if you are new with us, keep your Bible open with your finger on the text as we go through. Notebook open, things like that, that stand out to you. Don't ignore this time. And don't take a nap. Stay with us. I promise the coffee is okay today. Thank you, Lou, for the coffee. You got an applause. But don't forget your funeral.

Let's pray. Lord, we come to you today, and it's a tough text today. It's not too complicated in structure or form, but it is complicated because it's going to hit our hearts.

We need it to hit our hearts today. Help us to enter in today with a sense of longing for renewal.

[9 : 37] By the power of your Holy Spirit in our lives right now, personally, help us today. We praise in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

So the first section we have today is tension at the table. And this is from verse 36 to 39.

And verse 36, just as it was read, one of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclines at an assumed table here where people eat.

And now, we're not told exactly why Simon the Pharisee invited Jesus to this dinner and this meal. It could have been a power play.

It could have been going along with Sabbath customs of this culture of day of inviting rabbis to their homes. Or just maybe religious courtesy.

[10 : 39] But what we do know, based on context in this passage, is that Simon's invitation was not motivated in honoring Jesus Christ the least bit.

He omitted every common courtesy of Middle Eastern hospitality. If you look just a little bit further ahead, in verse 44, there is no water to wash Christ's feet.

Verse 45, no kiss of greeting. Verse 45 again, no anointing oil for his head. Simon was treating Jesus Christ with disrespect and dishonor here.

He is not the guy that everyone's gathering around at the party. This is bullying. And so, this is kind of like tense.

You can kind of sense the tension. Okay, Jesus isn't necessarily the honored one here. What's the story? Well, the story is that everyone around would notice.

[11:50] Jesus Christ is the dishonored one. They would see as you recline at a table. You'd see those dirty feet, right? You'd see him sitting there.

And it's almost as obvious as kind of like welcoming somebody into your home. And then they're followed by a whole crowd of other people and saying, Welcome to my home. And shutting the door.

Dishonor. Disrespect. Disrespect. And the setting of this dinner and this meal was a public courtyard where outsiders could actually be around.

As weird as that sounds in our culture, they could be around and observe and listen in on the discussions going on. And Jesus Christ's feet as being dirty was that symbol of dishonor from the host.

And so, this is kind of tense as word was going around about Jesus. Jesus. And then enters the shock here. In verse 37, look with me. And behold, a woman of the city.

[12:54] Little side note. Who was a sinner. When she learned that he was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster flask of ointment.

And so, the scene kind of is set and the tension is rising. She enters in here. And I just want you to see this picture here. You have to see this.

If you're going to get anything out of the sermon, you have to see this. Verse 38. And standing behind Jesus, who's reclined on the floor. These tables are low. He's reclined just sitting there on his side.

Dirty feet and all. Disrespected and all. Verse 38. And standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment.

This emotionally raw sinner, likely a prostitute, does what Simon refused to do.

[14:10] And it wasn't just a checkbox on her list. It was a natural response of entering the presence of Christ. She weeps uncontrollably.

Imagine how embarrassed she would be. As she's weeping uncontrollably, her tears are falling on Christ's feet, making a muddy mess.

She's almost feeling probably insult to injury to Christ, who's already being dishonored. And then she lets down her hair, which in this culture was basically the equivalent to exposing your front parts for females, right?

She lets down her hair, she kisses his feet repeatedly, and she anoints them with perfume. It's a muddy mess.

Filthy. What does she do? She gets her hair all ratty with mud and dirt. Stinky feet.

[15:16] Maybe it's chronologically appropriate that she, after kissing her feet, she anointed them with perfume. I don't know. But regardless, this was not a time where there was any honor whatsoever for the sinner or Christ himself.

This prostitute literally came as she was. Letting down her hair was common in her profession as a prostitute if it's equivalent with nudity.

The perfume was common for her profession as well to make her smell good for work. And every common courtesy that Simon refused to Jesus Christ was revealed through her.

Through an outpouring of being in Christ's presence. I hope you sense the tension here. Because now the Pharisee speaks.

Now when the Pharisee in verse 39 who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, if this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him.

[16:39] for she is a sinner. Simon thinks that Jesus Christ, the appropriate response to this would be to recoil from her and to rebuke her.

But Jesus Christ receives her. It's in this raw, muddy mess that Jesus receives those of us who have faith in him.

You come to him as you are. Sinner. Filthy. Life a mess. That's how we come to Jesus Christ.

There's no other way. And this is the full compassion of Jesus Christ on full display. Where Simon sees shame, Jesus sees worship.

Where Simon sees scandal, Jesus sees sincerity. And with the rising tension of honor and dishonor that's going on, we ask two questions here.

[17:50] Number one, why is this woman crying? Why is she crying? The other question is, why is Simon judging Jesus Christ?

Upon those, the points of this sermon will actually hinge and unfold. We see the second section of passage here. We see the realization through a parable.

In verse 40 through 43, Jesus breaks the silence. Thank God, right? This would be so awkward. He breaks the silence and Jesus answering said to him, Simon, I have something to say to you.

So proper. And he answered, say it, teacher. Jesus says a parable in verse 41. And listen, a certain moneylender had two debtors who owed 500 denarii and the other 50.

500, the other one 50, both in debt. Verse 42, when they could not pay, he canceled the debt of both. Now, which of them will love him more?

[19:10] In other words, this parable was basically simple math. Anybody could probably understand who would be more grateful.

Two men owed a debt, one 10 times greater than the other. I mean, one denarii was basically one day labor. So if you're saying 500 denarii, or denarii, you got basically 500 days of labor to pay that back.

That's a significant debt. And the other one would have almost about two months or so, you know, 50 days of labor to pay that back. Imagine being relieved of 500 days of labor, of enslavement, to pay a debt back.

Well, Simon's like, well, I suppose for whom he cancels the larger debt. Ding, ding, ding. And Jesus said to him, you have judged rightly.

Even those with the poorest judgment understand gratitude. This guy is judging Jesus for his lack of response, but he's able to understand simple math gratitude of which is completely absent from him.

[20:39] Simon gives the right answer as he, I think, reluctantly senses that he's getting caught here. The story appears to be a little bit too close to home, like Jesus might have a motivation here, that his little plan of not welcoming Jesus hospitably is kind of coming to bite him.

The implications of this story puts the woman, a 500 denarii sinner and Simon, a 50 denarii sinner, but both of them are what?

Sinners. Sinners. Both. If the woman represents this horrible sinner who was just sleeping around maybe the week before this occasion, okay, yeah, Simon wasn't probably sleeping around, that's assumed in the text, but you kind of get the point.

It was obvious for the woman, she's the 500 denarii sinner. And Simon being a little bit cleaned up with his life, a little bit more, a better moral compass and everything like that, we'll give him 50, right?

All metaphorical language, all for the sake of illustration to show Simon what he is lacking. And so, in other words, both of them, no matter the debt, are both bankrupt, neither can repay, both need grace.

[22:04] And this is the point. Being less sinful does not make you less in need. Being less sinful does not make you less in need.

Simon, we can call him the moralist. He's the churchgoer who doesn't see, his own debt. Thinks everything's going pretty well.

He's the checklist church member. Now, checklists and having a list is not inherently bad. Not saying that. But don't check out, don't check your heart out of your checklist and the things that God requires of us to do according to Scripture.

Don't check your heart out of your checklist. And the one who weighs their own goodness against others is what this is all about.

The one who weighs their own goodness against others, their own religiosity against others, their own theological knowledge, as great or as limited that might be, against others, rather than keeping essentials.

[23:18] Thinking less of our sin is equivalent of thinking too highly of ourselves. And I don't want you to fool yourself and be that Christian that claims to be humble, right?

That's the most prideful thing any Christian can say about themselves. Don't claim to be humble, but live this competitive Christian life with brothers and sisters of whom we are all sinners.

the one who weighs goodness against their brothers and sisters, their religiosity, perfect attendance at the morning service, at the evening service, at the house church.

Brent keeps giving them high fives, great discipleship, you're growing like wildfire, amen. Don't compare religiosity against others or theological knowledge. You could be an author of a book or barely be able to read through a book with your toddler child. Keep essentials essentials.

[24 : 24] Think less of yourself lest we think too highly of ourselves. And Jesus ties up any loose ends of confusion. He's not making any friends here.

I just want to let you know. In the third section, the last section here in verse 44 through 50, then turning toward the woman as this pitiful, weeping, hairs down, muddy mess. You could probably see the chunks of whatever Jesus walked in on in her hair. Complete hot mess. And turning towards this woman, he said to Simon, do you see this woman? woman. Simon didn't. Simon saw a label. Simon saw a reputation. Simon saw everything on the outside. He saw a distraction from what he was trying to accomplish here. But Jesus Christ sees something deeper than the mess on the outside.

[25 : 36] He saw her heart pouring herself out in gratitude of the greater debtor forgiven. And he gives a crushing comparison here.

He says to Simon, you gave me no water, she gave me her tears. You gave me no kiss, she hasn't stopped kissing my feet.

You gave me no oil, she poured perfume. on me. Simon's religion was all outside. It was an outside affair.

Simon had religion, the woman had redemption. She did everything that Simon refused to do. Simon had respectability, the woman had repentance. Simon invited Jesus to dinner, and the woman offered him worship. Jesus exposes Simon's heart here.

[26 : 43] This is kind of the thrust of the passage. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which are many, 500 denarii, are forgiven, for she loved much.

The forgiveness is exposed in how much she is loving in this passage. She probably heard a teaching of Jesus Christ at his last little gathering that he had, and ticked off some Pharisees at that one.

She wanted to meet the Savior today, and she did, in worship. And he concludes here, but he who is forgiven little, loves little.

In other words, Simon, you can get the logic, you can get the right answer on the math test, but that doesn't mean that you get salvation.

You don't have love. And church, here is the tragedy of religion without redemption, because it does the minimum required of us.

[27 : 58] if anything at all. The scene right here of this just ridiculously embarrassing, just crying, rawness, exposing your emotions to others.

This is a picture of heaven. Unity, true oneness with Jesus Christ. Christ. It doesn't matter if you're an emotionless, stoic person, y'all are going to be crying in heaven.

Praise the Lord for it. And this is the hard reality, because a minimum committed Christian may be no Christian Christian at all.

Whether it is evidence at their minimum level of joy that they have, maybe a minimum level of commitment of their time, maybe a minimum level of commitment of their giving, a minimum committed Christian may be no Christian at all.

Because the passage makes us look in the mirror. I looked in the mirror quite a bit this week. And we ask ourselves, what evidence do we have to testify of God's grace?

[29 : 34] You might not be a crying person, you might be a stoic person, so you might not see these tears, but do you see that committed heart? If you don't have tears to commit to Jesus, because of your stoicism or whatever excuse, mommy never loved you and things like that, you know, all of that can happen.

But what evidence do we have now that we are forgiven, given new hearts, a Father who loves us tremendously, of in Him our sins are separated as far as the East is from the West?

Do you respond in just religious duty? church? Check boxes on your list throughout the week.

You show up and do the motions, right? You're the one who's singing without praise.

You're the one who's praying without any expectation or any passion, giving without any gratitude, gratitude. No tears, no oil, no kisses.

[30 : 56] Well, God's Word says today, you need to check your heart. You have to check your heart.

God's love. God's love. God's love. The greatest danger of true spirituality is not gross immorality. You might think along those lines. It's actually respectable religiosity. And you know the unfortunate thing is that gross immorality usually follows those who have this great respectable religiosity about them.

It seems like a week doesn't go by of a fallen, well-known Christian man who seemed like he had it all together. All of a sudden, he's been in a 20-year-long affair. And you raise this guy up on a pedestal.

You got the books. You sang the songs. And all of a sudden, what? It was all a sham. Yeah. It was. That's the trouble with respectability that Simon had here.

[32 : 15] One evangelist once said, I would go any distance to find a sinner who recognizes their need. And we got to ask, would that evangelist find you?

Do you recognize your need? God, I can take it on myself. Ownership at the pulpit. Would that evangelist find me if he were looking?

Church, don't forget your funeral. Don't forget your funeral. You were dead. You weren't just sick or misguided.

You were D-E-A-D dead. Dead. Record of sins. You had it all. Muddy, nested hair with poop and debris.

Everything. Just as this woman. Wretchedly dead. You see, that's our spiritual condition without grace. Whether Pharisee, a 50 denarii, sinner, 500.

[33 : 29] Dead is dead. A tenth of denarii is still a tenth of denarii that is owed. In verse 48, he said to her, your sins are forgiven.

In verse 50, he informs us, your faith has saved you. Go in peace. Wasn't the tears. Wasn't the little foot massage.

massage. It was her faith that saved her. This power and authority left those who were present quite perplexed. Verse 49, then those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, who is this who even forgives sins?

May we not be perplexed like this crowd, church, or proud as Simon. May we be propelled to Jesus Christ who raises the deadness within us.

We are confident in who Jesus Christ is. This is good news for anyone here today who realizes the severity of sin, whether it's 500 or 50 or a tenth.

[34 : 51] It doesn't matter. A sin is a sin. A sinner is a sinner. Jesus paid it all.

If this is the first time you heard that today, that you can be forgiven of your sin because Jesus Christ paid it for you through his blood that was shed upon the cross and took the penalty that we deserve, but you come to him knowing that Jesus did pay it all.

All to him we owe. It's not a checklist. It's not obligation. It's worship. Jesus paid it all. All to him we owe. Sin had left a crimson saint, but he wiped it, washed it white as snow.

Right? Man, it's the good news of the gospel. Jesus doesn't recoil from sinners, praise God, or else we'd all be doomed. He restores them.

He tells them to come. Leave your sin today and be propelled to Jesus by your faith. Now, there was a widely recognized theologian of history, D.L.

[36 : 09] Moody, if you don't know anything about him, he was very recognized, he was reputable, very influential in the 19th century. I figured I'd go with the 19th century today, so here we are.

And he was also well known for his simplistic approach to theology, some robust, he wasn't a Spurgeon, very simple, he broke things down. Amen?

For guys who can break things down. D.L. Moody said, I have more trouble with D.L.

Moody than with any other man I know. Church, if we could just have that humility about us, that we're not pointing our fingers at the sins of others, but we're realizing that it is us that disgusts us most.

Even one of the most powerful evangelists of the 19th century never outgrew his need for grace. And that is what separates those who go through the motions from those who fall at Christ's feet with messy hair, worn out their ointment.

[37 : 28] Simon had morality, but no mercy. The woman had a past, but she didn't have peace. The difference, one forgot that he was dead, and the other knew she'd been raised.

Amen? Church, don't forget your funeral. Don't forget what you were without Jesus Christ.
Don't forget the day that he did raise you. When we remember, we weep. When we remember, we
worship. When we remember, gratitude will flow.
So come with tears if you must. Oil, affection, but definitely with sincerity of hearts, not through the
motions. Because where grace is found, gratitude must follow.
It's an intentional word, must. Where grace is found, gratitude must follow. Gratitude is what grace
sounds like when it is echoed within our hearts.
[38 : 36] Let's pray.