

## The Telltale Sign of Sinner and Saint

Luke 7:44-50

May 6, 2018

Luke 7, verse 36 to the end of the chapter. And as you're turning there, I'd like to ask you a question, and I hope that by what has already been evidently a theme in our service already this morning, I hope you're set up for the answer. Here's the question: What do you think is the defining mark of being a Christian? What do you think is the defining mark of being a Christian? We're not talking here about something that only God can know looking at every human heart from his omniscience, from his divine vantage point. I'm talking about something that we all can see on the outside, externally.

I, I know it may require some careful observation, it may require some biblical education and reflection on those things, truths in Scripture. But what is the telltale sign of a Christian? If you, in your mind, in your heart, answered, love,

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you're correct. A text that could have flashed into your mind is John 13:35, where Jesus said, "By this, all people will know that you are my disciples if," what? "You have love for one another." Love is the sign.

Divine love. Biblically defined love is the telltale sign of being a Christian. Like, love for one's enemies, that's a telltale sign. Those who treat us with contempt or disdain, or disrespect, loving those kinds of people. Only Christians do that. Christians must do that. Love like that only comes from God. It comes from God and God alone. Love is the telltale sign because love, even though many attempt to fake it, even though many have attempted to redefine it, to diminish it, to practice some kind of a human-produced counterfeit.

That love that God gives to the Christian is something that cannot be faked. It cannot be reproduced by any human means. The Apostle John wrote in 1 John 4:7-8, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God." Love is the sign that you have been born of God.

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“Whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

So whenever true, biblical God-given love is present, it's proof positive that one has been born of God. And if one is born of God, then that person has been made a new creature. This is a new creature who believes, who obeys, who grows in holiness, who leaves behind all earthly ambitions and distractions and pursues heavenly things.

So love is the telltale sign of true Christianity. Love marks the difference between sinner and saint. Love is what causes the righteous to emerge from among the unrighteous. Love is what distinguishes itself from the lusts of the world. Love is the difference between the condemned child of the devil and the true child of God. And that's why it's love. Love for God and love for other people. Love is the telltale sign. It's the counterfeit-proof virtue, it marks the difference between the sinner and the saint.

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And that is what we are seeing here in this very important section of Scripture in Luke 7:36-50, that love is the telltale sign between sinner and saint. We see both sinner and saint in the text. We see that Jesus deals with both of those individuals in love. And in his love, he confronts the one, and then he comforts the other.

Just to bring up to speed, we've divided the passage into four sections. We've talked about the scene, the story and now today we're going to talk about the sinner and the Savior. We've already studied the scene and the story, but since we've had a week away from the text, we want to go back into the text in Luke 7, this morning, and remind ourselves of those two points, the scene and the story, verses 36-43.

Jesus has been invited by a Pharisee to be his guest at his house at an afternoon dinner. Other guests are there. They share the Pharisee's heart and mind. They're friends of the Pharisee, but Jesus is "the Teacher," as you can see, he's called in the text. He's the respected, he's the featured guest at this dinner. Jesus has already gained some notoriety in

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Galilee and this Pharisee and his company, they are keen to hear what Jesus has to say in a more private setting.

From Jesus' perspective, there are a number of clues that this will not be a friendly gathering. It'll be more of a skeptical inquiry into his legitimacy, sort of to, in the minds of the Pharisee who invited him, the guests at the table, they are there to disprove his legitimacy, his claims to Messiahship. But Jesus attends the dinner anyway. He's confident. He's utterly unafraid. And as the events unfold, we see God's providence turns the Pharisee's intention, really, on its head. We see the would-be interrogator, Simon, he becomes the interrogated. It's an ironic turn of play here in the story. And God actually uses the most unlikely of figures, especially in First Century terms. He uses a woman with a notoriously sinful past.

Have a look at the text and let's read verses 36-43, ground we've already covered. "One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. And behold, a woman of the city, who is a

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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 five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. 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.'"

All it takes is a simple display of humble worship by this former sinner to totally reverse the ambush that Simon and his, his own friends had set for Jesus. Jesus has discerned the

thoughts of Simon's heart and now Simon has come under the scrutiny of the Lord Jesus Christ. You can see here that Jesus isn't at all hostile to Simon. He's not unkind, but he's loving, and he starts by taking an indirect approach with Simon in confronting him. He tells Simon a short story, a parable.

The parable of the two debtors is a story that reasons from cause to effect. The cause of being released from a burden of an unpayable debt, it effects an attitude of love from both of those who were forgiven their debt. It's a very simple story. It's clearly make-believe, I mean no one, no moneylender loans money to others and then let's them off the hook and cancels the debt. No moneylender is that wealthy that he can afford that kind of loss, nor, nor can he afford getting a reputation for loaning out money, and then canceling debts, nor requiring repayment.

So this story is made-up. It's to prove a point. Only God is wealthy enough to have debt owed to him and cancel them. This story, though, comes across to Simon as a bit of make believe, which may be why when Jesus asked Simon in verse 42, "Now which

of them will love him more," Simon answers the way he does in verse 43. "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." Simon doesn't have any question about that. He does add that little verb, "I suppose."

Some commentators see in Simon's response, "I suppose," they see what they say is an air of supercilious indifference. Supercilious is a word you may not be familiar with. It refers to an arrogant, condescending attitude. Kind of a patronizing contempt for another person, for their argument, for their reasoning. So if that's how we read Simon's reply here, you might imagine Simon's sort of hearing this story when Jesus asked the question, he sort of rolls his eyes at Jesus' little story and plays along by answering Jesus' question anyway. He doesn't see the point of it, but he humors Jesus with an answer and yet he wants to let a little patronizing attitude slip in his answer by adding the, I suppose, response.

That may very well be the sense in which we should read Simon's answer. It is consistent with Simon's critical spirited judgment in verse 39. It's how this has played out so far. But



we could read it another way, too. A slightly more favorable reading of Simon might see him here as unsure of himself. Perhaps it's beginning to dawn on him that Jesus has kind of turned the tables, has drawn him into a rhetorical trap and is about to spring the punchline on him. So maybe we can read Simon's response as apprehensive, as hesitating. He's a bit nervous about what's coming next.

No matter how we interpret Simon's answer, no sooner has he spoken and given the answer, than Jesus does close the trap when he affirms, when he commends Simon's judgment in verse 43. "You have judged rightly." No problem with Simon's critical faculties. No problem with his reasoning. He is able to come to right judgments, as Jesus has just proven. So why did Simon get it so wrong in verse 39? "If this man were a prophet," oh, but he's not, then, "he would have known who, and what sort of woman is touching him, namely that she is sinner." She's known that way. Why doesn't he know that?

Jesus did know. And he is at least a prophet. So why couldn't Simon see that for himself? And why did he misjudge this woman with a, the evidence of her radical transformation so

clear for everyone in the room to see? How does Simon totally miss that? How does he misjudge Jesus and how does he misjudge this transformed sinner?

What I want you to see, this is vital for your own discernment, it's vital for your critical thinking, but it's also deeply settling for your own assurance, for your own devotion to God, to Christ. It's so vital for your sanctification. What you need to see is how, as we said at the beginning, love marks the dividing line between sinner and saint. That's what we see as Jesus interacts here with Simon and this woman.

Two main points this morning. They're noted in the printed outline in your bulletin. We're also gonna have some subpoints, so you can't just fill that in and then go to sleep. You need to pay attention and listen carefully, because I've got subpoints, all right? First main point, and this is counterintuitive to our culture today, right. First main point, Jesus loves the sinner, you can fill in the blank, by confronting him. Jesus loves the sinner by confronting him.

Take a look at the section running from verse 44 to verse 47. In the parable of the two debtors, we said that Jesus reasoned from cause to effect. Now in verses 44 to 47, he reverses the line of reasoning and he moves from effect to cause. Look at the text. "Then turning toward the woman Jesus 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 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.'"

Having read that, did Simon show love for Jesus? Even a little love for Jesus? No. Not even a little. Simon showed no love for Jesus. But Jesus returns that lack of love in Simon by loving him. And when he loves Simon, he loves him enough to confront him. He doesn't try to be nice here, to cover it over in grace, which is, by the way, total misnomer if you understand grace. Covering it over and not confronting somebody is not

grace. Grace is to lean into this with kindness and love and confront it.

So Jesus loves Simon here by confronting him. He, he is kind, but he is direct. He's gentle, but he is straightforward. He does not mince words. We could really use more of this today, couldn't we? So why does Jesus confront? Is Jesus personally offended here? Not at all. Jesus sees the evidence here that Simon is in a desperate condition. Simon, contrary to his own thinking, contrary to his sense of false assurance and, believe me, folks, there are many today who are under the shroud, the darkness of a false assurance because they have embraced false sub-Christian gospels. There's so many people who call themselves Christians, and they think they're fine. But, beloved, they don't know him.

And Jesus sees the evidence in Simon that he remains dead in his trespasses and sins, that he's still under divine condemnation and wrath, that he's heading for hell, and it's eternal. This is why he shows love by confronting Simon. This

has nothing to do with Jesus and his sense of personal offense. It has everything to do with his love and concern for Simon.

Let's look closely at how Jesus did this here. First of all, you can see, we'll call this subpoint A for your notes, subpoint A. When first of all you can see that Jesus confronted Simon's cold indifference, his cold indifference. Notice how verse 44 begins. It says there that, "Then turning toward the woman Jesus said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman?'" Now the woman has been worshiping at Jesus' feet. She's been making a scene. She's crying and there are so many tears that it wets Jesus' feet. There's no towel, so she wipes up the mess with her own hair. She's kissing his feet repeatedly, anointing and rubbing in the ointment onto his feet. I mean this is going on in front of the whole dinner party.

So here she is doing this at Jesus feet, he's reclined, his feet are behind him, so she's behind him. And Jesus tells the parable of the two debtors, remember, and he's looking at Simon as he's talking to him about that parable, telling that story. And she'd been there the whole time. Now, he turns away from

Simon, and he turns to face the woman. And yet, he's still speaking to Simon. By turning to the woman while still speaking to Simon, Jesus is no longer looking at Simon eye-to-eye. That is a subtle rebuke to Simon.

Not only that, but by turning to the woman, and speaking to Simon, by turning to the woman, whom Simon disregards, Jesus is leading Simon to force him to look at this woman as well. What's the big deal about that? This woman is a woman whom Simon regarded with cold indifference. He didn't care about her. She's nothing to him more than a notorious sinner, someone that he can look at, disdain, and feel better about himself.

Jesus has directed Simon's attention to this woman, some whom, someone whom he regarded as worthless. And he's now influencing Simon, not only to pay attention to her, but get this, to learn a lesson from her. This is going to be very hard lesson for this coldly indifferent Pharisee to swallow here. So why is Simon so cold and so indifferent toward this woman? What explains that? Subpoint B for your notes. Subpoint B, by asking the question that he asked, Jesus has also here confronted the

cause of Simon's indifference. Subpoint B, Jesus here confronted Simon's spiritual blindness. He confronted Simon's spiritual blindness.

It says, "Then turning toward the woman Jesus said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman?'" Or better if we translate the verb according to its verb tense, Jesus asks Simon here, "Simon, are you seeing this woman?" The verb is *blepo*. We can get range in meaning from the physical sense of just visual perception, that is physical eyesight. But there's also, in the range of this word, mental and spiritual perception. And Jesus uses it that way, actually, in the next chapter.

If you just look, look at the next chapter across the page at Luke 8:9-10. It talks about the purpose of his parables there. It says, "When his disciples asked him about what this parable meant, he said, 'To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that "seeing they may not see, hearing they may not understand."'" That's the same word, *blepo*, which Jesus clearly uses there to refer to something way beyond physical eyesight.

Seeing and hearing in that context are equated there with understanding. Jesus' disciples, to them has been given the gift of spiritual perception. But for others, most others, many others, they don't see, they don't hear, they don't understand. That's what Jesus is exposing here in Simon when he asks Simon, "Simon, do you see this woman?" Are you seeing her? It's not just about perceiving the physical presence of the woman. I mean her physical presence is obvious. Her sudden appearance, her surprising and continuing behavior, those actions led to Simon's critical thoughts and wrong judgments. He noticed her.

But by putting this in the form of a question, Jesus exposes the fact that Simon had been ignoring this woman. Now, he forces Simon to look at her, and then, to look closer at her, and to observe her behavior, and to perceive what explains it. Simon needs to look beyond that woman's past, doesn't he? He needs to look beyond her public reputation. He needs to see her for who she has obviously become. He needs to examine the situation with spiritual eyes, with true understanding.



But he can't do that, can he? Why? Because Simon is spiritually blind. He has no faculty for spiritual perception. He's dead in his sins. He's blinded by his sins. Jesus knows that, which is why he doesn't wait here for an answer. He immediately tells Simon what he cannot see or perceive. It's like trying to describe a beautiful Colorado sunset with all the brilliant colors and different form of clouds and describing that to a completely blind person who's never had sight. Try to explain colors to them.

In the same way, Jesus is painting the contrast here for Simon who's never seen, trying to show a contrast between this woman's signs of spiritual life and Simon's lack of spiritual life. Simon is simply unable to see it because he's spiritually blind. So after confronting Simon's arrogance and his blindness and that's not even really finishing the sentence. We get to subpoint C, here, subpoint C for your notes, Jesus confronted Simon's social unfriendliness. Subpoint C, Jesus confronted Simon's social unfriendliness.

Frankly, social unfriendliness sounds a bit mild. There's been a lack of hospitality on Simon's part. And as we can see in verses 44-46, it just goes beyond just simple unfriendliness to actually reveal a pretty profound problem in Simon. Notice how Jesus says to Simon in verse 44, "I entered your house." It's not a throwaway line. You can't see it in English, but the pronoun, *your*, is up front in the original language. And in this case, it draws attention, not, not simply to Simon's ownership of the house. I mean that's been established. But rather to the inhospitable treatment by the one who is the owner and the host. Another way to translate the sentence would be instead of, "I entered your house," it would be more like, "I was your invited guest."

Luke noted in verse 36 that it's the Pharisee, he's the one who asked Jesus to come and eat with him. Again, in verse 36 and in verse 37, the fact that this is the Pharisee's house is repeated twice there. In verse 39, Luke tells us that when the Pharisee, oh by the way, the one who had invited him, when he saw this. So now Jesus says, I was your invited guest.

With a reasonable expectation of social grace and propriety, there ought to have been honor, some honor showed to a guest of honor, right? At the very least, there ought to have been some marks of social grace and friendliness. From verses 44-46, Jesus outlines his charges, his confrontation with a pattern of contrast. Look again, "You gave me no water for my feet," then notice how it turns on, But she, but she, but she. "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."

You can hear the cadence there, right, the rhythm there in Jesus' confrontation. There is a pattern there. Three statements of contrast. All of them are parallel to one another. Notice how specific Jesus is in his confrontation. Notice how Jesus is concrete in his language when he confronts Simon. He doesn't indict Simon's lack of attentiveness to him in the abstract. That is he doesn't say, Simon, you were inhospitable, you were unfriendly, you were discourteous. Those are true. They're more abstract terms.

He points to the evidence and he uses concrete language, something they could all see. Something they could all recognize. The way he structured the language in the sentences, he's painfully direct. He doesn't let Simon off the hook at all. Here's how it comes across in the original. "Water for me upon my feet, you did not give. A kiss for me, you did not give. With oil my head, you did not anoint." It's stark. It's concrete. It's direct.

There's disagreement among commentators as to whether Simon, as the host entertaining an honored guest actually owed these acts of hospitality to Jesus or not. Or whether they were simply acts that though unrequired, would show somebody hospitality, friendship, and courtesy. When perhaps we can see maybe anointing the head with oil was not maybe an expected standard act of courtesy to guests, but it would be for a guest whom someone wanted to honor, certainly. But no water for the feet? Really? In dusty Palestine? When everyone is reclining and relaxing at an afternoon dinner, that seems like a pretty significant oversight. I mean we wear shoes, and we don't want anybody's feet at the dinner table, right, without being washed.

It's embarrassing to the one who reclines without his feet being clean and smelling good.

The kiss, too. In that culture a kiss was a gesture of friendship. I don't personally take it that way, except from my wife, my kids, just to put you on notice. But in that culture, if I grew up in that culture, even I, would probably count a kiss to be a gesture of friendship. Kiss of greeting would have been placed on the cheek, or possibly, according to one commentator, if Simon had wished to be very respectful, giving a kiss on the hand. But no kiss at all, no kiss at all. To an honored guest? That seems to go beyond mere oversight to be sending a bit of a message here.

At the very least, Simon has inadvertently signaled here a distance in the relationship, but more likely, he's revealing and signaling his unfriendly suspicion toward Jesus and perhaps even further to show an already decided contempt for Jesus. So wherever we land on the question of whether these social, marks of social etiquette were expected or not expected or just nice, it is clear that Jesus has noticed these oversights. That's

apparent. A lack of water, a lack of the kiss for greeting, the lack of oil anointing his head stood out to him.

This isn't the main point to the narrative, but it is something I want to point out. I think it bears mentioning that Jesus takes note of a lack of hospitality. And we need to ask ourselves as Christians, how do we treat people? Do we treat people like strangers who are basically guilty until proven innocent and worthy of our hospitality and friendliness? Or do we treat everyone with friendliness as our calling card? Do we show them kind hospitality? Are we gracious in giving and abundantly giving to people? I think God would have the redeemed people of the church to be kind, courteous, hospitable people.

I think I can say that without fear of contradiction based on Luke 6, verse 35, "Love your enemies, do good, lend, expecting nothing in return, your reward will be great, you'll be sons of the most high, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil." If God gives out of his eternal, everlasting, infinite bounty, if we're sons of the Most High, isn't that everlasting bounty ours as well? Can we give and then fear that

we'll run out? There's no sense of stinginess for the people of God.

God would have us be attentive to one another with lavish giving and also show that same kind of hospitality to outsiders, as well, to non-Christians, as well. God wants us to practice our love in considerate, hospitable, generous, kindness. One commentator, he made the same point. He put it this way, "Professing believers can at times be very rude." Isn't that sad? Isn't that sad that that shows up in a commentary? The same guy says, "The practice of Christianity does not exclude social graces, hospitality, kindness, etcetera."

A Christian should never be rude. We should never overlook the common, culturally recognized marks of courtesy to a fellow human being. Perhaps it's enough to say that if you tend to be cold to others, somewhat rude and indifferent by nature or altogether inhospitable, then simply this, here's the solution: Repent. Just repent. Simple, right? We just need, we need to not do that. Put off any inhospitable, indifferent, unpleasant

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attitude and put on, as forgiven children of God, put on kindness and compassion and loving generous hospitality.

Some of you can just simply start here by smiling more, just a smile. As a Christian, you have every reason to smile, right? Let that be your first step. And then, practice being friendly. Speak friendly words to, just start with one another. I mean no enemies in here among brothers and sisters in Christ, right? Let's, let's start here and we'll just be friendly to each other. We'll do it here; we'll practice it, and we'll take it out there. All right, so be friendly and find encouraging words to say about each other. We'll see, if you say an encouraging, so smile, say encouraging word, you'll find it's actually really well received. And believe it or not, unbelievers actually receive that very well, too. You don't need to be afraid of them.

Then, if you want to get really radical, invite other people in your house. And just keep pursuing that trajectory and God will help you to work out repentance in this issue of hospitality. In fact, God will transform you from the



inhospitable Simon the Pharisee, and he'll turn you into the one in this story who showed true Christian hospitality. You know who it is? It's the unnamed woman. She gave her very best. She shed her tears. She used the hair of her head. She used her lips. She used costly perfume and she gave her very best to worship. That's hospitality.

All right, back on track. As I said, whatever the expectations of First Century hospitality when hosting an honored guest like Jesus, the evidence of Simon's discourteous oversights become very stark when set against the shining backdrop of this woman's hospitality and worship. Whereas Simon gave no water and no towel, but she or really, in the original, "but this woman." That's the emphasis in the original. It's a demonstrative, near demonstrative pronoun. "This woman." Remember, Jesus has turned his attention to the woman at his feet. Simon is behind him. He's saying, Look over here. This woman, Simon. No water or towel from you. This woman, though, she's wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

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Whereas Simon gave no kiss of greeting, no kiss of respect, no kiss of friendship, oh verse 45, "This woman, from the time I came in, she's not ceased to kiss my feet." That's an expression of hyperbole there. Jesus was obviously already reclining when the woman arrived to worship. But the, the hyperbole here on Jesus' part is warranted by the meaning of the word, to kiss. It's not just *phileo*, to kiss, but it's *kataphileo*. And the preposition that's prefixed onto the front of that verb intensifies the meaning, kiss fervently, kiss affectionately. Back in verse 38, the grammar portrays her, her kissing his feet in the verb tense there, the imperfect tense, repeatedly, over, and over and over again, she's kissing his feet.

Whereas Simon provided no oil for his head, the word, *elaion*, that refers to the cheapest oil, household olive oil in the cabinet of everybody in Jerusalem or in, in Galilee and the whole land. It was so cheap because it was so plentiful. It came out of the olive presses, olive orchards, which were all over the region. But, so no oil, really? None in the house to find to anoint Jesus' head? Was it really costly courtesy to show? But by contrast, verse 46, "This woman, she's anointed my feet with perfumed ointment." She spent money on his feet. She poured

expensive *myron* on them, anointing them, and rubbing in that perfumed ointment.

Once again, we've said it before, but it really does bear repeating. Notice the emphasis on Jesus' feet. Before we, in another sermon, we noted Luke's narration of the woman's actions in verse 38. Remember? His feet, his feet, his feet, three times. She stood behind Jesus at his feet weeping. And then she began to wet Jesus' feet with her tears, wiped them with the hair of her head. And then she kissed his feet, repeatedly kissing them, and anointing them, the feet, with ointment. Three times Luke shows us this woman's attentiveness to Jesus' feet.

This wasn't lost on Jesus either. On all three occasions, Jesus notes that the woman used the very best of her to be attentive to the very lowest, very most unseemly part of Jesus. That's the view, as we said, of everyone who looks up at a throned monarch, right? Sitting on the throne, you see the feet of royalty. That's the first vision. That's the first view. When we look up, we see the bottom of the king's feet, the

queen's feet, as they sit upon their thrones. So it was not at all unfitting for this woman to focus her worshipful attention on Jesus' feet. It was actually most appropriate. It was actually, she maybe, maybe unbeknownst to her, but theologically very accurate, completely fitting to bow and worship at the feet of Jesus. He is, after all, the exalted Messiah. He's the King of all kings, the Lord of all Lords.

So Jesus has confronted Simon's arrogance, his blindness, his unfriendliness. He's moved from effect to cause to bring Simon to the conclusion we find here in verse 47. This is subpoint D for your notes, Jesus' conclusion about Simon. Jesus confronted, letter D, subpoint D, Simon's total lovelessness. He confronts Simon's total lovelessness. Here in verse 47, Jesus and Simon here both looking at the woman. Jesus has listed the obvious evidences of her radical transformation.

What started back in verse 40 with, "Simon, I have something to say to you," ends here in verse 47 with the conclusion, therefore I tell you. I have something to say to you, now, therefore, my conclusion, "I tell you, her sins, which

are many, are forgiven—for she loved much.” She who, “he who is forgiven little, loves little.” Therein lies the confrontation. As Jesus has pointed out in these three verses, Simon didn’t love much. Simon didn’t love a little. Simon didn’t love at all.

Negative particle is attached to not the no, no oil, no kiss, no water. The negative particle is not attached to those nouns, it’s attached to the verbs in the text. It’s emphasizing what he did not do, what behavior he did not perform. Verse 44, “You did not give water.” Verse 45, “You did not give a kiss.” And then, verse 46, “You did not give oil.” Cheap oil, olive oil. In contrast to the woman who gave the very best, gave the most, gave the greatest she could give, Simon gave nothing.

“Much love,” as Jesus says here. Much love is a clear indication that person realized how much God has forgiven him or her. And much love, notice, is not in feelings inside. It’s not just contained in the brain. Much love is what’s demonstrated on the outside. It’s what others can see. Much love. When there’s little love shown, that demonstrates that a person simply

doesn't recognize how much God has forgiven. The person doesn't recognize and realize the depth of sin, the seriousness of sin, that even the most minor sin merits an eternal hell.

But listen, where there's no love shown, zero, blank, nada, no love means no forgiveness. Those who have been justified by God through faith in Jesus Christ, Romans 5:1, those who've been justified by God, have peace with God. That is to say, there's no more enmity, no more war. It's the cessation of hostility toward God. And more importantly, the cessation of his wrath toward us. By his grace, we enter into condition of full and final peace. As Paul says, Romans 5:5, "God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."

Simon, his lack of love, spoke much louder than he knew. It revealed to Jesus, revealed to all who can look and see, it revealed his lack of regeneration, which means a lack of faith, a lack of saving grace, a lack of forgiveness. His lack of love means that he had not been forgiven. For all of his education, for all of his wealth, for all the respect that was afforded to

him in society, for all those who sought invitations to his dinner table, Simon lacked the one thing that really mattered. He did not possess peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We don't hear anything more out of Simon after verse 43. He's out of the picture after verse 43. We're going to hear the thoughts of Simon's other dinner guests in verse 49. But Simon's voice here has gone silent. We're going to have something to say about him at the end, but don't miss the point that in all this confrontation, which had to have been extremely unnerving for Simon in front of his guests, Jesus has actually been loving this man. Jesus confronted him because he loved him. This man who treated Jesus with such cold indifference, with discourtesy and disdain, this man who judged Jesus to be not a prophet, Jesus loved him. Jesus loved a man who treated him like an enemy. He turned and taught him a lesson about the true citizens of the Father's kingdom.

Listen, don't, don't forget that the next time that a brother or sister comes to confront you for your issues, for your sin, because it's a mark of genuine love. Let's turn to the

second main point in our outline this morning. It shows Jesus acting here in the role of the Savior. We've covered the scene, the story, the sinner. Now, our final point about the Savior. Jesus loved the sinner by confronting him, and now, number two, point number two, main point number two, Jesus loves the saint by restoring her. Jesus loves the saint by restoring her.

Take a look at those final verses. Start reading there in verse 47. This is where it starts. "Jesus said to Simon, '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?' And he said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'"

That section of Scripture, it is full of Gospel assurance. From the mouth of the Savior himself, this is all about forgiven sin. There's only one person in the story who can listen to and claim these promises from Jesus Christ. There's only one to whom Jesus' kind words of assurance apply. There's only one in this



scene who, the poor, she's become rich. There's only one here who, though hungry, is now satisfied. There's only one, who though, sorrowing and weeping, is now made to laugh.

Jesus had said, "Blessed are you when you people hate you, when they exclude you, when they revile you, spurn your name as evil on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets." This hated, excluded, reviled, spurned woman, she's identified herself here with the Son of Man, bowing at his feet.

And now, the Son of Man identifies himself with her. He restores her reputation here in full. Beyond that, he restores her into the company of all the righteous, exemplified by the holy prophets of God. This woman joins their company and Jesus wants to demonstrate that to everyone. Can you imagine that? The Savior, our Lord who died for us, restoring us, taking our side in public, boasting that we belong to him?

He restores her, first in the eyes of Simon. Then in the eyes of Simon's guests. Then in the woman's own conscience. We can make those three subpoints here. Subpoint A, restoration before the critic. Subpoint B, restoration before the public. And subpoint C, I couldn't find another "ic" to rhyme, so restoration in her own conscience, restoration in her own conscience. So restoration before the critic, before the public and in her own conscience.

He starts by addressing Simon in verse 47, which is subpoint A, restoration before Simon the critic. You remember Simon said to himself back in verse 39, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who, what sort of woman this is who's touching him for she's a sinner." And Jesus totally contradicts that critical and false judgment here saying, don't call this woman a sinner any longer. "Her sins, which are many, have been forgiven." So attaching, sinner, to her; totally out of place.

In verse 47, again, read from the verse in terms of Christ's affirmation about one of his sheep, such heartening

language, "Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much." Just briefly, I, wanna, want you to notice a few points in his affirmation to the critic about this woman. It tells us so much about how to proclaim an accurate Gospel. First of all, the Gospel provides justice. The Gospel provides justice. There's no Gospel, there's no good news when sin is ignored. That is a counterfeit called, Cheap Grace, which is shallow and ineffectual.

The Gospel acknowledges our sins. It deals straightforwardly with our sins, all of our sins, each and every one of our many sins. And then the Gospel tells us how God takes those sins away in a just way. He does not set aside his justice when he forgives us. He satisfies his perfect justice with all of its legal demands when he pours out his justified wrath upon each and every one of our sins. He did that when he punished Christ instead of us when Jesus died on the cross.

"God was in Christ," 2 Corinthians 5:19, "Reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them." How can he do that and still remain perfectly just? Does God set

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aside his justice to love us? I recently heard what I call the mad ravings of a so-called pastor named Steven Furtick, who said to his congregation, "This is why the Gospel is still good news in the world today because," get this, "God broke the law for love." He repeated it just in case you missed it, just to emphasize the heresy. He said, "I said to every sinner, 'God broke the law for love.'"

Folks, that is not good news. He just told every lawbreaker in the room that God became a lawbreaker to love them. What kind of lunacy is that? For God to deny his justice, to break the law means he's no longer God. For God to come short of his justice by one iota means God ceases to be God, the hope of salvation vanishes in a puff of whatever that guy's smoking. That is not Gospel.

God broke no law. Instead, the wisdom of God is manifest in this fact, that God completely executed his perfect justice by punishing each and every sin of ours on the cross in Christ. He punished Christ in our place. "God made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of

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God in him." God is both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. True Gospel deals with sin. True Gospel is executed in perfect justice.

Secondly, the Gospel promises full and complete forgiveness. Let me say that again. Secondly, the Gospel promises full and complete forgiveness. This is why Jesus can say when affirming this woman there in verse 47, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven." That's the perfect tense, are forgiven; perfect tense, passive voice. They have been forgiven. It's the verb *aphiemi*, a verb that's derived from a preposition *apo*, which means, away from, and then the root verb, *hiemi*, to put in motion or to send. So God put in motion and sent away sin from us.

Psalm 103, verse 12, right? "As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us." He sends them away forever so that David said in Psalm 32:1-2. How blessed is this woman whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered? How blessed is the woman against whom, whom the Lord counts no iniquity? God has forgiven this woman. She entered

into the scene of this dinner setting having been forgiven, perfect tense, passive voice. Jesus simply declares to Simon what God has already done in her.

Just as God forgives the sinner today, looking back 2000 years to Christ's atoning death for us and our sins, God had forgiven this woman of her sins by looking ahead just a short while to Christ's atoning death for her and her sins when he died on the cross. Her many sins have been forgiven. One more thing to note in verse 47 about the Gospel, thirdly, the Gospel produces the evidence of forgiveness, which is love. The Gospel produces the evidence of forgiveness, which is love. As we've already said, in the presence of a divinely begotten love in her life, the evidence is there. Prior to this, prior to her encounter with Jesus' teaching, she loved her sin. She loved herself. She loved her money. She loved her life. Now, she loves her Savior, and she loves him lavishly. She loves him publicly. Her much love is proof positive that she has been much forgiven.

So Jesus contradicted the judgment of Simon. He has erased the basis of his slanderous accusations and thoughts toward this

woman. Her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, period. How can Jesus know that? How can Simon know that? How can everybody there know that? How can we know that? Because she loved much.

Now, the Savior there, as we said, is done speaking to Simon. He's now addressing the woman. This is the first time we see him speaking to her, by the way, in the text. Jesus has restored this woman before the accusing Simon, before her critic, and as he begins to restore this woman, verse 48, he strengthens her conscience with word of assurance. But there's another opportunity that arises for restoration here. And this time, it's before the dinner guests.

We might call this subpoint B, restoration before the public. "He said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.' And then those at the table, they began to say among themselves, 'Who is this, who even forgives sins?' And he said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'" Look, the other guests at the table, they didn't recognize here that Jesus had been answering the objections of Simon's mind. Jesus read Simon's

mind there in verse 39, but they think that they can ponder Christ's pronouncement of forgiveness kind of in the safety of their own minds, anonymity of their own thoughts.

So they do what Simon did earlier, they say to themselves. Same language used of Simon earlier. They say to themselves, in their own thoughts, in their own judgment, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" It could be taken as the language of doubt. But it need not be. They certainly came to the table prepared to doubt. They came to the table ready to entrap Jesus, to prove themselves and to one another that he's nothing more than a false Messiah. They'd been listening in on what Jesus said to Simon. They heard the parable. They listened as Jesus applied the parable to Simon, as he confronted the host in front of them.

They heard what Jesus said here, too, about forgiveness. Beyond what's said there in verse 49, we really don't know much more about them. We don't know if they are negative in their judgment or expressing surprise and wonder, pondering what it might mean for Jesus to pronounce the forgiveness of sins in



this notoriously, evidently formerly, sinful woman. We don't know the outcome of this. What we do know is that Jesus doesn't address their thinking as he has Simon, at least not directly.

He does address them, though, indirectly. In his final affirmation to the woman, he's answering their objections. How is it possible? How is it possible to pronounce the forgiveness of this woman's many sins? Faith. Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." That word of grace shows these dinner guests the instrumental means of forgiveness, the conduit, which is faith through which the grace of God comes to forgive the sinner. And it shows the result in forgiveness in the presence of them all. Jesus essentially says, "This woman has been justified by faith and now has peace with God."

Paul would later write about the impregnable assurance that belongs to God's people. It belonged to this dear woman as well. "If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It's God who justifies. Who is to condemn?"

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Amen. The fact that the Savior restored this dear woman in the eyes of Simon and in public before Simon's guests, it indicates the fullness of her salvation means that not only is her sin forgiven as a theological fact, but also as a practical present existential reality.

Jesus has demonstrated his attention to erase all the, the polluted shameful past and to do so publicly, to do so as far as the east is from the west. He intends to give her a brand-new reputation, not as a woman known for her sin, sinful past, but as a woman known for her extravagantly great love for Christ, just what he's done. And you know what? We're reading about it today, 2000 years later on the other side of the world.

If that's what he's done for this woman, you know what? It's what he intends to do with you, too, your sinful past, all your shame, all the things you've done, and you really don't want people to know about. As far as the east is from the west. All of this for the assurance of our hearts, the joy of a clean conscience, the reconciliation to God through forgiven sins.

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Let's look at one more subpoint, subpoint C, restoration in this woman's own conscience. Restoration in her own conscience. Our Savior said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." That's more than, far more than a, a blessing to go on in the subjective feelings of peace. Grammatically what Jesus says there is far stronger, he tells her go forth, to depart from there, walking, not in subjective sense of peace, but in an objective and lasting condition of peace. The subjective feelings will follow close at hand, sure, but greater than the feelings of peace are the fact, is the fact of an objective peace, which she now possesses in a new relationship with God.

She's been reconciled through the full forgiveness of her sins. Another way to say this, Go and sin no more. That's what he's saying to her, Go forth, living up to what you've already attained. Another way to say it, be who you are, woman. Be who you are, living now as a forgiven saint, as a child of God, as a citizen of the kingdom. Live consistently with the peace before God that you now possess as a fact.

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This is such a beautiful affirmation of her reconciliation to God. From the lips of the Savior himself and he's made this affirmation in public. He's made it in the hearing of a religious leader. How they treated this woman from this day forward, we don't really know, but that really doesn't matter, does it? If the son sets you free, you'll be free indeed. Jesus will not deny this woman before his Father who is in heaven. He'll acknowledge her before heaven, and he's just acknowledged her before earth as a true child of the King.

Such a blessed assurance we possess, isn't it? Just as a postscript on this beautiful story, the villain, or the villains, as we might say, that in this story, are Simon and the hostile dinner guests. They certainly don't come off well in the story. Their thoughts are exposed. Their hearts are revealed for all the ugliness that's in them. And before we boo and hiss them off the stage, it's important to remember that but by the grace of God, there go I. Right? There go we.

You ever harbored a censorious spirit, a critical judgment? Have you ever had a proud attitude about yourself, about what

you are, about who you are, especially in reference to others in putting them down? Of course you have. How would you like your thoughts to flash on a billboard for everybody to see in the moment you think them. Or worse yet, to be written in very permanent ink on the pages of Holy Scripture? That's why God covered her name. We don't know her name. You know what? God covered all of our Pharisaical sins as well. But beyond that caution, for all of us to have a humble attitude of self-reflection.

Notice that the narrative has ended, and we really don't know what became of Simon and his dinner companions. Luke has left that open-ended. Their fate here is unresolved, which means, while there's life, there's hope, right. We don't know this woman's name, as I said, for obvious reasons. Love has covered over her shameful past permanently. We'll never associate her name with a sinful past. But it's not uncommon in Luke's writings to name those whom Christians know in the early church, to cite their names, people who, in his writings in Luke and Acts, are known to the church as believers. It's very possible here, it's actually maybe even more likely that Luke has done the same thing here.

We may, after all, see Simon in heaven. After all, we've got to ask with Luke and all his research, you can read about his research methodology in Luke 1:1-4, in all of his research and examination of documents, interview of, interviewing of sources, who was it that reported the thoughts that Simon had been thinking? Who reported to Luke the musings of the dinner guests? It very well might have been Simon.

Consider also that Luke was personally acquainted with a Pharisee like Simon, but someone who was actually far worse than Simon, a man who persecuted the church viciously murderously, who persecuted the church, and yet was converted, who was called, radically called, and converted and transformed and used greatly by Christ. He was a traveling companion, companion of the Apostle Paul. So perhaps Luke wants to hold out hope here for us as readers. God saves notoriously sinful women and men. And he saves Pharisees, too, those who appeared to everybody to be wonderful on the outside. And perhaps Luke wants to hold out hope for us as readers that God saves all kinds of sinners from the tax collectors and the prostitutes, to the Pharisees and the

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politicians, from poor to rich, from slave to free, that is the love of God.

That's the love of God that has been poured out by the Holy Spirit on our hearts. That's the love we're commanded to show to everybody else. As the hymn goes, "The Love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell. It goes beyond the highest star and reaches to the lowest hell. The guilty pair, bowed down with care. God gave his Son to win. His erring child, he reconciled. And pardoned from his sin." That's Gospel, a Gospel that names, confronts, deals with sin, executes justice, but in grace, not on us, but on Christ. That's the Gospel that saved me and you.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you for saving us. Thank you for your mercy and your grace. Thank you for the love that you showed, unmerited favor toward us in Christ and mercy beyond mercy that we should be called children of God. Thank you for causing us to be born again to repent of our sins and put faith in him, that we might rise as he has risen, that we might manifest on this earth, the love that he has shown us, that you

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have shown us in him. I pray that you would help us, like Jesus has shown for us in this example, to love our enemies, too. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.