

Forgiveness – Full and Free

Gospel According to Luke

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Look with me in your Bible to Luke 7. I'm going to read from verse 36 all the way down to verse 50 and speak with you about "Forgiveness – Full and Free." I shouldn't really have to define it that way but because there are so many different views among men as to how God forgives sin and forgives sinners, it's necessary to qualify it and what we're going to see in this particular portion of Scripture is the offense of men and works religion concerning this Truth, this Doctrine that God's forgiveness of sinners is full and free. Works religion says you have to earn it. The Gospel says it was earned but not by you or by me but by the very Son of God Himself, all of the conditions. And if by God's Grace if He gives us ears to hear, let's hear it: all of the conditions of forgiveness of sins is on the LORD Jesus Christ. Period.

Forgiveness, full and free, and we see that here in verse 36 of Luke 7:

36 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. 37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, 38 And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. 39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. 40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. 41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. 42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? 43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. 44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. 45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not

ceased to kiss my feet. 46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. 48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. 49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? 50 And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

Now we're going to come back to this portion because it is more than what can be taken in, in one sitting, but the LORD, being our Teacher, would want us to see what God has to say. That's what's important, not what men say or what I think but what God has to say about forgiveness of sins. And we're all sinners sitting here listening right now, but how we perceive ourselves is going to be in one of two ways: we either perceive ourselves as sinners through the light of natural eyes, which again, if you're in a dark room with the light out or a dim light, you don't really notice dirt that much, you can get along and we've all done it, all of a sudden you open the shades and turn on the lights and it's like, "Whoa, that is dirty!" So you run the vacuum cleaner and it's just full of stuff and you think, "How on earth does all this collect?" Well, it's being in this world.

But there are some that live in a natural light concerning who they are as sinners and those take it lightly. They'll shrug their shoulders and they'll say, "Well, aren't we all sinners?" Or maybe they have some religious life where they say, "I know, but I'm working on it." They would be the Pharisees. They would not confess it to others but at least they would try to prove to God that they're working on what He's commanded to try to get better and be better, and in the end, to be accepted. That's their view. But then the other type of sinner, and we can have some in this first category sitting here listening to me, the other is that sinner whose eyes the LORD has opened and I believe that's what we see here in this woman.

The LORD addressed who she was. At no point in here was she addressed as being good or righteous and therefore she earned that forgiveness. In fact, those two things don't go together. If you're good and righteous, you don't need forgiveness, and I believe that was our LORD's point in verse 47, making this distinction, "Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many," and it's just you can never get to the bottom of it, that's what our depravity is. It's not this sin and that. You can lop off this sin and be good for a while in your mind, and lop off that one, but the root is ever there. No matter how far you go, everything about us is tainted with sin. That's who we are as sinners. But for the LORD to say our sins, "are forgiven." Period.

And notice it says there, "I say unto thee," He was addressing this Pharisee, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much," and that word "for" actually in the original is, "therefore she loved much." The LORD having revealed in her, first of all, her sin and not just sins but sin and having drawn her to Himself, He said, "are forgiven." Where was Christ looking? She was one for whom He had come to pay her debt and that's how they're forgiven.

But He said, "for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven," now this doesn't say that there are some that can be forgiven a little and still be the LORD's because we know in His death He paid for every sin debt, even our sin of presumption, unbelief, whatever it is, that forgiveness is in His debt, "but to whom little is forgiven," this is from the perspective of that Pharisee that's thinking, "I don't have much I need forgiveness about." And I'll tell you, until the LORD opened my eyes to cause me to see who I am before Him and cry, "Woe is me, I'm undone!" I grew up in that natural light concerning my sin. I was taught from my youth up and it didn't take much to be reminded because I grew up in a home where they did use the paddle and, you know, there was discipline, so there was a constant reminder of my, at least, doing wrong and needing to be corrected, and all the way up through my religious education and graduate school, thinking in terms of, as I had been taught, sins are like little debts that you take care of every day, in fact, we were taught in our youth group to, "Use god's spiritual soap." Just like you take a shower every day, you use god's spiritual soap every day. You want to make sure before you go to bed you're clean. It's always do, do, do.

You know, when it says here, "to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little," in that instance, who is it that I loved? It wasn't the LORD, it was myself. It was myself. What Christ is addressing here with this Pharisee is that, "This blindness that you have," and Bob read it there in Matthew 6, "if the light of your eyes be evil, how great is the darkness therein." You say, "What do you mean, the light is evil?" It's looking anywhere but to Christ. That's evil. Looking to myself.

How great then is the darkness? The LORD explained why is it that men value Christ so little? Because they really have never been given eyes to see who they are before a Holy God because if they had, they would be and we would be, just like this woman that had no regard for anything around her, nothing kept her. I mean, you're talking about a woman whose reputation was as a sinner walking right into this Pharisee's house and going to one person alone, the LORD Jesus Christ.

When it says there in verse 38, "And stood at his feet behind him weeping," what a difference. You say, "What was she weeping about?" Well, the Spirit of God had revealed in her who she was as a needy sinner and had drawn her to Christ at this time, at this moment.

When it says she, 'stood at his feet behind Him weeping,' it's because they reclined when they ate around the table, and so you're facing the table, reclining, and your feet are out here and that's where she planted herself.

So when we speak of forgiveness full and free, we see here, first of all, those in need of unconditional forgiveness. What was the difference between the attitude of this Pharisee and this woman? The need. The one didn't see his need. The other was made to know her need. And I'll tell you, that is all the difference when you start talking to people and listening to how it is they speak of themselves or how it is they speak of God, or how it is they speak of Christ, or even this Word, one of two things: if they're the LORD's, He has

made them know their need and there will be that humility before Him concerning themselves.

There's nothing good in ourselves and all the exaltation will be for the LORD Jesus Christ, and here's where we get in trouble, because you'll hear people that don't talk that way and you try to correct them and you try to say, "Well, no, you should say it this way better than this," the problem is you're dealing with a dead man or a dead person. You can catechize them all you want to and get them to say the right answers but they're still dead. The reason they don't see who they are or Who Christ is, is because they haven't got eyes to see.

I'll tell you this, it's like John wrote, if you have the anointing, and that word "the unction," actually if you have the Anointed One, if He's been pleased to open your eyes to see Him as the Anointed One, he said, "You have not need that one teach you." That doesn't mean we know all there is to know, but what it means is that, we're not going to sit here arguing over who we are and Who Christ is and how it is He saves sinners. We're going to all have the same Testimony and it's going to be that of being forgiven fully and freely.

So that's the first thing here. We see that those that are forgiven unconditionally, when we say full and free, it means unconditional as far as we're concerned. The condition was on the LORD. You know, He's here as her sin-Bearer and notice the specificity of how He addresses each. He addresses the Pharisee one way. He addresses this woman another. Now this isn't some general amnesty forgiveness that's being put out there, if you'll just take advantage. That's not salvation. All of the words specific to forgiveness were addressed to this woman and not to this Pharisee.

I don't know whether this may have been one that the LORD would draw later. There were some it says in the book of Acts that were of those men, that number that the LORD did draw, Saul of Tarsus being an example, but at least in what we see here, the LORD Himself is making a distinction. Here was this one with all of his righteousness, self-righteousness, and really even when you read in verse 36, every Word in Scripture is there for a reason, it says, "And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him." Now you go and run that through Scripture, there were those that desired Him because as this woman, she desired Him because she was made to see her need of Him. But here it says he desired Christ, that He would eat with him. There are many that profess Christ but they do so because they feel important. Here was one as Christ continued to preach, here was one that the crowds began to follow but He really wasn't in line with what these Pharisees taught and believed and so he's looking for compromise. "I'm going to invite this One to my table, I'm going to furnish the table, and He's going to see how important I am." It's that me, my, and I, religion of being lost, of being in darkness.

So you can see the contrast. Verse 36, there is one who really wasn't in need that provided everything. You know, it's like today we hear preachers saying, "Won't you please receive Jesus. He's done all he can do, now it's up to you." That's the sense. That's not a person in

need. Verse 37 is the needy one, and again in Scripture we see that word "behold," that's to get our attention. "Behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner." There's the Pharisee mentioned in verse 36 which means pure, that's where the word Pharisee came from. They felt that they were the pure ones. Then the sinner.

Now it reminds us of what we're going to see later on in our LORD's ministry, the publican and the Pharisee when they went into the temple to pray. The LORD was constantly making this distinction but, really, that's the only two positions there are. You're either a self-righteous Pharisee that is blinded by your own self-righteousness and don't see yourself for who you are because your eyes have never been opened, or you're like this woman that the Scriptures say is a sinner here.

So let me just give you a few characteristics that as I read through this the LORD brought home to my heart and I'm going to speak in the first person, me, because as I stand here before you, the only reason I do is because I am one of these that the LORD has mercifully and graciously been pleased to forgive freely and unconditionally. You know, when people bring up your faults, you look at them and say, "You know, I'm thankful you don't know the half." But the ones that bring up the faults, that is the reason they bring them up because they don't see their own.

That's what this Pharisee was about. Had he seen who he was indeed, in fact, before God with all of that self-righteousness actually being filthier rags than this woman's yet he didn't see it. Had he seen it, he would never have said as he did in verse 39, "when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself." He didn't even have to pronounce the words. You see, men by nature are deceptive. They always want others to see them in the best light possible and so they're the biggest hypocrites in the world but it's because they can't identify with sinners but look down their nose at them.

Here's the result, verse 39, this man. You think about, he's not just talking about this woman here, he's using this occasion, which to me, shows the true intent of his inviting Christ to his table. It was not to learn of Christ but to build himself up in the eyes of Christ, and when he saw the attention that this woman was giving to Christ as a needy sinner, he spoke up. He didn't even say it verbally. Here it says, "within himself, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner." You know, you don't have to sit down and take a 10 question true or false test to figure out whether you're a Pharisee or you're a sinner. It shows in your attitude. Your speech will betray you no matter how good you pretend to be. Your attitude, your speech.

So what is the characteristic of one who is forgiven conditionally? And here's the first person: we have been taught of Christ by His Spirit. That's the only thing I can tell you as to where I am now. There is a pre-Christ and an after-Christ. There is a lost and a found for those who are the LORD's. So when I say, 'we,' I'm not saying it presumptuously. We/you, we/them. I'm giving you a Testimony and that's what preaching ought to be. It's a Testimony of what the LORD has done in this poor sinner's heart. So the only reason I

stand here today as a sinner saved by Grace and forgiven fully and freely is because I've been so taught of Christ by His Spirit.

Now here again, we quickly read over Scriptures but if you look in verse 37, look at that Word, You'll say, 'Well, how is it that she even came to this house, and especially being a Pharisee's house?' You see, her reputation preceded her, so she wasn't even allowed in the synagogues. She was not even allowed in these circles and certainly she was not invited here. This was not a plant like the one that they brought to Christ to ensnare Him, the adulterous woman where one by one they went their way and the LORD asked her, "Where are these thine accusers?" This is a completely different situation but the same type of person, a sinner before our LORD.

But the key there in verse 37, notice, "when she knew." That word means to become fully acquainted with and perceive one, "when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house." Now you notice Jesus is in italic so the word Jesus is not there in the original, but 'when she knew that He.' You see, that's where our eyes are opened to perceive Who He is and where He is and why He came into this world. It's all about Him.

Now she didn't know Him by education. The only way she would have known Him, she wouldn't have even known Him according to religious upbringing because she wasn't even invited into the synagogues, first of all, as a woman she wasn't invited. But then add to it being a sinner of reputation in the city. So everything that she knew or had heard would have had to have come through our LORD as He went about preaching and teaching. Maybe she was one of these that stood afar off initially and heard His words.

But that word 'knew' there, is not any ordinary word. It's how any of us know Christ. It's because He has been pleased by His Spirit to teach us. It's what Paul said. Look in Galatians 1. Do you see how this is so different from just a profession, making a profession, walking an aisle? Faith today is being preached as a performance. This had nothing to do with a performance. I know it's preached that way because, you know, we read here that she brought an alabaster box of ointment and that's where works preachers, works mongers begin to go wild. 'You don't want to ever come empty-handed,' that's what they say, even though the parable that the LORD gives to show why it is this woman was forgiven, it says in verse 42, "when they had nothing to pay." She wasn't bringing this as payment. When you hear people preaching up works as some kind of condition, you know, I call them 'fruit inspectors', looking at themselves. Her eyes were not on herself or on any of these around her, but on Him.

This is what Paul said as his Testimony. He was one of these Pharisees. Verse 14, "And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." Boy, he could give you a church history. "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace," to do what? "To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." I love the fact that this woman didn't confer. There's not even anything in here as far as I can see where she spoke a word. We've got too many people popping off today about who they are and how

they came to Jesus and what they're doing for him ever since. Their mouth is going. Here was a woman drawn by the Spirit, the reason is given right here in the word, "when she knew."

You know, when people ask you, "What made the difference?" When it pleased God to reveal Christ in me, I came. I don't hear people talking that way today. 'Well, the preacher, I'll tell you, one day he just preached a message you couldn't stay in your chair. Other people going down front, I had to go.' How many times have you heard people talking that way? 'I got caught up there and my hands were up in the air and the next thing I knew, I was down on my knees at the altar.' That's works religion and it's vanity, empty.

You know, you listen for the voice of a sinner, "when she knew that he was passing by." Just like blind Bartimaeus, you know, he couldn't see. In fact, they tried to run him off just like they would have done with this woman, but the LORD stopped it. I believe the LORD purposed to go that way all along. It wasn't by accident. 'Oh, okay. All of a sudden now we're meeting.' But the LORD by His Spirit even before He spoke to blind Bartimaeus to come, was already drawing him, and when he cried out, "O Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" Christ was passing that way and such was his desire that, 'If he would just but speak that word of forgiveness and peace and healing to me, I'll be healed.' I wonder how many really ever gather like we are right now with that in mind as needy sinners? But that's how the LORD draws us to Himself, "when she knew."

Over in John 3, look in John 3. I know for me there wasn't a soul around. The LORD put me out there in the jungles of Africa down a two hour dirt road that you got beat to death to drive down, sitting in a house without electricity, running water or a toilet, at a desk with a kerosene lamp and a Bible and He opened this poor sinner's eyes. That's when I knew because I began to see my lostness and I'd like to say, 'Well, you know, I just jumped up from there and all happy and joyous.' It wasn't. The LORD's hand was heavy on this man. He stripped away everything that I had ever put confidence in. You talk about being shut up to Him alone. I don't say that in any way to say, 'Well, that's the experience.' That's not the point here but it's how the LORD draws. But I do know there could be a whole crowd around you but if you're the LORD's, He's drawn you just like this woman here.

In John 3, that's what the LORD told Nicodemus. At this point, here's one of these Pharisees, this is one of these, like I said, I don't know about Simeon but I do know about Nicodemus. He was one of them. So we have to be careful not to swing the other way and say because they're in religion and in blindness in their works and self-righteousness, that they're reprobate. No, Saul of Tarsus the LORD drew. He drew Ken Wimer. He drew a Nicodemus.

It says there in verse 1, "There was a man of the Pharisees," same word as over here, the purists, "named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night." Be careful. Remember I said that it's the attitude of some is he came at night because he was

afraid. No, he came at night because that's when Christ drew him. None of this was of him.

He came by night, "and said unto [our LORD], Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." What was he doing? He was flattering Him. There are many that come because they want to flatter men with their understanding, just like Simeon. He invited Christ to come eat, sit at meat at his table, but he was doing so as his equal thinking that, 'We've got some things to share here.'

But what did our LORD answer? Verse 3, "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again," except a man be born from above, "he cannot," what? "See the kingdom of God." That word "see" means to perceive. He cannot even perceive what the kingdom of God is all about. Until he's given eyes to see, everything's going to be physical, natural, works religion. They that are of the flesh, are the flesh.

How many times have we caught ourselves? Again, I'll tell you, self-righteousness doesn't go away so you see somebody still caught up in that and you say, 'Why can't they see it?' Well, they're blind. Christ said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Cannot see that One Who is God's King, through Whom God has purposed to save a people and establish His reign by His Spirit through His work in their heart.

"Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Again, you read this and think, 'How stupid can you be? That's not even what the LORD's talking about.' Now wait a minute, there again is that old self-righteousness popping up in the heart. Why do you see it and someone doesn't? Why are you quiet and thankful when you hear a message such as this that God sent His Son to save sinners? Whereas over here these are arguing and debating? Well, it's because you've been born from above. That's the only reason.

Verse 5, the LORD came back at it, "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." There are enough traps and snares in the Bible to catch anybody that looks at it and reads it from natural minds because even here where it says, "Except a man be born of water," man, you've got them running down that path. "See? That's water baptism. Unless you're baptized, you'll not enter the kingdom."

That's not what the LORD is saying here. He's saying what the water is. "Except a man be born of water," the Word, "and even of the Spirit." Christ said that, if a man, the Spirit of God is in him, springs of Living Water will flow out of his heart. Christ is the Water of Life. It's not talking about physical water. You can take a dead sinner and dunk him in water and bring him back out of the water and all you have is a wet, dead, dunked sinner. There's no salvation there. But the LORD is saying, "Except a man be born," just like a

man is born physically, the water breaks and they come forth, there is a Spiritual Water, even the Spirit without which "he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

Then He says that, verse 6, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." There's the difference. Remember I started off with different types of sinners? There are some that are hearing me that are still of the flesh. You're still trying to reason this. You're still trying to figure it out. 'Well, So-and-so puts it this way, how do you put it? My preacher says this, what do you say?' That's fleshly reasoning. Get out of that. This is not up for debate or argument, discussion. If you had a physically blind person that you were sitting at the table with and you kept going over and over with them about what it is to see, somebody's going to jump in a little bit and say, 'Why do you keep insisting on trying to get them to see what they can't see?' There's a reason they can't see, it's because they're blind. Whatever is of the flesh is flesh but that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.

Simeon here was of the flesh in our text. The woman who was a sinner, of the Spirit. You say, "Well, the Spirit isn't even mentioned in the text." Well, that's because the Spirit doesn't speak of Himself. He's not making Himself visible. Where you see the evident work of the Spirit is drawing that sinner to Christ in Faith.

When the LORD said to her, "Thy Faith has saved thee," he was talking about what He had created in her. It's like when people say, "You've got beautiful eyes." Well, you say, 'Well, thank you,' but you didn't make them. You're not saying, 'Yeah, I'm glad I worked on these. I got them to looking pretty.' No, they were given you.

Even here when the LORD said, "Thy faith has saved thee," He's declaring how it is that she even came and therefore, "go in peace." Because He gives Faith to every one that He forgives. Faith is never the condition for forgiveness, it's the evidence, it's the result. That's why it comes at the end.

There is so much more here that needs to be said but here in John 3, that's why He says in verse 7, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." He's not giving Nicodemus something to do. I remember years ago reading a pamphlet that someone had left in the bathroom as a supposed witness by a popular preacher and the title was, "What must I do to be born again?" Well, if they'd have been someone that was true, when you opened it up it should have been blank. There shouldn't have been anything there. It's not what you do to be born again, no more than any of us did anything to be born in this world. There wasn't a committee that met to bring Ken Wimer into this world and Ken had a voice in it as far as my family or my height, my weight, my hair, my color of skin, any of that. I came into this world based on what was determined and the same is true Spiritually. You know, I'm not going to stand up here and preach a message to define to you what the characteristics are of being a sinner and how you can be brought to see yourself as a sinner.

All I can say to you is you must be born again and that in verse 8, the LORD described, is entirely a sovereign work of God when He said, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and

thou hearest the sound thereof." You know, the sound is not visible. You hear. "But canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." In other words, it's not the sinner dictating the direction and especially it's not the preacher determining. How many times have we had somebody on our mind and heart and we're thinking, "Boy, I hope they're listening," and the LORD has just left them to themselves but over here, He's at work, quietly drawing. He says, "so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

So when it says there, "when she knew," in Luke 7, and we're going to have to come back to this, verse 37, "when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment." Oh, to be drawn to Christ having been given eyes to see and ears to hear.