

Love Much (June 2020)

Ruth 1: 15-18...Luke 7: 36-50

The parable of the sinful woman forgiven is simple enough,
yet there are intriguing concepts, aren't there?

So let me paraphrase the parable that Jesus told to Simon, who was
a Pharisee,My version goes something like this...

There are these two guys and they each owe a
creditor (or bank) money. One guy owes 50 bucks,
the other guy owes 1,000 dollars!

Now neither of these guys has the money to pay back their debt.

The bank, the creditor says fa-get-about it!

He tells the first guy

“You don't hafta pay me back the \$50 you owe me sir”

And he tells the other fellow, you sir don't hafta pay me

The 1,000 dollars you owe me!”

“Both of your debts are forgiven”

So then Jesus asks Simon...

“Which one of these guys will love the bank (creditor) more?”

And Simon responds, “Well the guy who owed 1,000 bucks”!

The guy that owes more money is much more appreciative right?

It's simple and straight forward, no question...no problem.

(Pause) But then Jesus compares the story to sin.

And specifically with “a woman of the city who was a sinner.”

Luke 7 Verse 37 reads, “A woman of the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee’s house brought an alabaster jar of ointment”

Clearly...the one who has sinned more appreciates forgiveness more.

So is Jesus suggesting:

If you are forgiven much...then you love much.

If you are forgiven little...then you love little.

The greater your sin, the greater you love.

The smaller your sin, the smaller your love.

If you sinned a little bit...just a tiny sin-

If you only owed 50 bucks...the fact that you are forgiven means little.

Now of course, what is involved here is a certain amount of jealousy,
Right? There’s anger and envy...

“I mean, if I had known my sins were going to be forgiven...

I would have sinned more!!!!”

“If I knew the bank wasn’t going to collect these debts,

I would have borrowed more money!!

(Pause) This is not exactly an attitude that is foreign to us, is it?

Let’s suppose you have a very puritan attitude about borrowing money.

You scrape and save....you watch every penny.

Your family makes sacrifices, eats left overs, wear hand me downs

Finally, you have to borrow \$50, to make ends meet.

Then there's this other chap....he's reckless with money!

This guy lives high on the hog! Drives a 2020 red corvette,

never seems to work....he travels, golfs, he's a jet setter.

And he's in debt several thousand dollars.

Now the bank comes along and tells you and this other chap,

that both your debts are cancelled! (pause) How do you feel?

Let me explain the sorry in another light...

I've always been a good Christian.

I was raised in a strict Christian home, I attend church regularly.

I actually have a 15 year perfect attendance pin!

Oh, sure, I've committed some minor sins, but I'm a good Christian!

Then there's this woman of the city...she drives a hot pink Cadillac.

She has lived her life in sin...she's never been to church.

(Pause) Jesus comes along and forgives us both. (pause)

In this parable, Jesus seems to be making a case for equality.

In His forgiveness, we are all equal.

The Cross does not make distinction.

Some of us are not more equal than others. (Pause)

And that's exactly what is so unfair.

There is nothing more unfair than equality!

“Jesus, surely, my reward should be greater than that woman of the street”

“And if we're being completely honest here God, I'm a little annoyed that you let her off without being punished! She deserved it! And I'm just as angry at the bank for erasing the debt of the playboy! He didn't deserve that break!

This is all part of the offense that Simon feels at his dinner party.

It's a Pharisee mentality.

The forgiveness of Christ makes us equal with all sinners.

(Pause) Even “woman of the streets”

But it's almost intolerable, because it's so unfair!

We are so much better, right?

The Pharisee are so much better!

Remember the parable of the workers in the vineyard?

Some worked all day...some six hours...some 3 hours...some 1 hour.

At the end of the day, they are all paid the same wage.

As you would expect, this didn't sit very well with the ones who worked all day! They were not at all happy!

Here again we see the great Christian offense.

Equal rewards for varying levels of sin.

(pause) There is no social class in the kingdom of heaven, is there.

We are jealous of the guy who worked 1 hr

We are jealous of the guy who's \$1000 loan is forgiven

We are jealous of "the woman of the city"

(Pause) and at the same time...we are a little annoyed with God!

Our anger is just like that of the Pharisee had with Jesus.

It emulates those who worked all day

Our anger mirrors the anger of the guy who borrowed \$50.

It emulates the Pharisee, "If he only knew what kind of woman she was"

How can Jesus forgive this woman?

Let's pause for a moment and reflect...

Because our dilemma just seems to be intensifying.

And maybe, we are understanding how Simon and the other Pharisee felt all too well.

Could our problem be the exact same as the Pharisees?

Have we, Christians of 2020, set ourselves above and apart?

Do we envision ourselves far better than others?

Have we established ourselves as a class conscious judge of others?

Have we been playing God? Judging and establishing degrees in our court system of forgiveness?

“Those rioters will never go to heaven!”

“Those protesters, those looters surly are less important than me!”

“Those people marching in DC, Minneapolis, Seattle,, Philadelphia, New York...those people can't be people of God”

(Pause) You see...in our role as God,
forgiveness isn't really that important to us...

there's always someone worse.

Forgiveness really has little significance for us.

If we're like God, what does forgiveness mean to us?

In our lofty Christian ego trip, we have been observing and reckoning the sins of others, so much, that we have conveniently missed our own sins.

Our life isn't to be devoted to the beholding of other people's sins.

We can't continually observe the sins of others.

I need to see that there is more good I could have done.

I need to see my own short comings.

I need to see my own failure to help others.

I need to see that I have sinned!

Jesus is constantly telling the Pharisees (and Us!), that we need to move down a few rungs on the ladder.

We can't regard ourselves as being above all others.

We have to humble ourselves.

We have to examine our own hearts....our own lives...

our own intentions...we have to examine our own motives...

our own actions...our own deeds...

we have to examine our responsibilities as a Christian!

Only when I'm able to behold...only when I'm able to see

my own sins...and fully realize they are many...does Jesus make sense.

Only in recognizing my own sins, can I be grateful to God and praise

His name for the forgiveness He offers me! The sacrifice of His Son.

Only then can I be filled with the spirit and joy of Jesus Christ.

“Therefore I tell you, her sins which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown much love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, love little.” From Luke 7.

I need to realize that in fact, I'm the one who borrowed the large sum of money and had it forgiven!

I am the one who worked one hour in the vineyard!

I am the “woman of the city”.

I am the one who has been forgiven much.

All I can do now is Love much....Folks, We all need to love much.

We need to realize, we are forgiven much....

So much, that Jesus died for me! Amen

