

# The Savior and the Sinner

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Luke chapter 7 is where we're going to be. Luke 7 starting with verse 36 and my text takes us all the way to verse 50 to the end of the chapter.

! Luke 7 verse 36. Luke 8 says,

I say amen, that's a clear problem. he went on to say he said it's kind of like telling a joke to someone who doesn't get it at first you know and then the more you try to explain the joke the less it becomes funny in fact you lose the humor altogether and it's always I would say to you speaking from a pastor a preacher it's always a potential pitfall in the nature of our work as expositors of scripture a pitfall to overanalyze a particular pastor or passage we preachers have a tendency to look at a text the same way a scientist deals with a laboratory rat you know in our desire to find out the various parts we lose the subject I don't want to do that this morning it is one of my pitfalls I like to look at every little nook and cranny every little detail and trying to analyze it to the fullest extent but I want to do something a little different now we're going to analyze some of the various parts but I want it to be the story that it is because Jesus here is not writing a doctrinal dissertation or or or thesis and what he's doing here or what Luke is doing rather with the life of Jesus is telling a story this is a story and it's a story in the life of Jesus and it is a story I think you would agree with me when I say it's a story that is full of drama intense drama really the story has a hero it has a heroine so to speak it has an antagonist or villain if you will in the story there's a climax to the story there's a conclusion to the story the story has all the basic elements of a good story and if it were to be made into a short little movie I think you would find yourself experiencing all manner of intense emotion just reading the story I think evokes that kind of thing in us I think if it were a little movie a short movie the ladies here would be shedding some tears and the guys would be trying to cover theirs up you know we can get emotional at a good story too and that's just the nature of this story in fact one sermon I read this past week I try to read some perspectives from other preachers one particular preacher said that really kind of treated the story as a theatrical play complete with acts one and two and three and that was kind of his outline he even introduced it kind of like a narrator would introduce the story he said I invite you to go with me to the El Shaddai dinner theater in ancient Hebron for the premiere performance of guess who's coming to dinner I'm not going to treat this like a theatrical play per se but it is a drama it is a story and I want that to unfold for us as I point out some particular parts to the story and the drama of the story really does help us understand what the Holy Spirit wants us to learn wants us to come away with from this story this is more than just a bit of dramatic history in the life of Jesus it has a message there's a very profound message here now what then does the Holy Spirit through the inspired pen of Luke want us to learn what the Holy Spirit wants us to learn what the Holy Spirit wants us to see here's the first thing first and foremost clearly I would say to you that the Holy Spirit wants us to see the Savior that's where we must start here in this story if that's not where you begin then the rest of the story is really pointless you see Jesus is the main character in the story as is the case throughout the gospel of Luke in fact all of the gospel writers the key character in all of their narrations is always Jesus it's always Jesus we need to see Jesus in this story and everything else in the story that we have here even though it's full of drama and very interesting all the rest of the story all the parts of the story we must see in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ the dinner party is because of him the lady who shows up there this woman in the city who shows up at the dinner party she is there she is present because Jesus is there and what she does while she is there there at this dinner party what she does there she does because of Jesus and even the Pharisee his thoughts his words his actions all of them are related directly to the Lord Jesus Christ nothing in this story would matter if Jesus was not there so we need to see Jesus here in the story now what does Luke tell us about Jesus what does he want us to know about Jesus in this story what is something

that makes this story worth reading and more than that it is something that makes Jesus worth knowing and what is that well Jesus himself said something about it near the close of our text from last Sunday it was what he said in that passage what he said that everyone else was saying about him do you remember he said in verse 34 of this same chapter he said you say you're saying this about me look a friend of sinners that's what people were saying about him and they were saying it of course not in a complimentary way this was derogatory very critical of Jesus spending time with drunks and you know and sinners and so forth and so they said this in a very kind of demeaning way very critical way but what they intended as an insult was actually true actually true and I think this is

Jesus point Jesus is the sinners greatest friend amen he certainly is and Luke tells us why Jesus is the only one who can forgive sinners you'll find it anywhere else you'll find it anywhere else you'll not find it anywhere else you'll not find it within yourself you'll not find it within man you'll find it only in Jesus Christ he is the only one who can forgive sins and that has already been established by the way by Luke in his gospel I'll hearken you back to Luke chapter 5 and verse 20 it's been a number of weeks since we've been there but you remember the story I'm sure where these guys bring on a stretcher this paralyzed man and they tear open the roof and they let his stretcher down there through the roof to place him in front of Jesus and you remember that story but Jesus said in Luke chapter 5 and verse 20 he said to the paralytic man your sins are forgiven you your sins are forgiven your sins are forgiven and of course the Pharisees there that day were beside themselves with indignation and contempt for Jesus and they said who does this guy think he is this is blasphemy and then this is what they said quote who can forgive sins but God alone exactly who can but God alone and Jesus confirms that in the very next verse in that passage he says speaking of himself I am going to heal this man and forgive his sins so that you will know that I alone have the power to do both and so we see the same thing I think portrayed here and this is Luke's primary point I think in the story here in Luke 7 first Jesus looked at the self-righteous Simon and he said this see this woman Simon her sins are many and they are all forgiven that's what he said they're all forgiven and we might be thinking that Jesus is saying they they are forgiven I perceive that they have been forgiven but that's not what he's saying he is saying in effect I have forgiven her of her sins and then he looked at the woman and said to her very plainly directly he said your sins all of them the implication is your sins are forgiven and we know what he's saying by how the people sitting there sitting there rather at the table how they took this they said in verse 49 of the Bible says and those who sat at the table with him began to say to themselves who is this who even forgives sin so they understood the point didn't they understood what Jesus was declaring what he was claiming for himself he is the one who forgives sins and so more than anything else Luke wants you to know in this story that Jesus is the savior of sinners he is the only one who can forgive sins and that makes Jesus worth knowing right because we're sinners and I just would ask you what good is Jesus to you if he is just a great teacher he is that to many people and just that to many people what good is he to you if Jesus is just a great teacher all that makes you is a smart sinner and when you die you go to hell a smart sinner and I would also ask what good is Jesus to you [14:13] if he is just a great physician a healer a miracle worker all that makes you is a healthy sinner and you die and go to hell healthy and I would add to that what good is Jesus to you if he is just a great example of morality that's what he is to many people in fact some would even point us to the cross and to the quote atonement and say that that is just basically Jesus showing self-sacrifice and he's a giver of himself and he's a very moral teaching morality and all of his ministry all of his preaching was to teach a morality morality among people what good is Jesus to you if he is just simply more nothing more than a great example of morality all that makes you is a moral sinner that's kind of an oxymoron isn't it and then you die and go to hell moral a good person and a lot of people do by the way

Jesus is worth knowing because he is the only friend of sinners the only one the only one who can forgive sinners the only one who can save sinners just like you and me now that of course explains why this woman risked all of the humiliation all of the ridicule all the raised eyebrows that day when she came into the courtyard to get near Jesus and why she did what she did when she was there so you've got to see the Savior first to understand the importance of what this woman did and even beyond that and that leads of course to the second thing we should see we need to see the Savior the Savior in the story and that's Jesus and second we need to see the sinner see the sinner here in the story and let's just follow the story verse 36 then one of the

Pharisees asked Jesus to eat or dine with him and Jesus accepted the invitation didn't he went to the Pharisees house and sat down to eat we don't know where this was some town in Galilee it was during Jesus Galilee in ministry we don't know what day it was particularly it could have been you know a meal after the Sabbath day service that day in the tabernacle we can only speculate as to why the Pharisee invited Jesus to his home for this dinner and I think we can be safe in this conclusion that you know culturally if you're one of the chief religious leaders of the community like this Pharisee was Simon was he was a prominent Pharisee if you're that kind of guy in the community then it would be the customary thing to invite a visiting preacher teacher to come home with you and dine with you that would be a customary thing in that day and this was not a private dinner you know this was something more on the line scale of a public kind of gathering in the sense that there were others allowed to come the Pharisee invited Jesus he also invited some of his

Pharisee friends no doubt and other friends who were part of the high muckety-muck of this city wherever they were but you know so there would be invited guests and they would come and recline at the table you know it probably was kind of an oblong low table there in the courtyard of this this home it wouldn't be a private place more public they would have often in these homes courtyards and they would be surrounded by a fence or some kind of a wall with a gate and maybe open air or maybe there would be some semi covering over this area and the guests the invited guests would recline literally recline maybe on some small cushions or low to the ground kind of couches and they would recline there with their elbow on the table and they would be eating and talking conversing and their feet would be off to the side and behind them you can kind of picture that they're all reclining around the table that would be for the invited guests but there would also be uninvited guests apparently we know that from the story we shouldn't take this as odd there would be uninvited guests they were not necessarily invited to the table they wouldn't come and sit at the table they wouldn't eat the meal necessarily but they would gather be allowed to gather inside the courtroom around the edges of the courtroom and they might stand there or sit there and they would just kind of listen into the conversation it would be interesting to them some of them would be there out of curiosity they've heard about Jesus and so they came to find out who this guy is maybe hear some things about him maybe hear him speak some things and so some were there for that reason some might have been poor and they were there hoping for some scrap to be thrown from the table some leftover after the dinner and so they were there gathered around for various reasons and just listening into the conversation and this would be a very customary thing in that day now this was a

Pharisee's home remember and certainly you you know by now in Jesus' ministry he was no friend of the Pharisees okay and yet they invited he invited his Pharisee invited Jesus there partly out of curiosity maybe partly out of courtesy be the customary thing to do mostly I think out of conspiracy this Pharisee perhaps was hoping to get Jesus to say something or do something that would incriminate him or cast a bad light on him or maybe he'd find some way to trap Jesus and so forth we can only speculate about this the Pharisee then invited Jesus to dine with him and other special guests perhaps some Pharisee friends of his so with that as the setting notice something unexpected happens something I do not believe the

[ 20 : 55 ] Pharisee intended to happen I don't think he set this up something unexpected something surprising we might even say shocking and we ought to take it that way in fact Luke I think intended for us to be shocked by this to be surprised by this next bit of information as the story is unfolding and we know that from verse 37 because Luke wrote and behold and it's a particular word in the Greek language that carries with it the idea of surprise surprise lo and behold we could even translate it and probably would in our day in our vernacular we would use the word look with an exclamation mark that's the import of the word here and this is what Luke is intending to convey look surprise a woman of the city who is a sinner has come to the dinner has come into the court now what does Luke want us to know about this woman well quite a lot actually she kind of takes center stage here for a moment in the story she's a key player here and when she appears all eyes

I guarantee you all eyes were on her not just the Pharisee but all the other guests from the community all eyes were on her and what does Luke tell us about her well he does not give us her name contrary to what some have suggested this is not Mary it's not a parallel to another passage where Mary does something similar with perfume it's not Mary this is an unnamed woman Luke leaves her unnamed I think for obvious reasons because the first thing we're told about her is she's

a sinner she's a sinner in fact three times we're told that she is a sinner first Luke who's writing the story the narrator he identifies her as a sinner verse 37 and behold a woman in the city who was a sinner very clear she's a sinner and then

Simon the Pharisee identifies her as a sinner in verse 39 he's speaking of Jesus but he says this man this Jesus if he were a prophet would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching him and you can almost kind of get the inflection of his voice almost the kind of almost wants to puke touching well he can't be any kind of prophet because she is a sinner that's what he said she's a sinner so Luke identifies her as a sinner the Pharisee identifies her as a sinner and third Jesus identifies her as a sinner yes he does verse 47 her sins which are many many that's how he identifies this woman and what's the point the point is that this unnamed woman is not one of your everyday run of the mill kind of sinners she's a harlot that's what the Pharisee meant that's what

Luke meant when he identified her Jesus is referring to the greatness of her kind of sin she's a harlot she's a business woman there in that community one of the oldest professions her business her vocation was prostitution she was into sales this woman was and the product she sold was her body her body and I would add judging from the expensive oil the perfume that she poured out on Jesus feet we could surmise that she was pretty successful at her vocation she's a sinner in our mind one of the worst kind but you know Luke does not dwell on that does he other than to identify her three times and make sure we understand who she is he doesn't dwell on it he doesn't give us any details about her life he doesn't even name her she's the only principal character in this story that is not named and so

I would have to conclude that that doesn't matter doesn't matter who she is what she has done here's what Luke really wants you to know about this woman she's forgiven that's what we need to see she's a sinner by our standard our judgment our way of kind of categorizing sinners she's one of the worst kind but she's forgiven forgiven and we know that from what she did here in the courtyard there at the table what she did for Jesus and we also know it by what Jesus said about her those two things and we need to bring those two things together and if we don't we might risk making a little significant mistake or error in theology point that out here in just a minute what did Jesus say about this woman verse 44 then he that's

[ 26 : 46 ] Jesus turned to the woman and said to Simon that's interesting isn't it turns to the woman he's looking at her but he's speaking to Simon and skip down to verse 47 I say to you he's speaking to Simon her sins which are many are forgiven there it is straight from Jesus mouth and according to his authority we can believe him her sins are forgiven that's what Jesus said about her she's a sinner but she's forgiven and look at verse 48 then he said to her now he speaks directly to the woman says very plainly very directly your sins are forgiven and the phrase are forgiven is one word in the Greek text and not to get bogged down with grammar try not to do that the verb is in a particular kind of form that's why it's important for us to study the original language a particular form is what's called a perfect tense verb perfect tense now that's important because the

Greek perfect tense carries this idea something has happened in the past but has a present and ongoing effect effect that's important not past tense something happened in the past and then that's it may or may not be something that's still true now but perfect tense this is the verb Jesus used perfect tense is something that has happened in the past no real reference about when it was but it happened in the past it's already happened but it has an ongoing continuing effect continuing result and so Jesus says your sins when he says your sins are forgiven listen to me he does not mean your sins have just now been forgiven now that's important

I said we need to guard against a theological doctrinal error here he did not say your sins are just now forgiven if he meant that then we would have to conclude that her act of love for Jesus the tears the wiping of his feet the expensive ointment we would have to conclude that that act of love somehow accomplished for her her forgiveness and by implication her salvation and that's not the case Jesus is saying your sins sins are already have already been forgiven in fact I think of the NASB if you have that brings that tense out your sins have been forgiven he's just stating a fact your sins have been forgiven and because it's the perfect tense he's literally saying they have been forgiven they are forgiven that's why are forgiven still is okay here they are forgiven because they are that you're in a state of forgiveness and they will they are forever forgiven that's the idea here they have been they are they always they forever are forgiven past event with an ongoing result and so apparently this is what we're to understand that since

Jesus had come to town and maybe it was just even earlier that day this woman had heard the gospel had heard him preach the gospel and she believed she believed on Jesus and so then all of her sin guiltiness was gone suddenly gone and all of the shame of her life was gone and all of the filth of her her immoral lifestyle was gone forgiven and she was then just literally swept away with gratitude as you can imagine and so she was totally overcome in her life with affection for Jesus and with love for Jesus and when she heard that he was there and that uninvited guests were allowed to come in she had to go and Jesus said she was forgiven much therefore she loved much you see what Jesus said confirms her forgiveness but also what she did confirms her forgiveness let's not miss that not only what Jesus said it's what she did and the two come together Jesus established the fact that at some point she had believed the gospel she had put her faith in Christ and she was saved and forgiven he's stating that fact and this is what Jesus said we can trust what he said but we also can look at what she did as proof verse 37 when she knew or learned that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisees house in short she went to the house went to the dinner let me ask you something if you were her would you have done that what if what if every person in this place this morning knew about your sin or sins that you thought and didn't want anybody to know what if everybody here knew that would you come here today and worship the [ 33 : 08 ] Lord Jesus maybe you would most of us I'm not sure how we'd answer that and I say that to to kind of heighten the extreme nature of this the extreme love that she had for Christ she didn't care what anybody else thought or knew and when she got there she came and she brought with her the Bible says an alabaster flask that's how it's translated in the New King James jar vial probably would be the best translation an alabaster vial of fragrant oil or perfume very expensive very costly archaeologists have found these by the way big caches of them in archaeological finds they're little vials that are made out of fashioned out of something that looks like marble it's some kind of stone that is quarried and they cut it into pieces and they bore out the inside of it polish the outside and they shape it in various ways but commonly at close to the spout or the lid of it the opening they would bring that down until it's just real narrow just a tiny little neck on this vial and they would pour in the very expensive perfume and then they would seal it up not with a little cork or something you could pull out and then use and then cork it back up they'd seal it so that you could not get anything out of it unless you broke it and that's what they would do they would break the tiny neck on that vial and then the contents could be poured out extremely expensive that's what she brought with her and I think she had every intention of taking that oil and anointing his head that would be the customary thing to anoint his head

I mean you know life was just different in those days you know they bathe as much as we do and anointing the head would be a gesture that would cool the person give comfort and fragrance I think she had every intention of doing that when she approaches Jesus he's there reclining at the table I don't even know if at that point he's even looking at her she begins to cry because she's been forgiven much she cries and her tears are falling on Jesus feet in fact she's crying so profusely that his feet are soaked with her tears and then she lets down her hair which would have been scandalous for a woman to do in public in that culture she takes her hair and dries his feet can you picture this then she has that oil expensive perfume and instead of anointing his head she takes it and uses that expensive perfume on his feet anoints his feet it's difficult maybe even impossible for us to really capture this whole thing and the significance of this and this is what this woman did why she's a sinner she's forgiven forgiven and something else about her just kind of tagged on to the end she's saved glorious she's saved

Jesus said in verse 50 your faith has saved you it's almost as if let me make sure you don't misunderstand here her faith has saved her not her love as great as it was and not her humility something that goes beyond what most of us would do and not because of her act of kindness to Jesus anointing his feet with oil and not because of the sacrificial costly oil that she gave up for him your faith he said has saved you go in peace beautiful beautiful story beautiful scene what does this mean he I mean you put all this together what what what Jesus said to her after she did this great thing this supreme act of love

Jesus when Jesus said your sins are forgiven that takes care of her past that past life of immorality that she had lived for and it was her business the perversion of it and all of that when he said your sins are forgiven that that assured her that all of the past is done away with the same is true of us when Jesus says you are forgiving that takes care of the past but he didn't stop there he said your faith has saved you and when he said your faith has saved you that takes care of your present

saved redeemed and then when he said go in peace that takes care of her future so the past present future all of it's taken care of your sins are forgiven your faith has saved you go in peace peace no more at enmity with

God no more out of fellowship with him no more an enemy of God you're at peace with him complete total full salvation see the savior that's the first thing we need to see in this story and see the sinner in the story is that the end of the story one more thing very important thing see the sermon in the story people the story is the sermon Jesus sermon the story is the sermon the sermon is the story you want a shocker maybe something unexpected the main point of this story is not about the woman it's about the

[ 41 : 07 ] Pharisee you see we read this story and we read about this woman and what she did and we remember that about the story we remember the woman and what she did in the story but she is not the main point of the story the real story here is about Jesus preaching a gospel sermon to this Pharisee named Simon and the woman is just a part of the sermon she's the illustration every good sermon has a good illustration she's a living illustration for Jesus and so Jesus wants this Pharisee that's why he attended the dinner he wants this Pharisee to see true salvation here's what it really is this is what it looks like this woman he wanted this

Pharisee to see that Jesus also wanted this Pharisee to discover then that he is totally lacking utterly lacking what this woman had and the proof is her great love for Jesus and what this Pharisee completely lacked his love for Jesus that's the proof and when we when our eyes are open to this it's really easy to see think about it this notorious harlot in the community enters the courtyard that's not by accident Jesus is orchestrating this whole thing and out of the extreme love for Jesus her redeemer she washes his feet with her tears and dries them with her hair and anoints his feet with this expensive perfume and right off the self righteous heart of this

Pharisee is revealed right off and he begins to think within himself he's not speaking out loud he's thinking within himself she is the worst of sinners worst of sinners doesn't he know that he's no true prophet he's no true messiah and so he says that to himself but Jesus knows his thoughts doesn't and what's more Jesus knows the sinful condition of this Pharisee's heart and so Jesus tells a short parable remember this is a sermon verse 40 Simon I have something to say to you so he said teacher say it and here's the parable verse 41 there was a certain creditor who had two debtors one owed 500 denarii a debt by the way equivalent to 500 days wage big debt the other 50 550 two debtors and when they had nothing with which to repay neither one could pay the debt he freely forgave freely forgave that's very significant word one word in the

Greek text charizomai from charis grace he graced them he forgave the debt and then Jesus said to the Pharisee tell me which of them will love him more and the Pharisee I think very tentatively answered because maybe he's thinking it's a trick question and he kind of tentatively says I suppose the one whom he forgave more right Jesus said you rightly judged and now Jesus takes then Jesus takes that parable and anchors it to a real life person to reality because Jesus knows what the Pharisee is thinking this parable has now done its work and the Pharisee now thinks he knows what Jesus is getting at and this Pharisee this Simon thinks that Jesus wants me to see myself as a part of the parable that is what the

Pharisee is thinking Jesus knows he is thinking that Jesus wants me to see myself in the parable the one who owes 500 denarii that's of course this filthy sinner this immoral harlot and the one who owes 50 denarii that's me the lesser sinner that's what Jesus wants me to understand now he's not buying any of this but I think this is what he's thinking Jesus wants him to get perhaps that's what you think Jesus is getting let's see what Jesus says verse 44 then he turned to the woman and said to Simon do you see this woman and of course he had I entered your house Simon and you gave me how much water no water not just less water but no water and it would have been very customary for someone who is an honored guest invited to dinner to provide water there as they enter in to wash their feet because feet get dirty in those days and feet go places that you don't want to be brought to the table customary but you gave me no water not just less than this woman but no water and she has washed my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair the hair of her head you

[ 47 : 10 ] Simon he goes on to say gave me no kiss two would have been a customary thing we wouldn't particularly like it if you come visit me in my house I'm probably not going to kiss you but it be customary in that day but Jesus said you gave me no kiss but this woman has not ceased to kiss my feet since the time I came in and then he said you did not anoint my head with oil none this too

would have been customary not as an expensive perfume like this woman brought but some oil would have been provided to anoint the head and it would be refreshing after traveling outdoors and it was customary thing but he said Simon you didn't give me any none not less or even something of a lesser value you didn't give me any oil whatsoever but this woman has anointed my feet of all things with the most expensive of perfume and here's the clincher verse 47 he's still talking to

Simon therefore I say to you you Simon her sins not yours hers which are many are forgiven for she loved much that's how you know but to whom little is forgiven the same loves little what Jesus is saying we must understand he's not saying that Simon is the lesser sinner that's the first thing we would conclude that Simon is part of the parable and he's the one that has less sin so he doesn't love Jesus as much he's not saying that because he's he's not saying that Simon has been forgiven a little there's nothing in here to to to say that

Simon has been forgiven of anything in fact that's what he's saying Simon you're not forgiven you're not forgiven and the proof is you don't love me any he is then opening Simon's eyes to his true condition before God he is unforgiven unsaved and the proof is no love for Jesus and the example is the woman who's been forgiven and forgiven much she loves much that's what he's saying what Simon problem was same problem a lot of people have in the world today Simon didn't have any problem seeing Jesus he saw Jesus he didn't have any problem seeing the woman he understood her and her sin and all that and maybe even understood how she might be forgiven perhaps but his big problem was he did not see himself in a sense!

he was the bigger sinner even beyond the one mentioned in the parable a bigger debtor you see apart from redeeming grace we are all debtors all of us and apart from God's redeeming grace for Christ we none of us can pay that debt we're like the ones in the parable we can't pay it to make a difference how much the debt is big or small in our eyes we cannot pay it but listen the self righteous like this Pharisee named Simon the self righteous the one the ones who think they owe no debt to God that they do not need forgiveness that they do not need salvation and there are many in that camp today the self righteous they are in perhaps the most dangerous position before God like this

Pharisee and here's what Jesus is inviting you to ask who am I in this story who am I am I the woman forgiving much loving much or am I the Pharisee thinking I don't need salvation I don't need forgiveness I'm not sin yes but I'm not a sinner which one are you Thank you.