

Grateful Faith

Luke 7:37-48
SS Lesson for 10/27/2019

Devotional Scripture: Luke 17:11-19

OUTLINE

LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Key Verse: Luke 7:38

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

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We are sinners because of accountability to God (Rom 3:19)

We are sinners because the whole world is a prisoner of sin (Gal 3:22)

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Lesson Background and Key Verse

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Why is it so hard to say “thank you”? If you think it is not, then you are not the parent of a high school graduate who has received gifts of congratulations. If you are such a parent, you probably recall begging, pleading, cajoling—perhaps even threatening—to get the appropriate thank-you notes written! Some people see a distinction between non-gratitude and ingratitude. Robert Emmons, for example, makes a distinction between two attitudes that do not say thank you. Non-gratitude is mere forgetfulness, but ingratitude is actively negative and meant to punish another. Others like Gina Barreca, however, see no gray areas: a person who is thankful says so, and one who isn't, doesn't. She considers laziness in saying “thank you” a symptom not of forgetfulness but of a lack of thankfulness. This in turn reveals deeper character flaws. This debate can go on, but there is no question that showing gratitude is a virtue that befits the disciple of Jesus. When Jesus healed 10 men with leprosy, He was disturbed that 9 of them never thanked Him (Luke 17:11-19). Jesus' obvious implication was that all 10 should have given thanks. So who is more likely to thank Jesus for His work: a religious leader or a notorious sinner?

Jesus was invited to dine in the home of a Pharisee (Luke 7:36). The Pharisee's motive for this invitation is not given immediately (see commentary on 7:40). He may have wanted a time of quiet conversation with Jesus (compare the Pharisee Nicodemus in John 3). More likely, the Pharisee had less than honorable intentions. By this time in Jesus' ministry, the Pharisees have already shown themselves to be hostile to Jesus' work. Luke 6:1-11 records two events in which they opposed Jesus. We might be surprised that Jesus accepted the invitation in the first place knowing the potential hostility of His host. If so, we'll be even more surprised to learn that He accepts at least one more such invitation (Luke 11:37). The Pharisee's invitation in today's lesson does not mention any other guests, not even whether Jesus' disciples were invited. But apparently others were included in the invitation, perhaps additional Pharisees, since “they . . . sat at meat with him” and judged what they saw and heard while eating (Luke 7:49). Their presence as well as their attitude adds to our suspicion that Jesus was invited to this dinner as an occasion to mock or question Him in some way (see Luke 7:44). This dinner party occurred not long after the centurion's servant was healed (see lesson 8). The location is not stated; it could have been in Capernaum since that city was something of a headquarters for Jesus' ministry (Matthew 4:13; Mark 2:1). While the healing of the centurion's servant did occur in Capernaum (Luke 7:1-10), we know Jesus left there and was in Nain, where He raised a dead man to life (7:11-17). The dinner in the Pharisee's home happens sometime after those events (7:36). Following today's text, Jesus toured “every city and village” of Galilee (8:1), so the anointing in the Pharisee's home could have been in nearly any of them. Each of the Gospels reports on an anointing of Jesus by a woman while Jesus was attending a dinner. As a result, some believe each reports on the same event. While showing some similarities, the anointing recorded in the other Gospels (see Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8) is almost certainly a separate, later event (see John 12:1). Each of the other accounts locates the event in Bethany in Judea (Matthew 26:6; Mark 14:3; John 12:1), while Luke's account belongs to the Galilean ministry (Luke 4:14-9:51). John specifically identifies the woman as Mary of Bethany, whose reputation is certainly not that of a notorious sinner (compare Luke 7:37 with John 11:1-5, 28-32).

Key Verse: Luke 7:38

Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

This passage illustrates the principle Jesus laid down in verse 35. A Pharisee named Simon is contrasted with a sinful woman, who received forgiveness (v. 47) and salvation (v. 50).

7:36-38. Simon (v. 40), a Pharisee, invited **Jesus to... dinner**, perhaps to trick Him in some way. It was the custom of the day when one had a dinner party to provide for the guests' feet to be cleaned before the meal. Because most roads were unpaved and the normal foot attire was sandals, it was common for people's feet to be dusty or muddy. As pointed out later in the episode, Simon did not provide for Jesus' feet to be cleaned at the beginning of the dinner party (v. 44). For special dinner parties recliners or couches were provided for the guests to use while eating. **A woman** arrived at the dinner after she **learned that Jesus was eating** there. She **had lived a sinful life**, and was probably a prostitute in the community. Her life was known enough for the Pharisee to characterize her as a sinner (v. 39). She was not an invited guest at the dinner gathering, but came in anyway with a **jar of perfume**. Her presence was not unusual for when a Rabbi was invited to someone's house others could stop by and listen to the conversation. As the woman

stood behind Jesus, **her tears** began to fall on **His feet**. It was a normal sign of respect to pour oil or **perfume** on someone's head. Perhaps the woman felt unworthy to anoint Jesus' head, so she anointed His feet. Such an act would have amounted to a large financial outlay for the woman who apparently was not wealthy. She also bent over Jesus and **wiped** her tears off **His feet... with her hair**. She constantly **kissed** His feet (the Gr. verb *katephilei* is the imperf. tense suggesting continuous past action), a sign of the utmost respect, submission, and affection. Jesus pointed out later that the host, in contrast, had done none of these things to His head (v. 46) or even given Him water for His feet (v. 44), whereas the woman was constantly anointing His feet. The passage does not state why she was weeping. It may have been because she was seeking repentance. Or she may have been weeping for joy at the opportunity of being around the One she obviously considered to be the Messiah.

7:39. The host thought that Jesus could not possibly be **a prophet**, for if He were **He would** have known that the **woman** was **a sinner**. And He then would not have let her touch Him, for a touch by a sinner brought ceremonial uncleanness.

7:40-43. **Jesus**, knowing Simon's thoughts (cf. 5:22), taught in a parable that a person who is forgiven much loves more than a person who is forgiven little. In the parable one man was forgiven a debt 10 times greater than another man—**500 denarii** compared with **50 denarii**. These were huge debts, for one denarius coin was worth a day's wages. When asked **which** one would **love** the lender **more**, **Simon** rightly responded that **the one who** was forgiven the larger **debt** would naturally be more inclined to greater love. Jesus then applied the parable to the woman.

7:44-50. **The woman** had been **forgiven** much and therefore **she loved** Jesus very **much**. Jesus was not implying that the Pharisee did not have much need for forgiveness. His point was that "a sinner" who is forgiven is naturally going to love and thank the One who has forgiven her. Simon's treatment of Jesus differed vastly from the woman's. She was evidencing that she loved Jesus for she realized that she had been forgiven much. She realized that she was a sinner and in need of forgiveness. In contrast, Simon saw himself as pure and righteous and therefore did not need to treat Jesus in a special manner. In fact, he did not even extend to Jesus the normal courtesies of that day: greeting a male by **a kiss** on the cheek, and anointing a guest's **head** with a small portion of **oil**. In effect he did not seem to think Jesus could do anything for him, for he did not consider Jesus a prophet (v. 39). But the woman was not forgiven because of her love; rather, she loved because she was forgiven (vv. 47-48). Her faith brought her salvation: **Your faith has saved you; go in peace** (cf. 8:48). Her faith in turn caused her to respond in love. **The other** dinner **guests** wondered **who** Jesus **is** since He forgave **sins** (cf. 5:21). Though Jesus in this interchange with Simon never explicitly stated His claim to be the Messiah, He spoke as He did because He is the Messiah.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

(Note: Lesson major points and cross-references copied from previous lesson dated 04/10/16)

Grateful Faith in Worship (Luke 7:37-39)

37 And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil,

38 and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil.

39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."

Worship with the knowledge we are sinners (37)

We are sinners because we have fallen short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23)

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

We are sinners because of accountability to God (Rom 3:19)

19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.

We are sinners because the whole world is a prisoner of sin (Gal 3:22)

22 But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

We are sinners because no one is without sin (1 John 1:8)

8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Worship through offerings (38)

An offering done willingly (2 Cor 8:12)

12 For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.

An offering offered right (Gen 4:2-7)

2 Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. 3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. 4 But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. 6 Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."

An offering given out of love (Eph 5:1-2)

5 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children 2 and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

An offering that is sacrificial (Phil 4:16-18)

16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. 17 Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account. 18 I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

Worship without judging (39)

Do not judge because judging condemns us (Rom 2:1-3)

2 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. 2 Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. 3 So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment?

Do not judge because everyone is under God's rule (Rom 14:4)

4 Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

Do not judge because everyone will eventually be judged by God (Rom 14:10)

10 You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.

Do not judge because there is an appointed time for judgment (1 Cor 4:5)

5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

Grateful Faith in Love (Luke 7:40-48)

40 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." So he said, "Teacher, say it."

41 "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.

42 And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?"

43 Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged."

44 Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head.

45 You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in.

46 You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil.

47 Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."

48 Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

Love through thankfulness (40-43)

Thankful for all things (Phil 4:6)

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Pray and give thanksgiving for others (1 Tim 2:1)

2 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—

Thankful through worshiping God (Heb 12:28)

28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,

Thankful for God's blessings (Luke 17:12-19)

12 As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance 13 and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" 14 When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. 15 One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. 16 He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him — and he was a Samaritan. 17 Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? 18 Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" 19 Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

Love through actions (44-47)

Actions to love others (1 John 4:21)

21 And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

Actions to edify others (John 21:15-18)

15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." 16 Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." 17 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. 18 I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go."

Actions that lead to obedience (1 John 2:4-6)

4 The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: 6 Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

Love through forgiveness (48)

Forgiveness where God will not remember sins any more (Heb 8:12)

12 For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Forgiveness that sanctifies (Acts 26:17-18)

17 I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them 18 to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

Forgiveness that rescues from a dominion of darkness (Col 1:13-14)

13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Forgiveness that is through Jesus' blood (Matt 26:28)

28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

The Setting (7:36-39)

We are not told precisely when this incident occurred, nor the name of the city. The principle characters are Jesus, Simon the Pharisee, and the woman with a soiled reputation. It is interesting that Luke gives us the name of the host, but not of the woman. Omitting her name is, in my opinion, a gracious act, purposely done.

At first look it would seem that there are two people equally zealous to see Jesus: Simon the Pharisee and the sinful woman. Simon could easily converse with Jesus in the comfort of his home, around a meal. For the woman, getting close to Jesus was no easy matter. Her sinful life, known to all who lived in her town, made it difficult for her, a woman, to seek out Jesus, a man. If she owned a home, she could not invite Jesus there, for this would be inappropriate, especially if she were a harlot, for this would be her place of business.

Reports of Jesus' ministry and teaching had somehow reached this woman, and she was most eager to see the Savior. When she learned that Jesus was to have dinner at the house of Simon, the woman knew it was her opportunity to see Jesus. From our Lord's words, it would seem that she arrived at Simon's house before Jesus: *"You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet"* (Luke 7:45).

If the dinner were to begin at 7:00 P. M., the woman seems to have arrived at 6:45. She was there, ready and waiting. With her, she brought a container of perfume.¹⁴¹ It is my opinion that this woman came prepared to anoint the feet of Jesus, the humble task usually delegated to the lowest servant. Perhaps she would be permitted to do this.¹⁴²

The washing of Jesus' feet can best be understood in the light of our Lord's words of rebuke to Simon, and when compared to the Lord's washing of His disciples' feet as recorded in John chapter 13. As the Lord entered the house of Simon, custom and normal hospitality would have it that Jesus would have been greeted with a kiss, His feet would have been washed, and His head anointed with oil.

The woman no doubt waited near the door for Jesus to arrive. She probably expected that Jesus' feet would have been washed by one of Simon's servants. After His feet were washed, the woman would then likely have planned to anoint His feet with the perfume she had brought. Imagine the look on her face when she realized that Jesus' feet were not going to be washed. She did not let the dirty feet of our Lord keep her from what she had intended to do. She dared not kiss Jesus on the face, as Simon should have done, but she could kiss His feet, His dirty feet. She had come with no basin, no water, and no towel. Nevertheless, as she began to kiss His feet, the tears began to flow, something most unusual for a woman of her profession.¹⁴³ As the tears began to flow, the woman must have noted that the little streams of tears carried the dirt of the road as well. She used the water of her tears to wash His feet, something she could hardly have planned in advance. Since there was no towel available to her, she used her hair to dry Jesus' feet. Imagine this, the woman used her hair, the most glorious part of her body (cf. 1 Cor. 11:15), to dry the feet of Jesus, the most ignoble part of one's body! She did not do her duty quickly, so as to quickly finish an unpleasant task. She persisted at kissing the feet of our Lord (cf. v. 45).

This woman's worship of Jesus was at a great cost to her. It cost her the expensive vial of perfume, and the humility to kiss, wash, and dry the dirty feet of the Lord Jesus. But there was a higher price than this paid by the woman. In my opinion, the greatest price which she paid was facing the scorn and rejection of the self-righteous Pharisees and other dinner guests at that meal. Jesus did not give her a "dirty look," but it is inconceivable to think that all of the others did not. Simon's disdain, revealed by his inner thoughts, must also have been evident in his eyes, and so too for the other guests. "What in the world are **you** doing here?" must have been etched on the faces of the guests. It could hardly be otherwise for a Pharisee, whose holiness was primarily a matter of physical separation from sin and from "sinners." The woman's desire to see and to worship Jesus was greater than her fear of these guests. Their scorn was a high price to pay, but to the woman it was worth it.

Simon's Thoughts and Jesus' Teaching (7:39-43)

No doubt a great part of Simon's motivation was to "check out" Jesus. Was this man really a prophet? Was His message to be believed? And how did His message compare with that of the Pharisees? Was He a threat, or an ally? Just who did Jesus claim to be and what was to be done about Him? Should He be resisted, opposed, put to death, or should be ignored? Could He be recruited to their side? These may have been some of the questions in Simon's mind, suggesting some of his motivation for having Jesus over to dinner.

Simon's reasoning is most illuminating. It went something like this:

Premises:

- If Jesus were a prophet, he would know people's character
- If Jesus knew this woman was a sinner, He would have nothing to do with her

Conclusions:

- Since Jesus has accepted this woman, He does not know her character
- Since Jesus does not know this woman is a sinner, He cannot be a prophet
- Since Jesus is not a prophet, I/we can reject Him, His message & ministry

Simon, like many of us, was being very logical about his thinking and his response to the Lord Jesus. The problem with logic is the same as the problem with computers: your output is only as reliable as your input. To put it differently, there was nothing wrong with Simon's logic, other than the fact that he based his conclusions on a faulty premise—If Jesus were a prophet, He would be able to discern the character of those around Him—was correct. Jesus, in fact, went beyond Simon's expectations. Jesus was not only able to detect the woman's character ("... her sins, which are many," v. 47), He was also able to know the thoughts of Simon, His host (v. 39). By conveying to Simon that He knew His thoughts, Jesus proved that He was at least a prophet.

Simon's second premise was entirely wrong, a reflection of his erroneous thinking as a Pharisee. Simon, like his fellow-Pharisees (remember that the word Pharisee means "separate"), assumed that holiness was primarily a matter of separation. Holiness was achieved by keeping oneself separate from sin and from sinners. According to this view, Jesus would have to shun this sinful woman in order to remain holy. Simon concluded that either (1) Jesus didn't know this woman's character, or (2) that whether or not He knew about her sinfulness, He was physically contaminated by her, and thus could not be holy.

Our Lord knew exactly what Simon was thinking, as well as why his thinking was wrong. Jesus' words to Simon in verses 40-47 expose the error of Pharisaical thinking, and explain why the "Holy One of Israel" would draw near to sinners, even to the point of touching them and being touched by them.

A Story for Simon (40-42)

The question which best expresses the issue which caused the Pharisees to draw back from Jesus is found early in the gospel accounts:

"Why do you eat and drink with the tax-gatherers and sinners?" (Luke 5:30; cf. Matt. 9:11; Mark 2:16).

Simon could not conceive of Jesus knowingly allowing this woman to touch Him by washing His feet. Why would Jesus possibly associate with sinners? Jesus gave the answer by telling a story and then extracting a principle.

The story was a simple one. A money-lender loaned money to two different individuals, neither of which were able to repay their loan. The one had borrowed ten times more money than the other. The money-lender forgave the debt of both men. "Which of the two," Jesus asked Simon, "would love the money-lender more?" Simon's cautious answer was that the one who owed the most would love the man the most. Jesus confirmed the truth of his response.

Underlying it was the principle, **THOSE WHO ARE FORGIVEN MOST LOVE MOST.**

Jesus now takes the principle and applies it to Simon and the sinful woman. Simon shunned the woman because she was a sinner, and expected Jesus to do likewise. Jesus rebukes Simon by showing that in every respect the woman has outdone Simon in her acts of love and devotion. Simon did not show Jesus even the minimum courtesy of washing His feet. This woman not only washed His feet, she did it with her tears and her hair. Simon did not bestow a kiss on Jesus' face; the woman did not cease to kiss the feet of Jesus, which, at first, were dirty feet. Simon did not anoint the head of Jesus with oil; the woman anointed His feet with expensive perfume. The woman outdid Simon in showing love to the Lord. The woman was, at least in Simon's mind, a greater sinner. The woman was, as Jesus pointed out, the greater lover as well. From both the story which Jesus told and from the supper which Simon held, the one who was forgiven more loved more.

There is a problem here, which has troubled theologians and Bible students over the years. In verse 47 it would appear that Jesus is telling the woman that she is forgiven because she loved much. It is not difficult to accept the statement that those who are forgiven much, as a result love much. It is difficult to accept the statement that those who love much are forgiven much. To love because you are forgiven is a natural response to grace. To be forgiven because you love is works. There are thus some who would teach that on the basis of this text we must love in order to be forgiven. This makes forgiveness the product of our works, rather than a gift of God's grace.

It may be over-simplistic, but I think that the problem can be resolved by taking note of who Jesus is speaking to, and the issue which He is addressing. In verse 47, Jesus is speaking to Simon the Pharisee. He is answering the question, "Why does Jesus seek out and associate with sinners?" The Lord's answer is found in His response to Simon:

"Simon, I seek out sinners and associate with them because they love me more than 'saints' like you Pharisees do."

Think about it for a moment. If God's purpose for the incarnation was to be loved by men, whom would you expect the Lord Jesus to associate with if it were true that "he who is forgiven much loves much"? If the principle is true, then we would expect our Lord to seek out those who were the greatest sinners (and in the minds of the Pharisees, this woman qualified as one of the city's great sinners).

Jesus is therefore addressing the question, "Why does Jesus seek out sinners?" rather than the question, "How is one saved?" The relationship between forgiveness and love is the basis for our Lord's actions in seeking and receiving sinners.

The body language of our Lord in verses 44-47 is most significant. All through the dinner, Jesus' back was to the woman, who was anointing and kissing His feet. He was, at the same time, facing His host, Simon. Now, once Simon's rejection of Jesus is revealed, in contrast to the woman's worship, Jesus turns His back on Simon and faces the woman, even though He is still addressing Simon (cf. v. 44). Jesus is, by His actions, rejecting Simon and accepting the sinful woman. What an incredible statement is being made here!

Jesus' Words to the Woman (7:48-50)

When Jesus speaks to the woman in the final verses of our passage, He now makes clear to her the basis for her forgiveness: "Your faith has saved you; go in peace" (Luke 7:50).

Let there be no doubt as to the basis for one's forgiveness. It is not works. It is not the work of loving others, even God's Son. Forgiveness is the gift of God, granted to those who have faith.

The question is this: "What was it that the woman believed by faith?" If the woman's faith saved her, what was the substance of her faith? What did the woman believe that saved her? I believe that the text strongly implies the answer: **THE WOMAN BELIEVED THAT IF SHE CAME TO JESUS AS A REPENTANT SINNER, JESUS WOULD NOT SEND HER AWAY.**

The "bad news" of the Pharisees—"Jesus associates with sinners"—was good news to this woman, because she acknowledged that she was a sinner. The only people who will bristle at the thought that Jesus has come to seek and to save sinners are the self-righteous, those who do not think they need saving. This woman did not dispute the fact that she was a sinner. She rejoiced at the reports that Jesus received sinners. She came to him as a sinner, believing by faith that He would not send her away—and she was right. Of all those who went to the dinner, only this woman is said to have left forgiven. Oh, the marvelous grace of God toward we sinners!

(Adapted from URL:<https://bible.org/seriespage/23-wordless-worship-unnamed-woman-luke-736-50>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

How do we say "thank You" to Jesus? Today's text suggests we do so by acts of kindness. Of course, we cannot minister directly to Jesus, as the grateful woman did at Simon's house. But we can minister to our peers. We express our gratitude to God by kind acts to others (Luke 10:25-37; James 1:27; 1 John 4:20, 21). At least, we do if we are truly grateful! If God's grace and forgiveness toward us have produced in us the kind of love they produced in this woman, then that love will show in our treatment of other people. We will show our gratitude by being gracious.

Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary

The Power of Forgiveness - Simon, a Pharisee, invited Jesus into his home. A woman who seemed to be a well-known sinner or prostitute in the community followed Jesus to Simon's home. Jesus used the opportunity to teach about the enormous restorative power of God's forgiveness. The woman brought with her a very expensive gift, an alabaster flask of fragrant oil. One can only imagine the tension in the room when she directed her attention solely on Jesus. She washed His feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair, and then anointed them with the oil. The scene violated all kinds of social graces, but it expressed her love and appreciation for Jesus.

Questioning Jesus - Finally, Simon broke the silence in the room but not with a word spoken aloud. He inwardly responded to this woman's actions and questioned Jesus. A true prophet, he thought, would know what kind of woman this is who is touching Him. Jesus must be ignorant of this woman's identity. Instead, Jesus understood her heart. Jesus also saw deeply within the soul of everyone in the room. The woman at Jesus' feet got the prize for being the most grateful for the Lord. Jesus read Simon's mind and answered his troubling thoughts with a story.

A Parable about Forgiveness - The story revolved around a businessperson who had two people who owed him money. One owed a big sum and the other a small amount. Neither had the money to repay their debt, but the businessman forgave them both. When Jesus asked which one showed more appreciation, Simon said, obviously, the greater debtor.

Forgiven and Moving Forward - Jesus then pointed out to Simon that He had come into Simon's house and was offered no water for foot washing, no oil for His head, nor a customary kiss. But this woman, detestable in the eyes of society, did all three for Jesus. He addressed her multitude of sins and stamped them forgiven. She humbly bowed before Him, He elevated her status by pardoning her past life, and He sent her away with a new outlook on herself and her future life. Intellectually getting to know all about Jesus is a good thing. But this biblical account goes one step further. It encourages an extravagant outpouring of love for Christ, not merely a passing or intellectual acknowledgment. When we look at the sacrifice on the Cross, it should cause our hearts to overflow with gratitude and appreciation for our Savior.