

Boundless Joy!

Luke 7:36-50

Rankings...

When and where do people get ranked? Based on what?
How does this ranking affect our relationship with God and people?

Pharisees

Highly respected and powerful people in society

They followed the rules of God very carefully
certain rules got more of their attention than others

They studied the Scriptures (plus their own traditions) very carefully

They were passionate for staying away from people and groups that were not similarly “pure”

They were viewed (and viewed themselves) as knowing who was pleasing to God and who was not

Jesus’ ways were problematic to the Pharisees

Luke 7:23, 29-30: a very startling claim in Jesus’ day! “Scandalous!”

Luke 7:36-50

36-38: Sinful woman highly honors Jesus when Pharisee didn’t

Pharisee and woman were exact opposites in society

Opposite ends of “Morality Mountain”

Why did Pharisee (4 times!) invite Jesus?

Maybe because he was skeptical

He wanted to see for himself what Jesus was like

Maybe he wanted the honor of hosting a popular traveling speaker at a feast (a semi-public event)

Why did Jesus go?

Graciously reaching out to the group that so often rejected Him

Woman was known by the locals, including Pharisee

She was viewed as “a sinner” (in society’s view)

Even if others sinned, she was viewed as much worse

She came intentionally to anoint Jesus’ feet

“How beautiful are the feet of him who brings good news” Isaiah 52:7

Perhaps she expected his feet to have been cleaned as a host would have done to show high honor

Shocking actions! (weeping, feet, hair, perfume)

Jesus viewed her actions as an extreme expression of love and worship

It seems she came because she realized forgiveness

39: The Pharisee silently judges the woman

Pharisee: the most virtuous people in society

This is his house, and he is responsible for the feast

His thinking:

A true prophet would be able to see the woman’s great sinfulness

A true prophet would not allow such a bad sinner to touch him

At least one of these 2 statements isn’t true of Jesus

Therefore, Jesus is not a true prophet (he is a fake)

He judges Jesus for not judging the woman

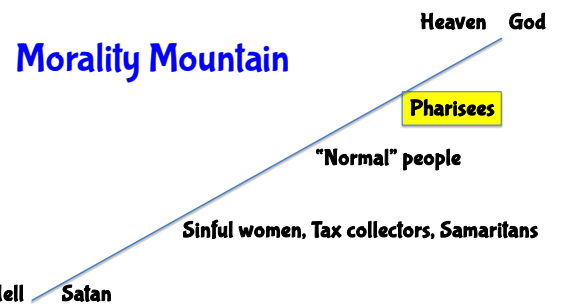
40-43: Principle: being forgiven more results in more love

Great irony: Jesus did know sinful hearts!

Both the woman’s and the Pharisee’s

Pharisee did not know or admit his own sin

2 debtors: 20 months versus 2 months



Both had the same trouble: unable to pay

Our view of how much we need forgiveness from Jesus shapes how we respond to Him

Receiving genuine forgiveness produces love in us

44-47: Woman proves God's wonderful forgiveness of her

Jesus (shockingly) directly compares Pharisee and sinful woman: shaming him and honoring her

"Do you **see** this woman?"

"Do you realize the love and beauty in her response?"

She lavishly does what Pharisee did not do at all

Her love is evidence of her acceptance by God

His lack of love is also revealing

48-50: Jesus blesses and honors the woman, to others' shock!

Jesus publicly declares what the woman has already sensed: her sins are gone!

Wonderful assurance **and** restoration

Others are shocked that Jesus claims God's authority

And that God would forgive & honor such a woman!!

Saved by her faith, which resulted in rich love

Jesus calls her to walk in God's ways of peace

The Big Idea

The love of God in Christ

is for sinners who accept

His gift of forgiveness and love

as the opposite of what they deserve

which fills their lives with joyous love

for God and for others

Self-righteousness: believing that I am morally superior

to people in another religious group

to people in another social category, socio-economic class, tribe, country, ethnicity, ...

to people in another political party

to people in a sin that particularly bothers me

Self-righteousness separates us from God

Self-righteousness separates us from other people

Self-righteousness destroys love

Self-righteous hearts are the farthest from God

The Gospel is the opposite of self-righteousness

The only difference between the high and the low

is that the high imagine themselves to be better off and they judge those who are lower

So they are less likely to think they need help, or to accept help, or to appreciate help

They love neither God nor people

Application

Be deeply moved by sin, righteousness, judgment, and grace

My **sin**, including my self-righteousness, is my disaster

God's gracious work is only ever with ungodly people

Judging others is my claim that I am not in this category!

We attack the people God deeply loves, and then we sit in the judgment seat of God, declaring ourselves better than them



Romans 2:1

Our sins might be different particular sins, yet we all owe a debt because of sin that we can never repay

God's **righteousness** cannot tolerate sin

He is morally perfect and glorious

He is completely humble, patient, kind, & understanding

He is the perfect combination of justice and mercy

The intensity of His holiness consumes anything unholy that enters His presence

And my self-righteousness is a key thing He cannot tolerate!

God's just **judgment** is for sinners like me

Justice will be done

Judgment is real and frightening

Being separate from God is unending death

Realize my **complete disaster** apart from the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for me

God's **grace** completely saves those who trust in Christ

Jesus' death on the cross purchased complete and final rescue from **all** my sin and its disastrous effects!

I am clothed in the perfect righteousness of Jesus forever!

Forgiveness is freely given in Jesus, for all who will put their trust in Him

My hope: Jesus was working to bring grace to Simon that day

Repent of self-righteousness

It is ugly, foolish, a lie, and destructive

It separates us from God

It separates us from other people

We still must have a prophetic voice!

Jesus did and does

After removing the log of self-righteousness, we can see more clearly to remove the speck from others' eyes

With a purer love and humility and desire for the glory of God

Receive complete forgiveness in Christ

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

Joyfully love God

Remind ourselves regularly...

What we deserve: shame, God's wrath, judgment

What we receive in Christ: we are the honored and deeply loved children of God

Respond with great appreciation, joy, and thankfulness

Trust God in the "smaller things" of life

Our perfect, gracious Father is working it all for our good

My sin...

oh, the joy of this glorious thought!

My sin, not in part, but the whole

is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more!

Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord, O my soul!

Joyfully love people

Knowing how God has forgiven me generates generous love for others in me

"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God." Romans 15:7

Having received such amazing love from God, we have the joy of being a conduit of God's love for others

To be clear...

Our love is **not a means to get** God's love

Our love is **our inevitable response** to receiving His love

“This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”

1 John 4:10

“We love because he first loved us.” 1 John 4:19

Conclusion

How much forgiveness do you need?

How much forgiveness have you received in Christ?

Our love for others and for God will reflect that

Thank you, God, for such great love for sinners like me!

Reflection Questions

1. Have you experienced the wonderful forgiveness of Christ for all your sins? When as that forgiveness captured your heart powerfully?
2. Is there sin in your life, either past or present, that you carry as if Jesus' forgiveness is not enough? If so, reflect on the reality of the grace of God in Christ? See passages like 1 John 1:8-2:2 and Psalm 103:8-12.
3. Where is self-righteousness most likely to appear in your life?
4. What helps you be deeply moved by the reality of sin, righteousness, judgment, and grace?
5. How does a rich understanding of these things lead you to love others joyfully? Who will you love this week with this joyful love?