

The Love of the Forgiven Luke 7:24-50

We've been studying the Gospel of Luke together. Today we will study the latter half of cp. 7, from verse 24 to 50. The theme is "the love of the forgiven".

1. The Rejection from the people

29-30

²⁹ All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been baptized by John. ³⁰ But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.

Luke divided the people who heard the Word into two groups.

1) Those who were baptized by John, and 2) Those who were not baptized

The first group of people. They heard the Word. And in the light of God's truth, they recognized that they were sinners, so they repented and turned to God. And they were baptized by John and expressed their faith through their action. In this way they acknowledged that God was Just.

The second group of people. They heard the Word. But they rejected the message and his authority by their own judgment. So they were not baptized by John. John was sent by God, and he proclaimed the message from God. So they rejected God's will for themselves.

The Pharisees and the teachers of the law rejected God's will by their own judgment based on their knowledge of the Bible, the OT. Then, what about people in general?

31-35

³¹ "To what, then, can I compare the people of this generation? What are they like? ³² They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling out to each other: " 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not cry.' ³³ For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' ³⁴ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and "sinners." ' ³⁵ But wisdom is proved right by all her children."

Here it describes what people were like. In short, they complained because things didn't go the way they wanted. Whatever they saw or heard, they just rejected without thinking much.

24-26

²⁴ After John's messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? ²⁵ If not, what did you go out

to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear expensive clothes and indulge in luxury are in palaces. ²⁶ But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

People went out into the wilderness. They didn't just go there without purpose, without reason. The reason is not for picnic. They went out to see John the Baptist. People heard about John and went out to see him. But they had their own image about him. They had an image about him that: if he was "a man of God" he should be like this. They had their own expectation about him. When they saw him different from their expectation, they rejected him. But, that doesn't mean John the Baptist was wrong, nor his message was wrong. People's expectation was wrong.

People acknowledged John was a prophet. Jesus also said so. A prophet is a person who receives God's message and proclaims it to the people. John had a clear mission. That was to prepare the way for Christ. But, after all, people didn't receive his message in the right way.

Let's summarize what we've been looking at from v.24 to 30.

People went out all the way into the wilderness. Their purpose was to see John the Baptist. They acknowledged John was a prophet. It looks as if they were responding to God's message. But, in fact, their heart was not responding to God's Word. They complained because things didn't go the way they wanted. Whatever they saw or heard, they just rejected without thinking much. That was their heart.

2. The Judgmental heart of the Pharisee

36-39

³⁶ Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. ³⁷ When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, ³⁸ and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. ³⁹ When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is--that she is a sinner."

Here the Pharisee judged two people.

1) He judged Jesus. Let's imagine what the Pharisee is thinking in his heart here.

"He is always talking about the kingdom of God, people think he is a prophet, but he can't even recognize the woman who is touching him is sinful. He talks about God's righteousness and holiness in front of other people, but actually he let this sinful woman

come and touch him. How can he do that?! If I were him, no way would I be with such a sinful woman, much less let her touch me. I am a person who always keeps the law precisely, I don't want to mix with such a sinful person. After all Jesus is all talk. "

2) He judged the woman. Let's imagine what the Pharisee is thinking in his heart here.

"Hey, do you know where you are? This is a Pharisee's house. This is not the place a sinful person like you can come. What are you doing here? Don't you know who the person you are touching is, at least he is called a prophet. Do you think a sinful person like you can touch him? Besides, who let the person like this come in. I have to tell the gatekeeper to do his job properly. Probably he fell asleep or something. How useless! "

The heart of the Pharisee not only refuses to receive God's Will, but also rejects others who truly come to Jesus. And they hinder others from coming to Jesus. That is the heart of the Pharisee.

3. Law or Love?

44-48

⁴⁴ Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶ You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. ⁴⁷ Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little." ⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

What did you think when you read this part? What was your first impression of this part?

If you thought, "Those who love Jesus much will be forgiven much. But those who love little will be forgiven little" or "This woman offered Jesus precious gift, she wept in front of other people. She did what was good and right, so Jesus forgave her", if you thought so, you can be a top Pharisee. If there was "Pharisees idol", you might be a champion.

If these thinking are true, it means that the forgiveness of sins is achieved by works. Trying to achieve righteousness by works, that is the heart of the Pharisee. That is the legalism, "doing-ism" or "performance orientation".

41-43

⁴¹ "Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?" ⁴³ Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

Now, I have a question. Which is first? The creditor forgave his debtors first? Or the debtors love the creditor first? Read carefully. The creditor forgave his debtors first.

Okay, next question. Did the creditor forgive the debtors because they did something good to the creditor? No! The creditor forgave the debtors unconditionally. And the debtors would love the creditor because they were forgiven.

Hearing this, some of you may have thought, "I see. Forgiveness is first. They loved because they were forgiven. So, because I was forgiven by Jesus, I have to love Jesus."

If you thought so, you can be a top Pharisee. If there was "Pharisees draft", you might be the first pick.

"I have to love." That is not love. That is a work of the law. "I was forgiven, so I have to do this." Do this or that because I have to. That is no longer love. Just a work of the law.

Remember your high school days. You found yourself following a person with your eyes. You wanted to talk to the person. You wanted to be with the person. Nobody would do that just because someone told you to do so. No matter how hard-working you are, you wouldn't open the textbook of "Love master course" and read "When you fell in love with someone, 1. You have to follow the person with your eyes. 2. You have to think you want to talk to the person. 3. You have to feel you want to be with the person." "I see. Okay, I'll try." You don't do that, do you? That is fake! Not the real thing. The love will naturally come out from inside without anyone teaching you or instructing you.

Hearing this, someone might say,

"But, to be honest, if I acted naturally, I wouldn't love Jesus so much. I don't dislike Him. I don't avoid Him. I really thank Him. But if I acted naturally, I would probably just greet Him before meals and that's it. But I know that as a Christian, I shouldn't be like that. The Bible says the most important commandment is to "love the Lord your God." So I'm trying my best to love Jesus. If I acted naturally, I wouldn't love Jesus so much. That is my honest feeling."

Why is our love for Jesus so tiny? Why does loving Jesus become a work of the law?

4. The Depth of our sin and the Depth of His Forgiveness

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⁴⁷ Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."

“He who has been forgiven little loves little.”

If you think you have been forgiven little, you will love Jesus little.

Does Jesus forgive some people more, and forgive other people little? No! The cross of Jesus is one. Jesus' forgiveness is the same for everyone.

Then, why do we think we have been forgiven little? Where does this idea come from? That is because we think we only need a little forgiveness. It is like this,

“In the presence of Holy God, I am surely a sinner. But, I'm not a bad man. I only need a little forgiveness.”

“Look at that person. He is so bad. He needs much forgiveness. But I am not so bad. I only need a little forgiveness.”

“That person has done this and that. I've never done such terrible things. On the contrary, I have done this good thing, and that good thing. So, for me, I only need to be forgiven a little. But, that person, surely he needs to be forgiven a lot!”

Only the blood of Jesus can redeem us. In other words, our sin cost the death of Jesus. The matter is not how many times we sinned, but is how deep our sinful nature root in us.

The more we understand how deep our sinfulness is, the more we understand how deep Jesus' forgiveness is.

Some of you may think like this,

“I see. I understand. But, I'm afraid to admit my sinfulness. If I honestly reveal my sinfulness before Jesus, and ask for His forgiveness, I'm sure He will not forgive me. Even if He forgives me, He will certainly dislike me and start avoiding me. So, I'm making every effort to make up for my shortcomings so that Jesus will not dislike me and will accept me. I can never reveal my sinfulness honestly before Jesus. I'm afraid to admit my sinfulness and ask for forgiveness.”

If you think like that, you are mistakenly concluding that Jesus is like that. You completely misunderstand Him. Jesus doesn't have a hint of the heart of the Pharisees, as you think.

Luke 5:32, Jesus says

³² I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Jesus isn't calling those who think they are righteous, but He is calling sinners. He is calling those who think, “I am bounded by sin. I can't get out by myself.”

Luke 5:12-13 says

¹² While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, “Lord, if you are

willing, you can make me clean." ¹³ Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" And immediately the leprosy left him.

Jesus never avoid or reject those who ask Him, "Jesus, I want you to cleanse me. There is no other way that I can be clean. Not just a little. Not just a part. But I need you to cleanse my whole being, from top to toe, from the past and future. Please make me clean." Then, Jesus will come near us, put out His hand and touch us. And He will say, "I am willing, be cleansed."

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⁴⁹ The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

"Who is this who even forgives sins?" Who is Jesus? What kind of person is He?

Jesus' healings show that He has authority to forgive sins. Jesus is God. His authority as God declares complete forgiveness of sins for us, you and I.

Jesus, who is God, died on the cross in place of you and me who were hostile to God, didn't believe God, and were sinners, went against Him and were an enemy of Him, but He redeemed us from sin. And He was raised from the dead, revealed God's righteousness, victory and power. That power of God is the power of the gospel that saves us, you and I.

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⁵⁰ Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

We receive salvation through faith in Jesus. If we truly admit our sinfulness, repent and receive salvation through faith in Jesus, we will be set free from the rule of sin, we will no longer suffer from feelings of guilt from the past. We can live in peace with Him.

Only when we have peace that all our sins were forgiven, and there are no longer any sins that need to be judged before God, we can boldly draw near to Jesus. We will draw near to Him without any hesitation and openly express the love of the forgiven.