



St John Lutheran Church

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Luke 7:36—50

It's Always About Jesus

Today we have a story about a Pharisee. **He seems nice** enough... **inviting Jesus** to a meal at his home. **But soon we see** his true colors. **We learn from** this story about the ugliness of self-righteousness. **We need to be** aware that we all too fall into this trap of thinking we're somehow better than others... **that some** how we do not have the glaring character faults of those around us.

However as the story progresses we find that it's more than just a story about a Pharisee...**it's also** a story about this "sinful" woman who crashes the dinner party. **What we really** need to be seeing here in this story... **is that** we are very much like this woman who is referred to as a "**sinner.**" **We need to** see her repentance and act of contrition... **as an example** for us so that we too may repent.

But as we go further we see Jesus Himself telling a story. **It's about a** lender who forgives the debt of two borrowers... **one who** owes a lot ...**and one** who owes a whole lot. **Jesus' story is** obviously about God's forgiveness of we who are in debt to Him. **Is this, then,** what the story is finally about?

Well, yes...sort of. But this still isn't specific enough. **Sometimes the main** thing is there in the open to be seen... **but we still miss it. We tend to** look for things that "**we think**" are what we are to be focusing on. **Meanwhile, we miss** the main point.

Take the Old Testament reading... **for example. David is the** main character in this story... **this is** plain to see. **David commits a** grievous sin and then tries to cover up his sin. **He ends up** only making things worse. **So is this** what this story is about... **that David's** actions should warn us to not act in the same way?

Or...perhaps it is really about the prophet Nathan? **Should we learn** from his action that we are to be faithful to the Word of God and clearly make it known **even though it can be nerve-wracking** (such as telling the king that he has sinned in a big way)? **That had to be** a gut wrenching experience for the Prophet Nathan! **Oh...by the way** good King...**your a** sinner and have offended God...**by committing** murder and abusing the privilege and power of your God-given Office! **Not easy for** Nathan to do...**but it** had to be done...**both for** Nathan's sake and for David's sake as we read in Ezekiel 33-34.

We come to find that there's another story told here as well. **It's about a** wealthy man who commits a shameful sin against a poor man. **It's obvious that** Nathan's story is about David's sin against Uriah and his wife Bathsheba. **Is this, then,** what the Old Testament reading is about?

Well, yes...sort of. But as was the case in the Gospel reading... **this isn't** quite specific enough. **What the story** of David and Bathsheba and the Prophet Nathan is really about is confronting David with the Word of God...**that is what** this Scriptural account is about ... **it is about Jesus.**

But how can that be since this is the Old Testament and Jesus is not even mentioned? **This can be** simply because the Old Testament...**the entire** Word of God... **in fact....is ALL about Jesus. The Old Testament**
It's always about Jesus

points to Christ to come. **It brings Christ** to us. **David was forgiven** in the same way you and I are... **on account** of Christ.

People in the Old Testament were forgiven by Grace through faith in the Messiah (Jesus) who is to come. **People in the** New Testament era... **including us...** are saved by Grace through faith in the Messiah who has been here and done His Promised salvific work. **No matter when** you are born... **or where** you are born... **no matter who you are...whether you** are a king ...**or a** humble and sinful woman begging for forgiveness...**you** are saved by Grace through faith in Jesus...**ALONE**. As Peter tells us... "**there is no other Name given under Heaven by which we must be saved.**" **From front to back the very center and substance of Holy Scripture IS Jesus Christ. He is the living and breathing Word of God! Apart from Him...Scripture cannot be understood at all.**

Even though Jesus is the main character in the Gospel reading... **it can** be hard to see that it's really all about Him. **But it's not** about the Pharisee. **It's not about** the woman. **It's not about** the lender or the borrowers. **It's about Christ. Jesus is the** reason we need to understand what's going on here. **Jesus confronts both** people... **the Pharisee** and the woman... **and He confronts them with their sin...Just like He did with David through Nathan. In the Gospel** we have One who denies it... **the other** willingly acknowledges it.

Walk into a bank and borrow \$100,000 dollars and then after a period of time...**inform them** you won't pay it back. **They will inform** you that you're in a heap of trouble. **And the police** will show you your way to the prison for embezzlement to make this point clear. **A bank will** not forgive your debt. **But this story** Jesus tells **is not about** falling in love with a bank or a banker because he so generously wants to give out its money to people who can't pay it back.

This story...this account of Holy Scripture is "His story"... it is all about Jesus. **His story is** about Him forgiving people who owe a debt to Him. **He pays the** debt. **His lavish love** heaped upon us has nothing to do with money. **It has to** do with sin. **This is what** the woman realized...**this is** what the Pharisee failed to realize. **The Pharisee refused** to acknowledge his sin. ***He* was righteous...after all...and the woman... this woman was a *sinner.*** **The Pharisee** figured that he didn't owe Jesus anything... **the woman...she figured** that she didn't deserve to be even in our Lord's sight.

The woman believed exactly this about herself. That she was completely unworthy to be in Christ's presence...**She knew that** she didn't deserve anything from Him ...and yet Jesus lavished His Grace upon her... **forgiving her sins. She came to see... that all this *wasn't*** about her. **It was about Jesus!! It was...and IS all** about Christ and what He did for her. **He forgave a** woman the whole town knew was an open sinner. **Everyone knew what** she had done...**everyone knew** just exactly what she was... **and now** everyone saw how Jesus forgives the undeserving and unworthy sinners who trust in Him. **She didn't do** anything as a requirement for her debt to be paid. **That's because it's** not about her. **It's about Christ...He paid** her debt....**He forgave** her sins! **It is Christ** who is in the verbs...**not the woman.**

This...Jesus did for the woman before us. **He did it** for the Pharisee. **He did it for David. He paid for** the sins of the world. **He forgives you** and me freely without any precondition. **If we were to** learn from this story of the Pharisee and the woman how **we are to live ...and what** we are to do... **we would** be as messed up as they were. **And the truth is... we are as messed up as they were. And that's why** we have this story before us here. **Because it's a** story about Jesus. **It's about what** Christ has done for the world. **It's all about** what He has done for you and me.

We tend to take ourselves way too seriously. **We want to** know how we should live. **We want to** know how the Bible applies to us. **How the Word** of God is relevant to our lives right here and now. **And sometimes**

what we are to learn is right out in the open for us to see...**but we** refuse to see it! It's never about what we are to do and how we are to live. **That all comes** from knowing who you are as a saved child of God. **After you have** been forgiven...**after you** have been given eternal Life in Christ...**then you** are free to live as Christ would have you live. **But what we** do is never about our salvation...**it is always a result of our salvation!!**

Your Christianity...your faith is always relevant...everyday of your life...no matter how you may feel. Whether you feel strong in the faith or whether you feel weak in the faith! No matter how you feel...you belong to Christ! What could me more relevant than Christ loving you the way He loved that woman? **With perfect Grace** and Forgiveness. **With unconditional love. Why would we** want to focus on ourselves and what we need to do... **or should** do... **when Christ** is before our eyes and always at the center? **What else can** we do but give a grateful response like the woman gave?

It's about Christ. It's all about Christ and His Divine Love for us His Children. **And if you** want to take anything away from this Biblical Lesson other than what Jesus has done for you...**what Jesus has given you...you could** look to His Love. **For it is** this same Divine Love that our Lord gives us... **that we** are share with one another! **Our faith...our salvation...our great** confidence is always that Jesus Christ, the Very Son of God is ALWAYS the One in the verbs... and because it is Christ in the verbs... **because it** is always Christ's work that saves us and keeps us in the faith... **we remain** confident...**certain ...because nothing** can pluck us out of our Lord's Almighty nail scarred hands!

Loving your neighbor...loving one another as Jesus loves us...**this is** your grateful response. **Like the woman** in our story and how she focused on Jesus alone...**we too focus** on Jesus and we begin to see one another through His eyes...**and by** His Almighty Power... **we grow** in the faith and love as He loves us. **His Love...His Grace** is always that which compels us...**and it** is His Power that enables us.

The Pharisee gave Jesus some food. **The woman gave** Him an act of gratitude and worship. **What do we** give Him? **Only that which** flows from His Grace...**and none** of this is in the same universe as what Christ has given to us. **Our work...our effort means nothing for our salvation...For Jesus has** given the ultimate Gift...**Himself. His suffering on** the cross was the suffering of sin and guilt of every person. **He suffered this,** paying the debt... **so that** we may go in peace...**and He** rose from the grave to give us eternal life. **You are forgiven. Go in peace.** In the Name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit...Amen.

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