

**Connection with Unit Theme:** To complement the small group study of *Broken Vessels*, these sermon outlines will use different Scripture passages related to the small group study theme, so the pastor can reinforce the study from the pulpit.

### Introduction:

Have you ever met one of Job's friends? Ever been one? You know who I'm talking about, the guy who is theologically precise but cold-hearted and uncomfoting in the face of real suffering. Good theology wrong applied isn't helpful. We meet another one in the mold of Job's friends in Simon the Pharisee. In Luke 7 grace and redemption fill his house and he is blind to the whole thing. This leads me to ask the question—what causes some to be grace-filled comforters and others to be more like Job's friends? Jesus gives us the answer in Luke 7.

#### 1. Those who have been forgiven little love little.

Simon the Pharisee is an upstanding citizen. From everything we read he seems to have a solid theology. He has an unflinching desire to see God's holiness promoted. But he is blind to redemption.

Such a man as Simon the Pharisee would have been appalled by this women letting down her hair and anointing Jesus' feet. I'd say you could've heard a pin drop in that room as they all waited to see Jesus' response to this action. Would he rebuke her? Would he stop her? The fact that Jesus doesn't immediately send her packing has Simon the Pharisee considering only two options—either this guy isn't holy or he isn't knowledgeable. But Jesus is going to teach Simon (and us) a lesson about grace.

Jesus tells a parable about forgiveness and Simon doesn't respond with much confidence. The answer is obvious. The one forgiven the most debt is the happiest. But the Pharisee doesn't respond with much vigor, because he likely sees Jesus' point. He knows the rebuke is coming. But then Jesus turns to the woman and asks Simon whether or not he sees her. Of course he saw her...but did he really see her.

Then the rebuke comes. There are certain things that a host does for his guest. Or at least he has a servant or somebody do them. But not Simon. Simon's hospitality stinks. And Jesus tells us why, "...he who is forgiven little, loves little". Our hospitality reflects our grasp of the gospel. Our ability to comfort the afflicted is a testimony to how deeply we've experienced grace ourselves.

It's not as if Simon isn't as big of a sinner as this woman. It's not as if his pursuit of holiness is a problem and that he'd get grace a bit more if he'd been a more notorious sinner. No, the problem is that Simon doesn't realize how desperate and dependent on grace he truly is.

#### 2. Those who have been forgiven much love much

I have a ridiculous amount of student loan debt. I also have a couple of smaller bills that are almost paid off. If someone called and told me that our \$300 hospital bill was paid off I'd be ecstatic. But truth be told, it wouldn't be terribly life shaping. It'd be paid off in a couple months regardless. I'd be thankful. I'd be happy. But I wouldn't remember it twenty years later. But if the ones who hold my student loans informed me that the debt was paid in full, that would be life altering. That is Jesus' point in this parable.

Scripture doesn't tell us what type of missionary this woman became, but I doubt she'd have been like Job's friends. This lady understood grace. She got hospitality. You can almost hear her now counseling young women who made foolish choices. Can you hear her pointing to Jesus and remembering—maybe even with tears in her eyes—the weight that was lifted from her when Christ forgave her sins?

Her worship was in proportion to her experience of grace. And you can guarantee that her ability to comfort others is directly proportional to her experience of worship. She gave Jesus the most expensive thing she had. She placed herself humbly at his feet. She was even willing to cross social lines and boundaries to express her love for Jesus. Love will do that.

### **Conclusion:**

If you are in Christ you don't need a riveting story like the woman in this story. You have still been brought from death to life. You can guarantee that if a funeral ended in the dead guy hopping out of the grave it'd make the front page of the news. The problem is that we so often forget grace. We forget how much we have been delivered from. We put ourselves in the story of Simon the Pharisee more than the sinful woman. And because of this our love grows a bit cold and we become more like Job's friends.

Miserable comforters come from those who've become inoculated to grace. We start seeing with the eyes of Simon the Pharisee and not with the tear-soaked and worship-filled eyes of the sinful woman.

You'll inevitably have those like this "sinful woman" come into your life. Let grace cause you to respond differently than Simon. See them. And see them with eyes of grace, remembering what it was like to have your life falling apart. Comfort in the way that you've been comforted.

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