

First Baptist Church Merritt Island

*A Beautiful Ratio*

Luke 7:36-50

November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018

### **Main Point**

How much do you love Jesus? That may be a difficult question to answer, but Jesus says how much we love is in direct proportion to how much we know we have been forgiven. So, maybe we should start by asking, *“How much have you been forgiven by Jesus?”*

### **Getting Started**

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

*Aside from your conversion, what is the most profound act of kindness you have ever received?*

*How did you respond to the person who showed you kindness? How did you express your gratitude?*

*What does gratitude reveal about the condition of our hearts?*

*How do we express love to those who give us their all?*

While Jesus was eating at the home of Simon the Pharisee, an unlikely person expressed profound gratitude for His love. Simon’s response to this expression of gratitude led Jesus to share a parable illustrating both the immeasurable forgiveness God offers and the only natural response to that forgiveness.

### **Observation**

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ Luke 7:36-50.

*If you could see Jesus face-to-face, what is the first way you would express gratitude for your salvation? How did the woman in Luke 7:36-38 do this?*

*What do you find most shocking about the woman’s actions? What did Simon find shocking about her actions?*

*What risk was this “sinful woman” taking in coming to the house of Simon, the Pharisee? What does this tell us about her?*

An unnamed woman who lived in this town came to the banquet. Luke described her as a sinner. Several social conventions were broken in the woman's encounter with Jesus. The woman must have entered the home uninvited: for a woman to approach a man who was not her husband would have been unthinkable in Jewish society. Her sinful reputation would have made any contact between her and a religious leader forbidden. Each part of the woman's actions spoke eloquently of her love and deep gratitude for Jesus.

*How would you have reacted if you had seen or heard this woman's grateful action or smelled the "fragrant oil" she used? When do expressions of gratitude make you uncomfortable? Why does the gratitude of others sometimes make us uncomfortable?*

*Read Luke 7:39 again. What is your impression of Simon? What doubts did Simon have about Jesus?*

*What does Jesus see in this woman that Simon does not? How does this affect Jesus' actions toward her?*

*How might our worship be different if we were more concerned about honoring Jesus than we were about the thoughts of others?*

*What seems to be Jesus' main concern in this passage? Simon's main concern? How had Simon misunderstood the nature of Christ's ministry?*

*Contrasted with the woman's humility and thankfulness, Simon's response revealed the haughty and critical nature of his heart. Because Jesus showed compassion, Simon doubted that Jesus was a prophet and doubted that He knew the woman's background.*

*How did Jesus lead Simon to a clearer understanding of the woman's motives? What was the point of the parable (vv. 40-43)?*

*What decision did Jesus' parable and questions help Simon to reach (v. 43)?*

*It's been said that the more we grow in our walk with Christ, the more we realize how sinful we are. Have you experienced this? How is such a realization vital to our spiritual growth?*

Jesus' parable helped Simon understand that love grows out of forgiveness. The more a person understands and appreciates his or her debt, the more that person will appreciate forgiveness. The natural response is to love the one who forgives, just as our love for Jesus grows out of having received forgiveness from Him. Jesus showed love in guiding Simon to see both the woman and her extravagant care. Jesus did not stop with emphasizing the rightness of the woman's action. He also prompted Simon to contrast his own lack of gratitude.

## **Application**

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

*When have you treated Jesus as Simon the Pharisee treated Jesus? To what extent have you treated Jesus as the woman treated Him? What leads you to these different responses?*

*Because Jesus forgives us, we can put our faith in Him and experience His peace. How do you deliberately live as a person grateful for these gifts? How can we do a better job of this as a group?*

*We love Jesus to the extent we realize how much He's forgiven us. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the depth of Jesus' forgiveness of your trespasses. Only God can open our eyes to see how much God has forgiven us through Christ!*

*Read Ephesians 1:7. What did Jesus' shed blood accomplish for us? How many trespasses does His blood cover? What does it mean for God to redeem you with the blood of Christ?*

*What is one step you might take to cultivate a heart of gratefulness to God this week?*

## **Prayer**

Thank God for His grace that He gives to older and younger sons alike. Pray that His grace would transform your life and would lead you to share His grace with others. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see how much He has forgiven you and how much He loves you.

## **Commentary**

7:36. While Pharisees often criticized Jesus for eating with sinners, one member of this sect invited Jesus to a meal at his home. Jesus did not refuse the man, although He surely knew the nature of Simon's attitude toward Him. Willing to offer His love even to those who rejected Him, Jesus entered and reclined at the table.

7:37. An unnamed woman who lived in this town came to the banquet. Luke described her as a sinner. Although the nature of her sin is not identified, the term "sinner" and Simon's reaction to her probably indicate she had a notorious reputation. Thus she was known to people at the dinner. Several social conventions were broken in the woman's encounter with Jesus. The woman brought a gift, not for the host but for his guest. An alabaster flask was often used for perfume. Mark 14:5 indicates the value of the fragrant oil at more than 300 denarii, nearly a year's wages for the average person then. Such would not have been used for ordinary purposes.

7:38-39. Luke did not address why the woman was weeping. The context suggests love and gratitude motivated her tears. Her tears also may have reflected remorse over and repentance for sin. Not daring to address Jesus, the woman wiped His feet, cleaning

away the dust and the tears with her hair. Her humility and her love for Jesus led her to perform an unthinkable act of servanthood.

7:40. Contrasted with the woman's humility and thankfulness, the Pharisee's response revealed the haughty and critical nature of his heart. The language used here conveys that the Pharisee did not speak aloud. Although the Pharisee did not speak directly to Jesus, Jesus replied to him.

7:41-43. Jesus answered the Pharisee's objection to the woman's act with a parable. The more a person understands and appreciates his or her debt, the more that person will appreciate forgiveness. The natural response is to love the one who forgives, just as our love for Jesus grows out of having received forgiveness from Him.

7:44-46. The contrast of Simon's indifference and the woman's gratitude stand in stark contrast. The woman's act showed she had more than respect for Jesus. She had great love for the Lord and expressed it in an extravagant manner.

7:47-48. The first sentence in verse 47 does not indicate the woman was forgiven because of her act of love, but rather that her love showed she had been forgiven. Because her many sins had been forgiven, she responded with much love. As Jesus noted, the person who is forgiven little, loves little. Addressing the woman, Jesus startled everyone at the table by declaring her sins were forgiven.

7:50. Jesus did not defend Himself, nor did He accuse the guests of hypocrisy. Instead He again spoke to the woman, giving reassurance that her faith had saved her. The Pharisees believed salvation was the result of doing enough good works to earn God's approval. By following the law and thus doing good, Pharisees expected the blessings of God on earth and a place with God in eternity.

Adapted from [www.smallgroup.com](http://www.smallgroup.com)