

Sermon Discussion Guide

February 18, 2024

Luke 7:36-50

"Grace, Gratitude, and Generosity" (Hope Overflowing Sermon Series)

Hope is continuing a sermon series alongside our Hope Overflowing Initiative. We are looking together at what the Bible has to say about why and how we spend what we are given (our time, money, abilities, etc).

We're spending 6 weeks tracing how God's grace stirs up our gratitude, and how this gratitude overflows into generosity- a generosity poured out into this world and into the lives of others. These are actions we're calling "grace, gratitude, and generosity."

This 2nd Sunday we will look at how God's generous heart stirs up our gratitude.

Leader's Notes:

(1) This passage describes a woman kneeling at the feet of Jesus, wiping his feet with her hair. This scene seems very similar to another scene near the end of the other 3 Gospels (Matthew 26, Mark 14, and especially John 12). There, at Bethany, a woman named Mary pours perfume onto Jesus' head and feet, and wipes his feet with her hair. But this scene between Jesus and a woman who was likely Lazarus' sister occurs at the house of Simon the Leper, not Simon the Pharisee (see Luke 7:36-40). This distinction - along with when the two stories are placed in the timeline of Jesus' ministry - makes it likely they are two different events. Often in the gospels, similar sayings and events occurred multiple times. We so easily forget that Jesus' public ministry was daily for three years. That's roughly 1,095 days for Jesus to speak and be spoken to, as well as to act and be acted upon.

(2) The big idea of Luke 7:36-40: The surprising relationship between sins, forgiveness, and love. (Our sin is bigger than we think; Jesus' forgiveness is bigger than our sin; and our love for Jesus and others is the result of seeing our sin and Jesus' forgiveness as bigger.)

(3) Please read through all the questions ahead of time. You will need to be selective, and not ask all the questions. There are more than a healthy discussion can handle. Also, the un-bolded and un-numbered questions that are indented-to-the-right and below are meant as follow-up questions for the main questions that are bolded and numbered. Use the follow up questions if the main question is too difficult or too easy, or to take the conversation deeper.

Examine. Taking a closer look at the passage

Read aloud Luke 7:36-50.

1. What is one gut-reaction you had to this passage?

- Did anyone else in the group react *similarly* to this? How so?
- Did anyone else in the group react *differently* to this? How so?

Discuss. Studying the passage (using the sermon) to observe and interpret

± Apply. Making the connection from thinking to action, from their lives to ours

2. Someone re-read verses 36-38 aloud. If you were there at that dinner, what emotions would you feel?

- Say more about that. (Why would you feel that way?)
- What's going on in the scene that makes you feel that?

3. Someone else re-read verse 39 aloud. What do you think about Simon the Pharisee's reaction to this scene?

- What do you think Simon the Pharisee's face looked like when he said this?
- What is Simon the Pharisee saying about Jesus here?

4. Someone else re-read verses 41-43 aloud. Why does Jesus tell this story? (Feel free to use Sunday's sermon to help answer this question.)

- Match Jesus' inner story to Luke's outer story:
 - Who is the 500 denarii debtor?
 - Who is the 50 denarii debtor?
 - Who is the moneylender who cancels both debts?
- Why does Jesus ask Simon the question, "who will love him more"?

5. Someone read verses 44-46 aloud. What is Jesus saying here in your own words?

- Why do you think Jesus begins by asking Simon, "do you see this woman"?

6. How are Jesus' words less about who is the bigger sinner and more about growing in self-awareness?

(Again, feel free to use Sunday's sermon to help answer this question.)

- Based on this description of how the woman and Simon received Jesus:
 - Who is the 500 denarii debtor?
 - Who is the 50 denarii debtor?

- When we take Jesus' description together with how Simon and the woman lived their daily lives, why is it so difficult to answer who is a greater debtor to God?
 - This comparison with the woman forces Simon to reassess who he is in the story. How does it force you and me to do the same?
- 7. Someone else read verses 47-50 aloud. What is Jesus saying about the relationship between God's grace (forgiveness) and our gratitude (love)?**
- What makes us see the bigness of God's grace (His forgiveness)?
 - What makes us more grateful (love more)?
- 8. When do you find you love Jesus the most?**
- Describe a time recently when you felt like weeping in relief?
 - If it's hard to think of a time, why do you think that is according to Luke 7?
- 9. What are some ways you can express love for Jesus in your life?**
- With other people at home or work?
 - With other people at Hope?
 - With the gifts you have been given?
- 10. Why is Luke 7:36-50 such a unique motivation for being generous?**
- What do we typically hear (and say) to be more generous?
 - What is Jesus saying actually makes us more generous?

Prayer. *How does this topic or passage lead me to pray and how can we pray for each other?*

- Ask God to show you: what sins are more difficult for you to see?
 - Take a few moments to confess those, asking for God's forgiveness and help.
- Are there specific ways that God has reminded you of His forgiveness?
 - Take a few moments to name those people, places, and times to God.
 - And give thanks for them and for God using them in your life.
- Pray the following aloud (led by one volunteer or all-together as a group):
 "O King of glory, Lord almighty, Do not leave us as orphans, but fill us with the Spirit of truth whom you promised from the Father. Alleluia." (Adapted from a prayer on Jesus' ascension)