

“Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner?” (Luke 7:36-50)

Last month, I had the opportunity to meet Matt Brown who pastors Sandals Church in Riverside, California. Attending Matt’s church is a woman that is a former Vegas stripper and porn actress. Fortunately, this 31-year-old woman has exchanged her sin for the forgiveness that Jesus Christ offers. Now armed with a heart of gratitude, Heather has a heart for young girls who are stuck in her former way of life and hopes to introduce them to Jesus. This has led her to launch a ministry called *JC’s Girls*. Heather, a stay-at-home mom, and a first-grade teacher now evangelize at porn conventions and hand out Bibles wrapped in T-shirts that say “Holy Hottie.” They also visit strip clubs, paying girls for private dances and using the opportunity to share the gospel with them in the hope that they get saved and stop stripping. This year Sandals Church is contributing \$50,000 to this worthy ministry. On their website¹ our Christian sisters state that Jesus hung out with some less than acceptable folks because He loved them and knew they needed Him, and the essence of what it means to be a Christian is to follow Jesus’ example.

What do you think of what these young women are doing? What is your initial reaction? Are you immediately uncomfortable? Are you repulsed? More importantly, how do you think Jesus feels about what these young women are doing? Is He pleased? Is He disappointed? I would suggest that *JC’s Girls* have been called by God to reach young women who need Jesus to forgive their sins and cleanse them from the sins that have been committed against them.²

In today’s passage, we will meet one of the first of *JC’s Girls*. The scene is laid in Galilee. Jesus has just healed a centurion’s servant who had been close to death (Luke 7:1-10). A day later, He intercepted a funeral procession at Nain’s city gate and restored a dead son to his widowed mother (7:11-17). The rumors flying across the countryside about this astonishing young rabbi from Nazareth seemed to become more unbelievable every day (7:18-35). As a result, a Pharisee named Simon knew it was time to arrange a meeting with this Jesus. If he gave a dinner party and included Jesus in the guest list, Simon could avoid having to mingle with townsfolk in the marketplace. It would also give him an up-close opportunity to study the potentially dangerous new teacher. The last time Jesus preached in their synagogue and marketplace, some of the worst people in town had shown up. The town gossip was that some of those people got “converted.” In fact, the word was that a town prostitute had gotten the idea from the rabbi’s preaching that even she could be forgiven by God and could be given a new beginning. Simon was sure that righteousness couldn’t be secured with mere faith.³ In Luke 7:36-50,⁴ we will see how this episode unfolds. As we look into this passage, we will learn three important truths about Jesus.

1. Jesus fellowships with sinners (7:36-38). Our account begins in 7:36 with these words: “**Now one of the Pharisees [Simon, cf. 7:40] was requesting Him [Jesus] to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table.**” When you think about it, a dinner invitation can be given for one of two reasons: The host wants to enjoy your company or the host wants you to enjoy his company. He is honored to have you in his home or he thinks you should be honored to be in his home. In this context, I believe we will see that Simon thinks Jesus should be honored to be in his home.⁵ Nevertheless, Jesus was happy to oblige him and share a meal together. Jesus showed no hesitation in accepting this Pharisee’s dinner invitation.⁶ After all, He came to be the Savior of all—tax collectors, sinners (7:34), and religious leaders.⁷

Likewise, we should adopt Jesus’ practice and seek to share meals with lost people, even those who are skeptical or critical of our faith. This is an example of finding common ground. After all, believers and unbelievers both have to eat, right? Why not use the summer months to have a barbeque with some of your unbelieving neighbors? Why not invite your unbelieving classmate, coworker, or neighbor out for a meal? Take the initiative, follow in Jesus’ footsteps, and strive to seek and save the lost (see 19:10).⁸

Upon entering Simon's house, Jesus "reclined at the table." In the first century, the people of the Middle East didn't sit on chairs with their feet under the table. The dinner table was low to the ground and the guests would lay on mats, with their head near the table and their feet away from the table. They would prop themselves up with their left elbow, and eat with their right hand like your kids do when they eat in front of the TV. (Next time you tell them to quit eating on the floor, they may well say, "I'm just trying 'to preserve a biblical tradition.'") This is how all meals were eaten.⁹

Not only was the eating posture unique, but so was the architecture of the homes. In the ancient world, homes were more open to the street and it would have been common for others who were not a part of the dinner party to drop by and sit away from the table and listen to the conversation. Social custom also allowed needy people to partake of some of the leftovers. Large crowds would gather especially when a noted rabbi was in attendance.¹⁰ This helps explain the rest of Luke's account.

In 7:37a, Luke informs us that an unexpected visitor "crashes the party." While Jesus is lying at the table, eating and talking with the other guests, a woman from the crowd of onlookers approaches Him. Luke describes her as a "**sinful**" woman. In Jesus' day, there was only one way a woman could get a reputation for being sinful—she had lived a promiscuous life and was likely a prostitute. We don't know how this woman came to be a prostitute. Perhaps she was filled with lust. But more likely she was sexually abused as a child or has grown up an illegitimate child with no prospects for marriage. Or perhaps she is a widow struggling to survive. We just can't say, and should know better than to judge her harshly.

There is something else we can deduce about this woman: She has been battered down. Her self-image is tattered and ragged. She is the continual object of cutting criticism and insults by the wives of her customers. She has been spat upon. She is the example many mothers in town use to warn their daughters. She is the target of nasty jokes. She is shunned by the best people and used and abused by the worst. Inwardly, she is broken and bleeding. Her spirit is wounded. For her to come to the banquet at Simon the Pharisee's house takes shocking courage. She is viewed as a sinner, one who conveys uncleanness by her very touch, almost as if she has an infectious disease. She knows that she will have to endure stares, whispers, and muffled laughter as the men nudge one another. She knows that Simon will not be happy to see her in his house.¹¹ But she wanted openly to express her love for Jesus, and she was willing to endure public humiliation to do it. This woman longed to be in the presence of Jesus.

In 7:37b-38, Luke tells us that this woman "**brought an alabaster vial of perfume, and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume.**" Let's consider this woman's worship of Jesus.¹²

- *She stands...to honor Jesus' greatness.* When we sing, we often stand to honor our Lord. In fact, we sing the song, "I Stand in Awe of You." Are you in awe of the Lord Jesus? Do you revel in His greatness?
- *She weeps...overwhelmed with sorrow over her past.* Outside of this passage, the New Testament records only five other uses of the verb "to wet."¹³ The word is used either of rain or of fire and brimstone that God sends from heaven. The volume of this woman's tears was like the rain from heaven. Not only were Jesus' feet getting wet, but the floor was also getting wet.¹⁴ Psalm 56:8 says that God puts our tears in a bottle. How many tears have you shed over your sin? Are you broken over your behavior, words, thoughts, attitudes, and motives?
- *She wipes Jesus' feet with her hair...a sign of deep humility.* Our woman unfastens her hair and lets it fall free. She kneels down and begins to wipe Jesus' feet with her hair. To go about in public with her hair down was considered a shameful thing to do; yet she is not deterred.¹⁵ She humbles herself before Jesus and those who are present for the meal. Do you humble yourself before Jesus on a regular basis? Is your desire for Him to increase in your life?

- *She kisses Jesus' feet...a gesture of affection and respect.* By constantly kissing (*kataphilei*, the imperfect tense) Jesus' feet the woman was expressing her affection, respect, and submission (cf. 1 Sam 10:1). Clearly, she loved Him. How do you express your emotions and affection for Jesus?
- *She anoints Jesus' feet...in gratitude for what He has done for her.* Normally, people anointed the heads of others, not their feet. But this woman was not able to get to Jesus' head, so she came up behind Him and anointed His feet. She is overwhelmed with gratitude. Are you grateful for the person and work of Jesus? Do you express your gratitude with praise and thanksgiving?

This woman does not care about what people think. She is not self-conscious; she is God-conscious. A couple of weeks ago, I was telling my wife, Lori, that I am grateful that Stephen Rennie and his family have moved back into our area, returned to our church, and that Stephen is on youth staff. One of the things I appreciate about Stephen is that he is not self-conscious when he worships. Whether he is worshipping God at church on Sunday morning, Wednesday night at youth group, or with a small group, he is an expressive worshipper. I am excited because our young men can see how a man worships.

The worship of this woman could not have been a worse disaster for the proud host than had a loose bull tromped through, overturning tables and delicacies. Yet, Jesus graciously received our woman's worship, which left Simon and his party aghast. You see, we can love Jesus too little, but we can never love Him too much. Jesus longs for us to worship Him.

2. Jesus regards love as the proper expression of gratitude (7:39-47). In 7:39, Luke picks up the story by giving us an inside scoop. **“Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, ‘If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner.’”** Simon saw this encounter as proof that Jesus was naïve and anything but a prophet.¹⁶ The Pharisees would not associate with such sinners.¹⁷ As a Pharisee, Simon was outwardly an upright and religious man. He attempted to keep the Law of Moses. He tithed his income. He fasted regularly. He prayed at least three times every day. He never missed in his attendance at the synagogue. He was a decent man who was respected as a religious leader in the community. Yet, Simon is self-righteous. He does not see himself as a sinner in need of a Savior.

Can you relate to Simon? Do you see yourself as a reasonably good person? When you compare yourself to others, do you stack up pretty well as a spouse, parent, church member, and overall moral person? Do you find that you look down on other more notorious sinners? If so, you need to recognize that God doesn't grade on the curve. You don't score points by being better than the worst people. You need His forgiveness as much as anyone. Like this sinful woman, Simon had much to be forgiven—but he was too smug to acknowledge it.

Jim Henson, the creator of the Muppets died unexpectedly a few years ago. He was sick, but he didn't know it. He thought he had a cold. He thought it was a touch of the flu. He thought he would soon be better, so he did nothing about it. He had no idea that it was life-threatening. He could have saved his own life with a trip to the doctor, but he didn't know how sick he was. In the very same way, there are millions of people on this planet who think that because, in their own opinion, they are basically good—that that is good enough. They will never be able to receive God's forgiveness because they will never bring themselves to acknowledge their own sinfulness. “After all,” they will say, “I've never killed anybody. I do my job, pay my bills, try to help my fellow man, and I'm a productive member of society. At least I'm not a drug addict or prostitute.” They say this, but they don't see how their lives are filled with bitterness, or envy, or gossip, or resentment, or self-righteousness, or pride, or hate, or jealousy—they don't see how sin has corrupted them and driven a wedge between themselves and a holy God. As a result they go through life thinking, I'm not that bad; in fact, I'm better than most.¹⁸ It is these types of individuals that Jesus is directing this parable to.

I just love 7:40a! Luke writes, “**Jesus answered him, ‘Simon, I have something to say to you.’**” First, please notice that Jesus answered Simon, but Simon has not said anything! Jesus read Simon’s mind because he knew his heart (cf. 5:22). Luke uses splendid irony by showing that Jesus could read Simon’s secret thoughts, even though Simon doubted that He was a prophet!¹⁹

What is Simon to say at this point? So he replies, “**Say it, Teacher**” (7:40b). In other words, “Let’s get this over with, Jesus. Go ahead and say what you need to say.” What mockery, what sarcasm! By these seemingly polite words, Simon mocks Jesus. In essence he is saying: “Instruct me, O thou great teacher,²⁰ you who are not a prophet, you who are not even as wise as I am for I, even I, know that the woman who is touching you is a woman of the street, a prostitute, a whore so, please, kindly instruct me, O thou most wise and most learned teacher... You sham, You fraud.”²¹

With this backdrop, Jesus commands Simon’s attention with a brief parabolic missile. If the party needed an “afternoon dinner story” to pep it up, this one was wired for explosion. “**A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty**” (7:41). A moneylender’s business was to lend money to others at a fixed rate of interest. The denarius was worth about a day’s wage for a laborer. Thus, the debts were significant: They represented two months’ pay and one-and-three-quarter years pay (20 months), based on a six-day work week. One owed ten times more. Despite the divergence of the amounts, Jesus says that both debtors were unable to repay their debt so the moneylender graciously forgave them both (7:42a).

Jesus then asks Simon, “**So which of them will love him more?**” **Simon answered and said, ‘I suppose the one whom he forgave more.’ And He said to him, ‘You have judged correctly’**” (7:42b-43). The answer to Jesus’ question may have been obvious to Simon though he seems to have known very little about forgiveness and love. However, he apparently knew that Jesus sometimes used questions to lure His critics into a trap. So he replied with uneasy reluctance allowing the possibility that the answer might not be as obvious as it appeared to be.

“**Turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, ‘Do you see this woman?’**” (7:44) Simon’s great mistake was that he could not see this woman as a forgiven woman. He could only see her as the sinful woman she had been. So Jesus set her in contrast to His host: “Simon, let me help you to see her.”²² Jesus proceeds to say, “**I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave Me no kiss;²³ but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume**” (7:45-46).²⁴ Jesus hadn’t complained about Simon’s cold welcome. But He had noticed it.²⁵ Now He linked it to a lack of gratitude for God’s forgiveness. “Simon, didn’t you just tell Me that the person who has been forgiven a huge debt will feel great love for the one who forgave? This woman had a great debt. But it was forgiven. Now look at her gratitude! Look at her love! What does your treatment of Me say about your gratitude?”

Simon assumed that this woman was the 500 denarii sinner and that he was the 50 denarii sinner. Yet, the truth is, Simon was guilty of countless sins just during this evening alone. He despised this woman who was made in the image of God. He treated her with an attitude of superiority. He failed to show hospitality to this woman who quite obviously was in great need. He excluded her from his banquet and from his life (see 14:13-14). He showed preference/favoritism to his friends’ well being more than to this woman’s needs. Furthermore, Simon treated the God of the Universe with disrespect. He assumed that he knew better than Jesus did. He acted in disbelief. This is all in one evening party. Can you imagine taking into account the multitude of sins that Simon committed yesterday or the day before? In reality, Simon is a 500,000 denarii sinner because God knows not only all of his deeds but his thoughts (see Jer 17:9-10).²⁶

In 7:47, Jesus states, **“For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.”** The word “for” (*hoti*) is not causal (i.e., the woman’s sins were not forgiven, “because she has loved greatly”). Instead, it is logical (i.e., the woman’s sins were forgiven, “as evidenced by the fact that she has loved greatly”). In other words, the “for” gives the evidence of forgiveness, not the ground.²⁷ For example, we may say, “It is raining, for the window is wet.” The wet window is not the cause of the rain, but the evidence of it. Jesus’ point is that the person who realizes how great a gift forgiveness is (because they have a deep sense of sin) has a great love for the one who forgives. The woman’s acts of reverence to Jesus honored Him as the one who brought God’s message of grace.

We must realize our great debt and our utter inability to repay our debt. To love Jesus much, we must come to the realization that we are in debt to God because of our sin nature and because of the many deeds of sin that we have committed. We must also realize that there is nothing we can do to repay the debt. All the good deeds in the world added to our sins is like putting frosting over a moldy cake. We’ve got to come to the place where we recognize that our entire cake is moldy and we can’t do anything to fix it. If we have no sense of debt to Christ, we will love little. Thus, we must acknowledge that we have sinned and are guilty before the holy God.

3. Jesus provides those who love Him assurance (7:48-50). In 7:48, Jesus turns to the woman and says, **“Your sins have been forgiven.”** We could translate it, “Your sins have been forgiven and stand forgiven.” The perfect tense of the verb “forgiven” (*apheontai*) makes it clear that her forgiveness was not the result of her love.²⁸ It was the other way around. She had already been forgiven before she entered Simon’s house. Jesus was not now imparting forgiveness to her for the first time, but was commenting on her forgiven condition.²⁹ Here, in front of Simon and others crowding that dining room, Jesus publicly declares her to be a forgiven woman. Whatever she has been in the past—her sin is forgiven, forgotten, forever. Forgiveness was the springboard for this woman’s lavish love. It is the same for us today. “We love God because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19). God starts the process by loving us unconditionally and forgiving us because of Christ’s sacrifice for our sins. The more we come to understand forgiveness, the more we will love. Forgiveness is the cause. Love is the effect. Forgiveness is the reason and love is the result. Forgiveness is the root and love is the fruit.³⁰

How did our woman know that her sins were forgiven? Jesus told her. How do we know today that we have been forgiven? God tells us so in His Word.³¹ Assurance comes from depending upon the promises of Scripture. This is very important. There are many days that you may not *feel* saved, but the issue is: Have you trusted in Christ alone as your sin-bearer? If so, cling to His promise. Don’t trust your works or lack thereof, trust the promises of Christ.

In 7:49, Luke informs us: **“Those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say to themselves, ‘Who is this man who even forgives sins?’”** The dinner guests also raise the question of Jesus’ identity (cf. 7:39; 5:21).³² These ancient scholars recognize something that many contemporary scholars fail to acknowledge: You can only rightly forgive sins if they were committed against you. Luke wants us to consider that “this man” is not only a prophet; He is the one who’s Law this sinful woman had broken. As God in human flesh, He could rightly forgive sins.

Jesus’ last word to the woman is, **“Your faith has saved you; go in peace”** (7:50).³³ Jesus now confirms to the woman what had already taken place. This was a word of assurance.³⁴ It was not her love that saved her. It was her faith.³⁵ Because God accepted her, she could go in peace. Simon and his crowd would probably never accept her. Others in the town might continue to look down on her. But they knew nothing of the grace of God. She could go in peace because her future was secure. She belonged to God.

The question is this: What is it that the woman believed by faith? If the woman's faith saved her, what was the substance of her faith? I believe that the text strongly implies the answer: The woman believed that if she came to Jesus as a repentant sinner, Jesus would not send her away. This echoes Jesus promise, "...the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out" (John 6:37b).³⁶

Simple faith in the person and work of Christ results in an eternal relationship with God. The benefits are listed in 7:48-50:

- "Your sins are forgiven." This takes care of the past (7:48).
- "Your faith has saved you." This takes care of the present (7:49).
- "Go in peace." This takes care of the future (7:50).³⁷

In Luke's account, our nameless woman was also wordless. Yet her actions spoke volumes. How do you express your love and gratitude to God for His forgiveness? Suppose that God works in proportion to our love and gratitude. Suppose that it is the basis of how He determines to work in a church. Suppose He goes from one church to another, asking, "How much do they love me? How grateful are they?" Suppose He comes to our church, looks over our congregation and asks, "How much do they love Me?" What would the answer be? Suppose He looks at each individual. Suppose He looks at you. He wants to know how much you love Him. If that was the prerequisite, the condition for His getting involved in your life, what would be the result?³⁸

This passage ultimately teaches one truth: Those who are forgiven most love most. So if you want to love Jesus the way He desires, review His love for you. To renew your love for God, review God's love for you.

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Scripture Reading

Luke 7:36-50

Matthew 26:6-13

Mark 14:3-9

John 12:1-8

John 6:37; 8:11

Romans 5:1

Ephesians 2:8-10; 5:1-2

Study Questions

1. Jesus was criticized for spending time with sinners (Luke 5:8, 30, 32; 7:34; 13:2; 15:1-2, 7, 10; 18:13; 19:7; 24:7). Have Christians ever expressed concern with me spending time with sinners? How have I responded to these concerns? Are there certain activities that I should not participate in when attempting to influence others for Christ? Are there specific places I should not frequent in my attempts to share Christ? If so, where do I draw the line? How can I make sure I do not violate my convictions? How can I keep a Christian brother or sister from stumbling, yet maintain my Christian liberty for the sake of the gospel? Read 1 Corinthians 9:15-23.
2. The sinful woman that approached Jesus lavished her love upon Him (7:37-38). To what extent should my love for Jesus be emotional? Are feelings important? How do they relate to faith? When I am not feeling “in love” with Jesus, how does He want me to respond? What if I am not an emotional person, how can I express my love and worship to Jesus? Does Jesus expect any outward response? If so, what and when?
3. Agree/disagree: The more we grow in Christ the more we will see our own sinfulness. Support with Scripture. How can we balance the reality that we are “saints,” “new creations,” “righteous,” “beloved,” yet continue to sin? How can we appropriate our new identity in Christ, yet compare ourselves with Christ’s perfect standard and be humbled by our sinfulness? Why is this important?
4. Jesus seems to be far more concerned about the self-righteousness of Simon the Pharisee than He is the sinful woman’s sexual immorality (7:40-47). How does this make me feel? As one who may be relatively sexually pure, does this bother me? Since all Christians struggle with self-righteousness, what does this suggest? If Jesus is so repulsed by self-righteousness, how can I grow in my humility so that I do not look down on others or judge them? Read 1 Corinthians 4:1-5.
5. Jesus implies that an awareness of sin and an experience of forgiveness are important elements in loving Him (7:47). Must a person be deeply convicted of sin in order to get saved? Why or why not? How can we help people to see their great need before God as unbelievers and as believers? Do I sense a deep awareness of my own sinfulness and inability to please God apart from the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit? How can I cultivate this sensitivity in my own life?

Notes

¹ To read more about this ministry, click on <http://jcsgirls.com>.

² The porn industry is now a \$10 billion business—bigger than the NFL, the NBA, and MLB combined. What a mission field for women and men that have been called to target these people in need of Christ. See also ministry of www.XXXChurch.com.

³ Alice Matthews, *A Woman Jesus Can Teach* (Grand Rapids: Discovery House, 1991), 104.

⁴ Morris writes, “Each Gospel has a story of an anointing of Jesus by a woman (Mt. 26:6-13; Mk. 14:3-9; Jn. 12 1-8). There are good reasons for thinking that the other three are describing one and the same incident, but Luke a different one. They refer to an incident in the last week of Jesus’ life, Luke to one much earlier. The ‘sinner’ of Luke’s account wet Jesus’ feet with tears, wiped them with her hair, kissed them and anointed them, which is different from what the others describe. And the ensuing discussion is different. In Luke it is concerned with love and giving to the poor. There is no reason for holding that the woman in the other Gospels was a ‘sinner’ (John says she was Mary of Bethany). Some have held that Luke’s ‘sinner’ was Mary Magdalene, but this is sheer speculation.” Leon Morris, *The Gospel According To St. Luke: The Tyndale Bible Commentary Series* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974 [1986]), 146.

⁵ Dr. Daniel Hill, “The Gospel of Luke: An Expository Bible Study,” *Grace Notes*, 103.

⁶ This is the first of three reported occasions (see also Luke 11:37-54; 14:1-24) in which Jesus is invited to dine at a Pharisee’s house, and each of the three is a comparatively lengthy scene. This type-scene repetition suggests that this is a characteristic situation during Jesus’ ministry and one of special interest to the narrator. Each of these scenes is an occasion of conflict. Thus, it is surprising that Jesus is always so willing to oblige these men.

⁷ C. Marvin Pate, *Luke: Moody Gospel Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1995), 175.

⁸ During Jesus’ earthly ministry, He received constant criticism for being concerned about sinners (Luke 5:8, 30, 32; 7:34; 13:2; 15:1-2, 7, 10; 18:13; 19:7; 24:7).

⁹ This is also the likely arrangement at the Lord’s Supper when Jesus washed the feet of the disciples reclining around the table (John 13:5).

¹⁰ Dr. Ralph F. Wilson, “Anointing by a Sinful Woman” (Luke 7:36-50):

http://www.jesuswalk.com/lessons/7_36-50.htm.

¹¹ Jewish rabbis did not speak to women in public, nor did they eat with them in public.

¹² The five correlations come from Dr. Ray Pritchard, “How to Be a Great Lover” (Luke 7:36-50):

http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermons/read_sermon.asp?id=342.

¹³ Cf. Matt 5:45; Luke 17:29; Jas 5:17 [twice]; and Rev 11:6.

¹⁴ Barry C. Davis, “Love Lost / Love Found—Part 2” (Luke 7:36-50): Unpublished sermon, October 2003.

¹⁵ In a careful and scholarly study of hairstyles of women in the First Century, Fee concludes that “the evidence from Paul’s era shows that women did not appear in public with long, flowing hair,” but cites the lack of First Century evidence that long, loose hair would have been associated with adultery. Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 509-10.

¹⁶ The text uses a “contrary to fact” second-class conditional clause to present the Pharisee’s remark, so that the leader clearly doubts Jesus’ prophetic credentials. Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 219. See also NET Study Notes: “This is a good example of a second-class (contrary to fact) Greek conditional sentence. The Pharisee said, in effect, ‘If this man were a prophet (but he is not)...’”

¹⁷ NET Study Notes. It is worth noting that the touch of a “sinner” brought ceremonial defilement.

¹⁸ Steve May, “A Lesson in Forgiveness” (Luke 7:36-50): <http://preachingtoday.com/31680>.

¹⁹ Stanley A. Ellisen, *Parables in the Eye of the Storm* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001), 75.

²⁰ The term “teacher” (*didaskale*) is Luke’s equivalent of “rabbi” (cf. 9:38; 20:21, 38; 21:7; 22:11), less than a prophet.

²¹ Davis, “Love Lost / Love Found.”

²² Matthews, *A Woman Jesus Can Teach*, 109-110.

²³ This refers to a formalized kiss of greeting, standard in that culture. To convey this to the modern reader, the words “of greeting” have been supplied to qualify what kind of kiss is meant. See NET Study Notes.

²⁴ This event is not equivalent to the anointing of Jesus that takes place in the last week of his life (Matt 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8). That woman was not a sinner, and Jesus was eating in the home of Simon the leper, who, as a leper, could never be a Pharisee.

²⁵ The host required none of these actions, but the fact that the woman has engaged in them shows that she has taken extra steps to greet him. I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: CGT* (Exeter: Paternoster; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 311-312.

²⁶ Davis, "Love Lost / Love Found."

²⁷ The connection between this statement and the preceding probably involves an ellipsis, to the effect that the *hoti* clause. For similar examples of an "evidentiary" *hoti* see Luke 1:22; 6:21; 13:2. See discussion in Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50: BECNT* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 703-5. See also E. Earl Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke: TNCBC* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 122. The following English versions render the verse in question accurately:

- NET: "Therefore I tell you, her sins, which were many, are forgiven, thus she loved much; but the one who is forgiven little loves little."
- HCSB: "Therefore I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; that's why she loved much. But the one who is forgiven little, loves little."
- NRSV: "Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little."
- NLT: "I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love."

²⁸ The Greek perfect tense indicates a past action that continued in the present tense. Thus, the woman had been earlier forgiven of her sin, the result of which continued up to that very moment (cf. 7:47 for the same verb). See also Pate, *Luke*, 177.

²⁹ Jesus had earlier forgiven the sins of the paralytic man in Capernaum (5:20). Here he did not forgive the sins of the sinful woman but announced authoritatively that they stood forgiven. See Dr. Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Luke*: <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes.htm>, 2005.

³⁰ Matthews, *A Woman Jesus Can Teach*, 110.

³¹ E.g., Isa 1:18; 43:25-26; 55:6-7; Acts 13:38-39; Rom 4:7-8; Eph 4:32; and Heb 8:12.

³² It's not the first time in Luke that this question has been asked. Jesus demonstrated His authority to forgive sins by raising the paralytic from his stretcher (5:21, 24).

³³ Constable is correct when he writes, "Jesus concluded the incident by giving the woman a further word of encouragement and clarification. It was her faith, not her love that had resulted in her salvation, of which her forgiveness was a part. Consequently she could depart at peace about her condition even though others might continue to regard her as a 'sinner' (cf. 8:48; 17:19; 18:42). Here salvation has the larger meaning of spiritual deliverance. This is clear because of Jesus' previous comments about forgiveness and the lack of reference to physical deliverance (i.e., healing). Likewise the common Jewish farewell, 'May God's peace be yours' (Judg. 18:6; 1 Sam. 1:17; 2 Sam. 15:9; 1 Kings 22:17; Acts 16:36; James 2:16), assumes a larger meaning when connected with spiritual salvation. This woman was able to go into a lasting condition of peace because of her faith (cf. Rom. 5:1)." Constable, *Notes on Luke*.

³⁴ Again, Jesus uses the perfect tense of the word "saved" (*sosoken*, cf. Luke 7:48 "forgiven" [*apheontai*]).

³⁵ This woman was already saved. That is the point of the story. She was forgiven already because of her faith (not because of her love). Because she knew that she was forgiven much, she was expressing her love to Jesus. The word of reassurance that Jesus gives her is an added assurance. She already knows she is forgiven, but Jesus witnesses with her spirit that she is a child of God. There is such a thing as an intensified gift of assurance of salvation; an enlarging of the assurance that one has already. It might be given to use when we forget what others think. Michael Eaton, *Preaching Through the Bible: Luke 1-11* (Kent, England: Sovereign World, 1999), 106.

³⁶ Bob Deffinbaugh, "The Wordless Worship of an Unnamed Woman" (Luke 7:36-50): http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=1049.

³⁷ This has been revised from Pritchard, "How to Be a Great Lover."

³⁸ R.T. Kendall, *The Complete Guide to the Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Chosen, 2004), 121.