
a ***Grace Notes*** course

Life of Christ 300

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Lesson 301

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Course Outline

This course is composed of 10 lessons, each consisting of articles from Pastor Mark Perkins' teaching at Front Range Bible Church in Denver, Colorado.

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The Sinful Woman Forgiven

Luke 7:36-50

Translation: “(36) But one of the Pharisees kept on asking Him that He might eat with him, and entering into the house of the Pharisee He sat down. (37) And behold a sinful woman who was in the city, and after being sure that He was reclining in the house of the Pharisee, after buying an alabaster jar of perfume (38) and after standing behind at the side of His feet, after crying - she began to wet His feet with tears and with the hair of her head kept on drying off and kissing His feet and anointing with the perfume. (39) And seeing this, the Pharisee who invited Him spoke to Himself, saying, ‘If this man were a prophet, he would have known all along who and what kind this woman is who touches Him, that she is a sinner.’ (40) And after formulating an answer, Jesus said to him, ‘Simon, I have something to say to you.’ And he replied, ‘Teacher, speak.’ (41) There were two debtors for a certain moneylender, one who owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. (42) Not being able to pay him back, he gave grace to them both. Therefore who of them loved him more? (43) After formulating an answer, Simon said, ‘I take it that the one to whom he forgave more.’ And He said to him, ‘You judge rightly.’ (44) And after turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, ‘See this woman? I entered into your house, you gave me no water for my feet! But she wet my feet with tears, and wiped them with her hair. (45) You gave Me no kiss; but she from when I entered did not stop kissing My feet. (46) You did not anoint Me with oil; but she anointed my feet with perfume. (47) For this thanks I say to you, her many sins have been forgiven, so she loved much, and to him who is forgiven little, loves little.’ (48) And He said to her, ‘Your sins have been forgiven.’ (49) And those who were reclining at the table with Him began to speak among themselves, ‘Who is this man who even forgives sins?’ (50) And He said to the woman, ‘Your faith has saved you, go in peace.’”

Outline:

The Setting, v.36.

The Incident of the Sinful Woman, vv.37-38.

The Response of the Pharisee, v.39.

The Response in Turn of Christ, vv.40-48.

Christ gets Simon’s attention, v.40.

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The answer of Simon and approval of Christ, v.43.

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II. Exposition.

The setting of this incident is given by Luke in verse one. “But one of the Pharisees asked Him that He might eat with him, and entering into the house of the Pharisee He sat down.”

Since the Sermon on the Mount, there has been:

The healing of the centurion’s servant.

The raising of the widow’s son at Nain.

The sermon on the fall of John the Baptist.

The woes upon Bethsaida and Chorazin and Capernaum, including the yoke of Christ.

So it cannot have been too long a time since that momentous presentation of the kingdom. Perhaps two or three weeks, perhaps a little more or less.

Having just given the rebellious Jews of Northern Galilee one more shot at responding to His kingdom offer, Christ finds Himself the guest of a Pharisee.

This is Simon, an unknown Pharisee, probably of Galilean origin. The invitation is likely in response to Christ’s woes upon the cities of Northern Galilee, and the offer of His kingdom yoke to those people. You could bet that the Pharisee has some kind of agenda.

The imperfect active verb EROTA indicates that this Pharisee was insistent about Christ being his guest at table.

TIS TON PHARISAION tells us that the Pharisee is unknown; that is the function of the indefinite pronoun TIS. Luke was unable to put a positive I.D. on the man even though he has a name: Simon. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus are the only other two Pharisees for whom we have names.

So Christ enters and sits down - there is no indication that the meal has even begun before what happens next.

Verses Thirty Seven and Thirty Eight record the actions of a certain sinful woman: “(37) And behold a sinful woman who was in the city, and... after being sure that He was reclining in the house of the Pharisee, after buying an alabaster jar of perfume (38) and after standing behind at the side of His feet, after crying - she began to wet His feet with tears and with the hair of her head kept on drying off and kissing His feet and anointing with the perfume.”

He sets it up so that the woman is in the same town, and she makes ready a list of things she must do to go see this Messiah.

The real drama lies in the tears of this woman, and Luke saves that for the end - because this is a truly remarkable woman, and a truly remarkable incident.

So there is a real sentence her that goes: “And behold a sinful woman who was in the city, and she began to wet His feet, etc.”

But in between the giving of her location and the depiction of her actions with Christ is her deliberations and actions and emotions. These are all portrayed by aorist participles in the Greek, which have been translated “after...”

Luke employs the imperative verb IDOU to catch the attention of his readers. It is translated ‘Behold...’

This woman is given the descriptive adjective HAMARTOLOS. She is a sinner. Well this is not just a ‘welcome to the club’ kind of sinfulness. We are all sinners, and Luke knows that. But she is a sinner in some more spectacular way.

The category of sin is tactfully and respectfully left indistinct by Luke, even though his record of

Simon’s words later in the passage gives a stronger clue.

Because of Simon’s leering portrayal in verse 39, it is apparent that this whole deal has something to do with immorality.

Immoral, yes; a prostitute maybe. But immorality is the category of sin that separates this woman from her society.

First, she makes sure that Christ is reclining at this Pharisee’s house.

This is indicated by the aorist participle EPIGNOUSA. EPIGINOSKO is a verb which means ‘full knowledge.’

Here, she makes sure that Christ is at the place where He is rumored to be. When Christ entered any place, rumors would fly and people were talking wherever He went.

Making sure would mean either she sent someone, or more likely she checked by herself.

The second thing she did was to buy an alabaster vial of perfume.

The aorist participle KOMISASA depicts her buying this vial. Apparently there was a source near the home of the Pharisee.

An alabaster jar was an expensive container of crystalline gypsum.

MUROU is perfume; and perfume in the ancient world had three different functions:

(1) Medicinal - as a function of hygiene, the perfumes of the ancient world were based in vegetable and animal fat. Because of the dry climate of the ancient near east, these perfumes were used as lotions to keep the skin and hair from becoming too dry.

(2) Cosmetics - the perfumes of the ancient world were used as deodorants, or at least as masks for body odors; also, certain perfumes were employed as mouthwashes. In burial the perfume had a cosmetic function in masking the smell of decay. Perfumes were employed in love-making, as an additional treat to the senses. The Song of Solomon confirms this several times. Perfume was also applied to clothes and even furniture.

(3) Religion - anointing and incense were a part of religion; in works, trying to please God with a

pleasant scent; in grace, representing the fragrance of righteousness going up to God.

So this sinful woman has a plan that includes expensive perfume; normally one would consider that she had an attempt at seduction on her mind. That she was going to give some sort of sensual temptation to our Lord.

So now she has apparently entered the house and is standing behind Christ and to His side. This description is given with the words: STASA OPISO PARA TOUS PODAS AUTOU.

STASA is the aorist participle from HISTEMI. It is translated, 'after standing'

The preposition OPISO places the woman behind Christ as He reclines; the additional preposition describes her as PARA, at His side. So if you can imagine Christ laying on His side, facing the low table of the Pharisee's house, and the woman behind Him at the side of His feet - TOUS PODAS AUTOU.

The final part of the setup comes from the aorist participle KLAIOUSA, which means to cry.

This verb KLAIO is fairly equivalent to our 'crying,' and it indicates some vocalization of grief or emotion, but not to the point of ecstatic wailing.

This came with tears, and this woman finds herself full of emotion.

And there is more than one possibility for her tears. Either:

She is a sinner in the presence of righteousness, and she has found herself helpless; or:

She is a sinner who has found forgiveness, and these are tears of thankfulness.

Verse 47 answers the query: "...her many sins have been forgiven, so she loved much."

This woman is shedding tears of thankfulness. At some time in the past, she has realized the atoning work that this Messiah will do, and she believed.

Verse 50 confirms that she has already believed: "Your faith has saved you, go in peace."

So here is a premeditated act of worship from a woman who is a new believer.

But Luke still classifies her as a sinful woman. This also can have two possibilities.

(1) That she is still functioning under her sin nature, or:

(2) That the classification is difficult to shake.

But she is here at least in fellowship to give these acts of legitimate thanksgiving to Christ, so it is likely the latter. Luke gives the designation so that we can understand the response of the Pharisee.

10. The woman began to wet His feet - with the tears of her crying.

TOIS DAKRUSIN more properly goes with the sentence which follows, so that it should be 'she began to wet His feet with tears.'

She would only do this in order to wash the feet of our Lord.

Foot washing was a common thing in the ancient near east, thanks to the custom of wearing sandals, and the general dustiness of the land.

The feet were most often the dirtiest part of the body due to this, and so it was common courtesy to provide for the washing of the feet.

It would also become a metaphor for confession and forgiveness. When Christ washes the feet of His disciples in John 13, He teaches them something very important about the doctrine of fellowship, and it is on account of the actions of this woman that He does so.

11. Next there are three verbs in the imperfect tense; the imperfect tense portrays continuous action in the past.

EXEMASSEN means to wipe. She wiped His feet with the hair of her head. The idea is that she is crying continuously, and wiping continuously. There was no need for water.

KATEPHILEI means to kiss. She not only wiped His feet, but kissed them as well. This represents great humility indeed.

ELEIPHEN means to anoint. She was continuously anointing Christ's feet with the MURON, perfuming them rubbing them smooth. This is the medicinal function of this oily perfume.

This woman is performing a most humble service for our Lord, and doing it in such as way as to

demonstrate her thankfulness for what He will do for her.

She understands that she is forgiven; and she has had faith in the atoning work of the Messiah, yet to be done.

She knows of the suffering Messiah of Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53. She knows that this man will suffer greatly on her behalf, and that she has a great debt that she can never repay. Isaiah 53 defines what the Messiah will do regarding sin; Psalm 22 defines the how.

Since she has already believed and received forgiveness, the woman is not attempting to propagate some system of works onto Christ.

And these things that she does are humble works; they are stunning in that regard. Washing someone else's feet is the work of a slave.

This went on for some time, and Christ made no attempt to stop this woman from her efforts. And so Simon the Pharisee could contain himself no longer.

The thirty ninth verse contains that comment: "And seeing this, the Pharisee who invited Him spoke to Himself, saying, 'If this man were a prophet, he would have known all along time who and what kind this woman is who touches Him, that she is a sinner.'

Simon the Pharisee speaks to himself, EIPEN EN HEAUTO. Now, he still spoke out loud, but his comment was directed at himself.

The comment itself is a leering one:

The conditional particle EI functions here to introduce the Pharisee's judgmental attitude against Christ.

This is a perfect example of a second class condition, which is the contrary to fact conditional sentence in the Greek.

So the protasis is "If this man were a prophet." But it assumes that this is untrue. Although we know Christ is a prophet, the Pharisee does not think so.

Now there is more. The Pharisee apparently invited Christ into his house to test whether he was a prophet. But this is bogus in itself, for our Lord is the Messiah, and therefore as John the Baptist said, He is much more than a prophet.

The apodosis, or second half of the conditional sentence tells us why Simon has judged harshly against Jesus.

He would have known - EGINOSKEN, the imperfect active indicative of GINOSKO. Really, he would have known all along.

He would have known all along TIS KAI POTAPE HE GUNE HETIS HAPTETAI AUTOU. Who and what kind the woman who touches Him.

(1) POTAPE is a relative pronoun of quality: it denotes usually good quality, but here undermines the morality of this woman.

(2) HAPTETAI is to touch, but it is a sensual word. It means to touch a flint so as to make a spark. To touch fire to kindling in order to bring a flame to light. In the world of touching, it means to touch the skin in a sensual manner.

So Simon identifies this woman as a sinner, and assumes that in spite of all the crying and tears she is touching Christ so as to bring about arousal.

And looking at Christ, he has to wonder why Christ has not brought this supposedly erotic encounter to a halt; so all this goes through the mind of this Pharisee as he witnesses one of the most tender moments in the life of Christ.

And so in the fortieth verse, Christ must reply to this horrible and callused accusation: " And after formulating an answer, Jesus said to him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' And he replied, 'Teacher, speak.'"

The aorist participle APOKRITHEIS shows that Christ thought about this callused comment of Simon's. 'After formulating an answer.'

And then He speaks - I have something to say to you. Simon must be a brave man, a Pharisee used to getting his way in debate, and confident of his judgment even now, for he replies, 'Teacher, speak.'

He employs the term of respect to Christ, DIDASKALE. RABBI in the Hebrew. Although he has graded Christ down from Messiah to prophet, and then again from prophet to teacher, the Pharisee still has a kind of respect for Jesus.

The scathing statement of Christ comes out over the next several verses. First is a short parable:

“(41) There were two debtors for a certain moneylender, one who owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. (42) Not being able to pay him back, he gave grace to them both. Therefore who of them loved him more?”

This parable is designed to teach Simon a principle that only a Pharisee could appreciate.

A Pharisee would not consider himself much of a sinner, since all of his efforts were funneled into upholding the Law of Moses.

The debtor who owed five hundred denarii (a denarius was a day’s wage) would be the sinful woman in their presence.

The debtor who owed just fifty denarii would be Simon the Pharisee.

God is the moneylender. Neither debtor is able to pay the debt, but one has a greater debt than the other.

The word translated ‘forgave in the NASB is actually ECHARISATO - to ‘give grace.’ This parable definitely stays faithful to the doctrine of total depravity. Neither is able to pay the moneylender, so in one sense it doesn’t matter what the debts are. All we are like sheep who have gone astray... All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God!

But the sinner with the greater debt likely has an even great appreciation for the gracious attitude of the moneylender.

And this is the woman who is before them now. She had a great debt of the soul to pay to this man before her, and she knew the terrible price He would pay for her debt.

The question at the end is directed toward Simon.

Simon’s answer comes in verse 43: “After formulating an answer, Simon said, ‘I take it that the one to whom he forgave more.’ And He said to him, ‘You judge rightly.’”

The answer may be a little bit defensive, because the verb HUPOLAMBANO means ‘I take it...’ This is not unlike our English idiom.

When someone gives a real obvious hint like holding out the car keys before you and jingling them, you often would say: “I take it that you want me to start the car.”

So Simon provides the obvious answer - and Christ says simply: ‘You judge rightly.’ There is kind of a laconic phrasing to Christ’s summary, because He is just about to lambaste this man with a barrage of comments on his hospitality.

And even though what is to follow compares the man’s hospitality with that of the sinful woman’s, it is really about something else.

It is going to be: “Here you are judging this woman and judging Me at the same time, but I want you to know that she has the greater love for God!”

“(44) And after turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, ‘See this woman? I entered into your house, you gave me no water for my feet! But she wet my feet with tears, and wiped them with her hair. (45) You gave Me no kiss; but she from when I entered did not stop kissing My feet. (46) You did not anoint Me with oil; but she anointed my feet with perfume.’”

The aorist participle STRAPHEIS describes to us that Christ rolled over, away from the table and toward the woman. And while Christ is turned toward the woman, He speaks to Simon.

Then Christ demonstrates verbally toward the woman; perhaps there is a gesture as well. “See this woman?”

The woman has done three things that Simon has not; offered three courtesies that this high-falutin’ religious official has not. Christ lists them as an imprecation against the courtesy of this judgmental man, and to teach him the meaning of forgiveness.

The sinful woman has accepted Christ with accuracy; the Pharisee has taken Christ down two notches to ‘teacher.’ He is the Messiah, greater than a prophet. And He is a prophet, greater than any teacher.

Take this in the right way, but you must always accept God for Who He is. The woman had an accurate take on the Messiah, especially the suffering Messiah.

God is perfect and infinite; He is living and three persons. God is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent. He has perfect righteousness and

love; perfect grace and order; perfect willpower and He never changes; He has perfect integrity of communication.

And Christ was and is God. He is not just any prophet; and certainly not just any teacher. He is more than a teacher or a prophet, for He is the Son of God and Savior of the world; King of kings and Lord of lords. And all of His words are Wisdom.

By showing Christ this great courtesy, the sinful woman has loved Christ with accuracy. And for this, Christ lauds her as someone who truly loves Him. And this is, of course, the plan of God for all sentient creatures.

The greatest commandment is to love God with everything that you have; and this woman fulfilled that ideal magnificently - adulteress, prostitute, or whatever.

10. In Christ, it does not ever matter what you have been; it matters what He is. Christianity is not subjective, but objective - it concentrates on God. It is worship with accuracy and even with detail.

11. Now this woman had no great complex of doctrine in her soul, either. She was doing this humble service for Christ because that is what she had, and she is giving her widow's mite in a way.

12. Her small offering is given in love and in understanding the doctrine of forgiveness; and this small act is also a legitimate offering of worship. This action, these tears - they are as worshipful as any great hymn or prayer of doctrine.

13. Her capacity for worship was indeed limited, but at least she is exhibiting a vitality based on her understanding of one thing. And that is good.

14. This demonstrates the value and importance of having a vital spiritual life before God, no matter what doctrinal resources you might have.

15. This Pharisee, Simon by name, had failed to pay even the slightest respect to Christ - he had failed to give him even the commonest courtesy of the day.

16. It is as though Christ were in the same class as this woman, at least to Simon. But even if a prostitute were in your house (for some legitimate reason), you would still show her some small form of courtesy.

17. But Simon treats Christ with the respect that he would treat a salesman or a telemarketer or even a prostitute. Really, with no respect at all.

18. And here this woman gives Christ courtesy and it is not even her house! She walks in and realizes that a discourtesy has been done to her savior, and so she takes care of it without even a glance at the master of the house. She does Simon's job in an utterly humble way, and now he treats her like this.

Verses Forty Seven and Forty Eight turn the attention of the narrative back to the sinful woman. "(47) About which grace I say to you, her many sins have been forgiven, so she loved much, and to him who is forgiven little, loves little." (48) And He said to her, 'Your sins have been forgiven.'"

The first phrase of verse 47 is HOU CHARIN LEGO SOI.

The relative pronoun HOU picks up something that has been previously mentioned and brings it forward so that it is related to the current sentence. Here it is translated 'about which...'

The noun CHARIN is in the accusative case, and it completes the thought of the relative pronoun.

(1) This is the grace of God, as it applied to the woman.

(2) It is the salvation grace of the cross of Jesus Christ.

And then the verb LEGO and pronoun object SOI finish it off, "I say to you."

The second phrase is APHEONTAI HAI HAMARTIAI AUTES HAI POLLAI.

The most important part of the phrase is the verb, which is first.

(1) It is the perfect passive indicative verb meaning to 'forgive.' But here understand the grammar of grace.

(2) The perfect tense gives the portrayal of an action that was accomplished in the past, with lasting results - sometimes even everlasting results.

(a) The sins of the woman are forgiven. In fact, they are forgiven forever, due to the work of Christ.

(b) The saving nature of Christ's substitutionary death accomplishes forgiveness once for all. It is a perfect and lasting work.

(3) The passive voice indicates that the subject does not produce, but rather receives the action of the verb. Her sins were forgiven by God; she did not produce the forgiveness by herself.

(4) The indicative tells us that this is an absolute reality. It is not hypothetical in any sense. The forgiveness is real.

The rest of it is just the subject of the forgiveness: her many sins. Sins are forgiven.

The conjunction HOTI has an unusual connotation here, and that is result.

The result of the forgiveness of her many sins was her great love.

The verb EGAPESEN with the adjective POLU portrays that very thing.

And this is a gnomic aorist, of sorts, for it gives us a general principle about life: that if you are a spectacular sinner, it is likely that your love for God will be much as well.

It is interesting that Luke employs AGAPAO here, the verb which describes Christian virtue love. This is either love expressed toward virtue, or love expressed virtuously toward that which is not virtuous.

And here is a principle: that the more serious sinners of this world owe a greater debt to God, and when they realize the forgiving of that debt they find it easier to love Him.

The greater the debt, the greater the love is the principle.

This implies that if you have a lesser debt, then it is more difficult for you to love God. But not impossible!

How interesting that the less you have sinned, the more difficult it is for you to love God.

For the requirement for all of us is that we love God with everything that we have, and this is a requirement for all of us. It is just that it is harder for those with a better track record to love God.

So there is an advantage to being a prolific and spectacular sinner. But of course there is no way to get ahead on this if you are already a believer.

Romans 6:1-2 squashes this bug of an idea before it gets out of hand: "(1) What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? (2) May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?"

In contrast to this, the mundane and part-time sinner does not usually love as much. This portrays a general trend, but of course even the mundane sinner can come to love God just as much as the more achievement oriented one.

The Pharisee is certainly the one here who does not love much at all, as evidenced by his bypass of the simplest conventions of courtesy toward Christ.

He loves Christ no more than he would love the worst of visitors in his house. Christ is not the Messiah to him; He is not even a prophet.

Then Christ gives a reminder to the woman: APHEONTAI SOU HAI HAMARTIAI.

Again the perfect passive indicative verb indicates the final nature of the woman's forgiveness.

That final forgiveness was based on the integrity of God - it was based on the fact that God was good for His word, and that Christ would go to that cross and die for our sins.

Christ had not died yet, but God would be good for His word about the remission of our sins.

This stands as a reminder to her, even though she was already a believer. Remember, this woman walked into this house a believer, and the washing of Christ's feet represented her expression of love for that forgiveness.

So Christ reminds her that her sins have been forgiven - which is important for any believer in Christ to remember, because you are not done sinning just yet, just because you are a Christian.

This reminder is motivational in two ways.

(1) First, as a reminder to resist temptation - by the love of God.

(2) And second, as a reminder to confess - also by the love of God.

"(49) And those who were reclining at the table with Him began to speak among themselves, 'Who is this man who even forgives sins?'"

The scene shifts briefly back to the men around the table. There are more people at this gathering than just Simon and Christ.

As such, these are likely all Pharisees. This is after Christ has upbraided Simon for his lack of love and lack of courtesy.

This reproof passes through them like a mist, and they hardly notice it. For they hear one thing - that Christ forgives the woman's sins.

In their accurate picture of God, they know that only God can forgive sins. Well, they see this man here before them, passing along the forgiveness of sins to this sinful woman, and they cannot stand it.

For this man cannot be man and God at the same time - that is blasphemy!

So they ignored the fact that Christ had just given reproof to them - they ignored His legitimate authority over them and bickered about a point of theology that they should have known.

They had conditioned themselves to only look for the Messiah that fit their criteria. And Christ's kingdom was far from their own ideals.

So it is not that a man could not be God at all. These Pharisees understood the doctrine of the Messiah well enough.

But rather, it is that this man could not be the Messiah, and so He is a blasphemer.

10. And so this is also a lesson that we can learn - to never impute our preconceived ideas into what Scripture has to say - to let the words and the passages speak for themselves.

11. These Pharisees were indeed practicing EISEGESIS, the imputation of prejudice into interpretation.

12. They interpreted the life of Christ according to their preconceived notion of what the Messiah would be like. As a result, they missed Him and His benefits completely.

13. We must always accept God as He is, not as we want Him to be; we must always accept Scripture as it is, not as we want it to be.

“(50) And He said to the woman, ‘Your faith has saved you, go in peace.’”

Christ ends this incident with most appropriate reply of all. It is intended as a contrast to the statement of the Pharisees.

The personal pronoun SOU tells all; it is possessive, in the genitive case. It shows that the faith belonged to her, and to her alone.

The Pharisees had no faith in God or Scripture. Their primary faith was in themselves.

The woman could go in peace, knowing that her faith had a permanent result of salvation. The perfect tense verb SESOKEN establishes this clearly.

The final command is for the woman to go in peace, POREUOU EIS EIRENEN.

There may be a little adjustment we need to make on this, on account of the preposition EIS.

This preposition shows more of an entrance into a state than a status quo.

The verb is a command that shows the earnest desire of Christ - it is a present imperative.

The present imperative concentrates on a command that is to begin right away and continue indefinitely.

So this woman is to go and keep on going in peace. Therefore the command to ‘go’ is closer to ‘live.’

‘Live always in peace’ would be a fair rendition of this command.

The peace here is most likely a reference to the reconciliation unto God that this woman has most recently experienced. This would be a command to perpetuate the reconciliation by staying in fellowship with God.

This is accomplished naturally through the resistance to temptation, and the confession of sin when failure is encountered.

This is remarkably similar to Romans 5:1: “Therefore having been justified from faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...”

There is a pretty good chance that Paul had heard of this woman, and had this incident in mind when he wrote those important words.

III. A Footnote on Footwashing: John Chapter 13.

Verse One: “Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.”

This is the introduction to the Last Supper, according to John’s account. He provides invaluable information that none of the other gospels contain, including this ceremony, and a very long speech.

The introduction to this foot washing is that Christ knew that He was going to die, and that He loved His own disciples very much. In fact, this foot washing would be a demonstration that Christ loved them to the end.

Verses Two through Four: “(2) During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him, (3) Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, (4) got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself.”

The wheels were turning for the betrayal of our Lord. Judas, under the demon influence of Satan himself is going to betray Him at any time.

Jesus knew that the Father had given all things into His hands, operated calmly and deliberately in this desperate hour.

God had given Him everything - all authority and power to carry out His mission on earth to the last detail.

This is indeed one of the last details before Christ’s return to the Father. He has this ceremony, the last few words to say to the twelve, and again to pray with the three, and then to His duty.

So this is important; and in His mind is a certain woman, a sinner full of love for Him.

Verse Five: “Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.”

This simple ritual, this courtesy done by Christ to His disciples, was the work of a servant or even of a slave.

It must have caught them by surprise, but they were somewhat conditioned to follow His leadership, and not to question what He did. He was, after all, the Messiah.

Christ did not care at all about the dirt and stink on the feet of His disciples. He did not care whether He dirtied His hands by all of that...

Verses Six through Eleven: “(6) So he came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, ‘Lord, do You wash my feet?’ (7) Jesus answered and said to him, ‘What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter.’ (8) Peter said to Him, ‘Never shall You wash my feet!’ Jesus answered him, ‘If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.’ (9) Simon Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head.’ (10) Jesus said to him, ‘He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.’ (11) For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, ‘Not all of you are clean.’”

The response of Simon Peter is interesting, because he expects an honest answer. He anticipates neither a yes nor a no. It is a basic Greek question.

Simon Peter is befuddled by this behavior of Christ’s!

So Christ gives Simon an honest answer: that he cannot know now what Christ is doing, but soon it will become apparent.

This foot washing is meant to precede Christ’s work at the cross. Interesting and intriguing, isn’t it?

With all the ballyhoo about the communion ritual, this is one that is never talked about, and never practiced hardly at all. Yet this is on that night that Christ is betrayed, it has a connection with the cross, and it is passed on by Christ as a command. Interesting indeed.

Inexplicably Peter reacts in an emotional way against the action of Christ. Perhaps the way that Christ said META TAUTA that Peter understood it to be the death that Christ had foretold in Matthew 16:21 and many other places.

Peter had a history of wanting to prevent the death of Christ, and in his ignorance, he did not

understand or refused to understand the necessity of the atonement.

Christ's response to this outburst is concise. Taking part in this footwashing is tantamount to partnership with Christ.

Christ meant this ritual to prepare them for the events of the next day.

10. And then again Peter errs. He goes overboard completely and wants a bath from head to toe from Christ. He was going to miss the significance of the ritual.

11. This ritual was significant in its procedure; it was just the footwashing that was important as a representation of something that was about to occur.

12. The bath would be a representation of salvation; the footwashing a ritual about forgiveness after salvation.

13. Christ wants to highlight post-salvation forgiveness as a precursor to the cross, so that His disciples will understand the necessity of forgiving one another, and that the possibility of that comes from the cross.

14. Indeed, this foot-washing has become a new hand-washing with a twist.

The ritual of hand-washing had been around since the advent of the tabernacle, at least.

At the entrance to the holy place, there stood a copper laver, where the priests would wash their hands.

(1) The copper was highly polished, so that when the priests bent over to wash their hands, they would see their own image there.

(2) This was intended to portray and even initiate self-examination.

(3) So this laver for hand-washing was a physical metaphor for the confession of sin unto God.

This foot-washing of Christ's is similar to an extent. It represents not the vertical confession of hand washing, but rather the horizontal confession of relationships between men.

Christ says that a bath is not necessary; this does not represent salvation. Nor does it represent confession. Rather, it represents forgiveness between men.

But note this detail.

(1) Christ washes His disciples feet to show that He has forgiven them.

(2) It was the reverse with the sinful woman of Luke chapter seven. She washed Christ's feet as a recognition of His atoning work.

(3) Christ wants His disciples to perpetuate this practice so that they will forgive one another based on His work.

(4) But this right here represents forgiveness of post-salvation sin. Post salvation sin was paid for on the cross, just as all pre-salvation sin.

(5) The unlimited atonement extends to our Christian future as much it extends backward to our non-Christian past.

(6) All of it must be forgiven, and that is the nature of unlimited atonement.

(7) Judas is not a believer. Christ knows this. So Judas requires something greater than just the basic forgiveness of Christian sin.

Verses Twelve through Seventeen: "(12) So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? (13) You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. (14) If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. (15) For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. (16) Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. (17) If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.'"

Now finished with this ritual work, Christ settles in to explain.

He prompts them to think about what He has just done - He wants them to think it through, and asking questions is a great way to do that.

Then Christ goes on to answer His own question, in a roundabout way. He gets them to affirm His authority, and then to realize that He has led them by example. If I did this to you, then you should do it for one another.

Now you should all recognize that this ritual never really caught on during apostolic times.

This brings us to a conclusion: that the disciples never understood the ritual to be a command, but rather the reality behind the ritual as a necessity.

And the reality is to forgive the sins of others, as Christ has already forgiven them.

We now have this responsibility to imitate the underlying reality of the ritual.

From time to time we have to wash the feet of other people. That is, we have to come into contact with their dirt and grime that they pick up from walking around in the devil's world.

And it is our responsibility to wash that grime away. It is interesting that the metaphor has us doing the cleaning. In reality, Christ has done that completely through the cross.

But it is a good metaphor in that it has us participating in a dirty and unpleasant job. No one wants to clean up after the sinful spree of another. The fact of the matter is that the responsibility to do so remains.

But listen: the sins of others are not yours to bear. Cleaning their feet is a responsibility and a necessity because of the damage that may result to you and to the relationship if you perpetuate a grudge.

Because Christ has already borne our sins on the cross, we do not have to carry the debt of the sins of others. He has paid the price, and it is not really our debt at all. The sooner the forgiveness is given, the sooner we can be free from carrying the sin of another.

But of course there is a difficulty in this. What if the other person will not admit their wrongdoing? What if they rationalize their behavior, and justify it before you. How then can you forgive?

First, you must always be ready to forgive, as God is ready to forgive every unbeliever. You can do so because Christ has already died for those sins. Your readiness should never grow stale for that very reason.

Second, you must always keep the line of communication open - you should always be able to greet them with a clear conscience so that the issue of their sin may not remain a stumbling block.

Third, you must continue to pray for them, especially since this will prevent you from entering into judgment about the situation.

Fourth, the maintenance of your spiritual momentum is the only vindication you will ever need. Do not be self-righteous or haughty about this, but listen... this refutes any accusation that might be made against your character. Have the confidence of being right before God, and you will not worry at all about the other side.

These things all add up to washing someone else's feet. And it is dirty work, but if it results in the fulfillment of Romans 12:17-18, it is a good work indeed. "(17) Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. (18) If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men."

IV. The Attitude of Christ toward the Pharisees.

Our Lord comes down hard on Simon and his friends around the table.

But always Christ concentrates their attention on the truth. He does not let them get away with a single falsehood.

When you find yourself among the Pharisees of this time, you yourself do the same.

And if necessary, defend the honor of others right in front of them. There is nothing more effective than that.

The Pharisees of this world are almost always hypocrites, and that hypocrisy is an easy thing to find and point out to them.

But you must never cast a blanket judgment over them. Christ was there because He felt He could help them realize what was best for them. He gave them a shot at repentance, even though they were terribly rude to Him.

The Women's Auxiliary

The Women's Auxiliary

The Translation, Luke 8:1-3: "(1) And it came about in the proper order of things, and He kept on going around each city and village, preaching and evangelizing the kingdom of God and the twelve with Him. (2) And some women who had been healed from evil spirits and weaknesses, Mary, the one called Magdalene, from who seven demons

were cast out, (3) and Joanna wife of Chouza steward of Herod and Susanna and many others, who were continuously serving them from their own private means.”

I. The Exposition.

A. The first sentence is noteworthy in the Greek, because it employs the adverb KATHEXES. It denotes a sequence of events in a logical and proper order.

1. So whatever Luke is about to introduce here, it has a certain proper order following from the incident with the sinful woman at the house of Simon the Pharisee.

2. Since this passage has much to do with women, and the one preceding does as well, we can conclude that the women’s auxiliary to the disciples sprang from the interaction with the unnamed woman of Luke seven.

3. The verb EGENETO is the aorist indicative of GINOMAI. This verb is unique in that it portrays something coming into being.

- a. It has the connotation of an appearance out of nowhere, or from no discernible quarter.
- b. It has the idea of the arrival of something truly new, whether just in one locality, or totally new in the whole world.
- c. The idea of a woman’s auxiliary was certainly nothing new, not even in the ancient world.
- d. But Luke wants us to know of its spontaneous uprising. One day there was no auxiliary, and the next there was. It came about of its own accord.

4. Well actually it came about due to the initiative of some fantastic woman believers.

5. But the point is that Christ did not organize this; He did not form a committee for the formation of a woman’s auxiliary.

6. One or several women took note of some of the logistical needs that existed for Christ and His disciples, and they began to fill them.

7. This came about in the proper order of things because of Christ’s treatment of the sinful woman. He not only treated her well, but He also exalted her virtues in front of several Pharisees.

8. The Pharisees were the kind of men who used to thank God they were not born women. They

held women in no particular esteem, and often mistreated them. In short, they were quite gender-prejudiced.

9. Now the women of Galilee had a champion, and His name was Jesus Christ.

10. In particular note that the sinful women saw a logistical need for Christ and deliberately went about taking care of that humble service of washing His feet.

11. It must have been her example that inspired the other women to participate.

12. Christ kept on going around to the cities and villages. This comes from the imperfect indicative of DIODEUO. That imperfect tense describes continuous past action.

13. Two participles put forth the nature of His travels:

- a. He was preaching, KERUSSON, and evangelizing, EUAGGELIZOMENOS.
- b. Specifically, He was preaching and evangelizing the kingdom of God.
- c. These combine to tell us that he was doing the work of an itinerant minister through these towns. He was evangelizing, so that some might enter the kingdom of God; He was preaching, so that those who already resided there might gain and be built up.

14. The twelve were with Him, ostensibly learning and helping with the work.

B. In the next two verses, Luke names a few members of the women’s auxiliary, and just what they were doing, and how: “(2) And some women who had been healed from evil spirits and weaknesses, Mary, the one called Magdalene, from who seven demons were cast out, (3) and Joanna wife of Chouza steward of Herod and Susanna and many others, who were continuously serving them from their own private means.”

1. Verse two begins with a general category of women - those who had been healed from evil spirits and weaknesses.

a. The periphrastic construction reveals the radical healing work of Christ.

(1) This here is the pluperfect periphrastic, which contains the imperfect of the verb EIMI and the

perfect tense of the participle
TETHERAPEUMENAI.

(2) This is a very strong way to emphasize perfective action. These healings and exorcisms were done in a permanent fashion.

b. Two categories of women received healing: those with demons, and those with weaknesses - probably physical weaknesses.

2. The first woman is Maria, the one called Magdalene. Christ had cast seven demons from her.

a. This woman had endured much misery before she met Christ and believed.

(1) She must have reached the pinnacle of unhappiness and addiction in order to allow the demon possession.

(2) And the demon possession suppressed her own control, so that her actions doubtless became worse.

(3) To those on the outside, she had most likely the appearance of insanity; especially with so many different expressions of personality.

b. But one day she had the demons cast from her, and she believed, so that they could not re-enter.

c. She must have wondered just what to do for this man who had done so much for her, and now in a response of love, she reaches out to provide logistics.

d. But she is much more than just a logistical auxiliary; she followed Him even unto Jerusalem, into the great danger of the last week of His life, Matthew 27:55.

e. And when Christ's disciples had fled, Mary followed Christ to His cross, Mark 15:40.

f. After He had died, she still did not think her service to Him was complete, for she watched to see where He would be buried, Mark 15:47.

g. She was among the first to go to the tomb on resurrection day, Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1. And when she had seen the empty tomb, she ran to tell Peter and John, John 20:2.

h. She returned to the tomb, and there she saw the risen Lord. Her faithfulness was rewarded with this great distinction.

i. Then Christ commands her to go tell His disciples that He would ascend into heaven. She said to them, "I have seen the Lord." John 20:17.

3. Joanna wife of Chouza steward of Herod is the second; she comes from a very distinguished family of servants - they were servants to Herod.

a. Now Joanna must indeed have been an outcast among the Jewish women of her day, for Herod himself was greatly despised.

b. Therefore it is ironic that she should find the true Messiah and follow Him. For while all the rest of the Jews were involved in counterproductive political activism, she found the only way to have a great effect.

c. She is a classic invisible hero - the mouse in the palace that no one knows, and yet she has more impact than anyone.

d. And just how did the gospel get to this Joanna? Think. It is John the Baptist who was imprisoned by Herod, and the messengers of John who had gone back and forth to Christ. Somewhere in all of that she received the gospel. Perhaps she had even heard the word from John himself.

e. And this Joanna would have been wealthy indeed.

f. And needless to say, she went from a horrid boss to the best boss in history. It was a really good career move for her.

g. She was present when they laid the body of Christ in the tomb, Luke 23:55, and was thus among those who were bringing the spices for the wrapping of the corpse, and told the disciples of the empty tomb, Luke 23:56-24:10.

4. The third mentioned by name is a certain Susanna.

a. She is not found elsewhere in the gospels, even though she was well enough known at the time of Luke's writing to simply mention her name and have confidence that the readers would know of her.

b. Since she is not mentioned elsewhere, we can have just a little conjecture. Her reputation as a good person must have continued beyond the time of Christ's life and into the church. Perhaps she

was such a solid ecclesiastical citizen that she was well known even thirty years later.

5. Many other women were there, although they are not mentioned by name.
6. These and the many others were continuously serving Christ and the disciples. The verb is DIEKONOUN. This is the imperfect tense from DIAKONOO. It is from the noun form of this verb that we get our word for deacon.
7. These women were serving as deacons - not in the church ecclesiastical sense, but rather in the sense that this Joanna would be familiar with as a

steward of the house of Herod. They were continuously taking care of the logistical details of Christ's travelling band.

8. This they accomplished EK TON HUPARCHONTON AUTAIS.

- a. This is translated, 'from their own means.'
 - b. So these women did what they could from their own private savings and resources of various kinds, so that the ministry could continue.
 - c. They found a legitimate niche in the ministry, and away they went.
-