

## **Come with sin + Go in Peace**

‡ **What kind of sinner are you? (vv.36-39)**

‡ **How deep is your love? (vv.40-50)**

In the Name of Jesus, who forgives and comforts every sinner, dear fellow forgiven:

Some of Jesus' greatest lessons were not taught at temple or synagogue. Jesus was a rabbi, a teacher, but He did not act the way everyone expected he should. He did not sit in a study reading ancient scrolls. Kings' palaces or parties for the rich and famous did not occupy His time. When He taught in the synagogue, He was often rejected by the religious authorities and all His townsfolk relatives in Nazareth.

Instead you find Jesus on the shores of the Sea of Galilee calling His first disciples. And then He was in one of the towns not just healing a man with leprosy. When the leper asked, "**Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean,**" Jesus reached out and touched him: "**I am willing. Be clean!**"

There was a paralyzed man let down through the roof of a crowded house. Before healing him Jesus said, "**Friend, your sins are forgiven.**" Then He told the man to get up and walk. And he did.

Jesus caught harsh criticism from the religious elite when he called a despised tax collector named Levi (Matthew) to "**Follow me.**" Jesus went to dinner with Levi and his friends. The separated, holy ones, **Pharisees and teachers of the law** demanded, "**Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and 'sinners'?**" Jesus' classic reply still pierces our souls: "**It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**" Can you hear Jesus calling you?

‡ **What kind of sinner are you? (vv.36-39)**

Recently someone was telling me about a Caribbean island nation where everyone is wealthy. Their relative went there to work as a nanny and discovered a fertile mission. There were things the really rich needed to talk about, but were afraid to admit weakness among their friends. Apparently, they could open up to the help. It is truly remarkable how people opened up to Jesus.

Could that be one reason why Jesus accepted so many dinner invitations? This one was really unique. First, a Pharisee invited Jesus. Pharisees felt they had a monopoly on holiness because of their special rules and self-chosen good works. Surely they would earn a special place in God's heaven, wouldn't they? Jesus kept telling them, "No!" Simon Pharisee obviously didn't like Jesus. He skipped all the normal ways of welcoming his guest. Maybe, as on a former occasion (Luke 6:7), this Pharisee was just watching Jesus for a reason to accuse Him publicly and discredit Him. He soon got his chance.

Remember they did not sit, but reclined at the table with feet stretching away. And houses apparently were open enough for someone to just walk in. But no one expected this woman. Everyone knew what an immoral life she had led. They must have gasped just to see her enter the Pharisees house. She comes in crying, carrying a cream colored alabaster jar used for expensive perfume. Her tears are wetting Jesus' feet. She's wiping with her hair. She breaks the bottle open at the neck and pours the fragrant perfume on Jesus' feet. Women weren't even allowed to talk to men not married or related to them. How disgraceful! The Pharisee said to himself, "This man can't be a prophet or he would not let a woman like her carry on like that. What a shame!"

And certainly it was, but not the way the Pharisee thought. If asked, **What kind of sinner are you?** he would say, "For sure, not like her!" But Jesus will point out several ways the Pharisee failed to

practice simple hospitality to welcome his guest to dinner. Water for his feet, a kiss (our handshake), some soothing oil for his head – Simon the Pharisee missed all of these. The shame was really on him.

This lesson taught at the dinner table is that everyone, no matter how self-righteous they may feel about themselves, everyone is a sinner even for failures to show hospitality. The same Lord God who says, *“You shall not murder...steal...commit adultery...slander...or covet...,”* also commands, *“Practice hospitality.”* Along with that, *“Share with God’s people who are in need.”* (Romans 12:13 NIV84)

So right there at the Pharisee’s house, it’s a fair question. You are a sinner, but, **What kind of sinner are you?** Are you a sinner who comes humbly, grieving for your sins and certain you don’t deserve to be in the presence of the holy God? Or are you a sinner who looks down on everyone else as if they must be worse than you just because...? There are churchman sinners like King David who thought he got away with his sins of adultery and murder, then maybe once discovered might fear he was too sinful to be forgiven by God. (2 Samuel 11:26 – 12:15) There are church leaders like Peter the Apostle who did not think he was sinning until Paul pointed out his hypocrisy. (Galatians 2:11-21) And there are sinners like Paul the Apostle who considered himself *“a wretched man”* (Romans 7:24) David, Peter, Paul, and this sinful woman all knew what we and this Pharisee need to learn. Can you hear Jesus asking?

### † How deep is your love? (vv.40-50)

Christian family counselor Gary Smalley called it an “emotional word picture.” That’s what Nathan the prophet used to help David see his sin. In our First Lesson (2 Samuel 11:26 – 12:15) a rich man stole his poor neighbor’s only lamb to slaughter for a guest. As a former shepherd, now the king, David angrily pronounced the death sentence, only to hear Nathan say, *“You are the man!”* David took the only wife of one of his best soldiers, then had him killed in battle to cover it up. *“You are the man!”*

Now Jesus uses an “emotional word picture” sure to catch the heart of Simon and any red blooded CPA or banker. See how Jesus grabs his attention? *“Simon, I have something to tell you.” “Tell me, teacher.” “Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?” Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled.” “You have judged correctly,” Jesus said.*

To wire this lesson to Simon’s heart Jesus turns to the woman and points out how she has surpassed the host Pharisee by her emotional show of gratitude. It’s not her love that won God’s forgiveness. But her actions certainly gave evidence of grateful love deep in her heart. She literally didn’t care what anyone thought or how she looked. And she spared no expense. Against all cultural etiquette she came publicly to pour expensive perfume on Jesus’ feet, wash them with her tears and dry them with her hair. She had been forgiven so very, much. But Simon felt little guilt and little love.

**How deep is your love** as you come to God? Do we think we have our life all together like Simon the Pharisee? If there’s not much for God to forgive in us, there will never be much love from us to God either. But if we come with clearer eyes, deeply conscious of our guilt before God, then we will be deeply grateful to hear the Pastor say in Jesus’ name: *“Your sins are forgiven,”* and hear our fellow Christians seal that in heaven as Jesus assures, by saying, *“Amen.”*

For all who come confessing, Jesus has such a sweet, simple sendoff: *“Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”* God’s *peace* helped David say, *“I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.”* (Psalm 4:8 NIV84) It guards your heart and mind from foolish fears and crazy schemes so life can be a glorious adventure with God. God’s *“peace”* stirs the desire to come when God calls, to gladly obey His commands. When God tells to me, *“Bring an offering and come into his presence”* (1 Chronicles 16:29), I delight to give generously like Him. **How deep is your love?** Not even the religious elite could stop this sinful-forgiven woman from showing her love for Jesus. Then you know **your love is deep** and real. It needs to get out. So deeply loved by God...so much love to give! Amen.

For the study behind this sermon or for copies email [m.cordes@comast.net](mailto:m.cordes@comast.net) .  
You can also call: 651-484-1169. Hear the sermon at [www.wels.us/newlife](http://www.wels.us/newlife) .

New Life Evangelical Lutheran Church  
180 County Rd F - Shoreview, MN 55126