



THE SEARCH FOR TRUE IDENTITY

## POINT 1: FORGIVENESS FLOWS FROM LOVE

### LUKE 7:36–39 (CSB)

36 ONE OF THE PHARISEES ASKED JESUS TO EAT WITH HIM. HE ENTERED THE PHARISEE'S HOUSE AND RECLINED AT THE TABLE. 37 A WOMAN IN THE TOWN WHO WAS A SINNER FOUND OUT THAT JESUS WAS RECLINING AT THE TABLE IN THE PHARISEE'S HOUSE. SHE BROUGHT AN ALABASTER JAR OF PERFUME, 38 AND AS SHE STOOD BEHIND HIM AT HIS FEET WEeping, SHE BEGAN TO WASH HIS FEET WITH HER TEARS AND TO WIPE THEM WITH THE HAIR OF HER HEAD; SHE KEPT KISSING HIS FEET AND ANOINTING THEM WITH THE PERFUME. 39 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 KIND OF WOMAN THIS IS WHO IS TOUCHING HIM—SHE'S A SINNER!"

### BREAKDOWN

- **THE PHARISEE SAW SIN. JESUS SAW A SOUL WORTH SAVING.**
- **FORGIVENESS BEGINS WHERE JUDGMENT ENDS.**

**GOD'S FORGIVENESS COMES NOT BECAUSE OF OUR MERIT, BUT IN SPITE OF OUR SIN, WHEN WE TURN TO HIM IN REPENTANCE.**

**LUKE 7:47–48 (CSB)** – THE WOMAN'S SINS WERE FORGIVEN BECAUSE OF HER FAITH AND LOVE, NOT BECAUSE THE PHARISEE JUDGED HER FAVORABLY:

*"THEREFORE I TELL YOU, HER MANY SINS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN—FOR SHE LOVED MUCH...THEN, HE SAID TO HER, 'YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN.'"*

- **JUDGMENT (THE PHARISEE'S VIEW) DIDN'T STOP JESUS FROM OFFERING FORGIVENESS.**
- **FORGIVENESS STARTS AT THE MOMENT JESUS CHOOSES MERCY OVER CONDEMNATION.**



**ROMANS 8:1 (CSB) –**

“THEREFORE, THERE IS NOW NO CONDEMNATION FOR THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST JESUS.”

- **WHERE CONDEMNATION (JUDGMENT) COULD REIGN, FORGIVENESS REIGNS INSTEAD.**

**PSALM 103:10–12 (CSB) –**

“HE DOES NOT DEAL WITH US ACCORDING TO OUR SINS, NOR REPAY US ACCORDING TO OUR INIQUITIES...AS FAR AS THE EAST IS FROM THE WEST, SO FAR HAS HE REMOVED OUR TRANSGRESSIONS FROM US.”

- **GOD CHOOSES TO FORGIVE RATHER THAN TO EXECUTE PERFECT JUDGMENT ON OUR SINS.**

**MICAH 7:18–19 (CSB) –**

“WHO IS A GOD LIKE YOU, WHO PARDONS INIQUITY AND PASSES OVER THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE REMNANT OF HIS POSSESSION?”

- **GOD’S FORGIVENESS LITERALLY “PASSES OVER” WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN PUNISHED — JUDGMENT IS SET ASIDE, AND GRACE FLOWS.**





- **THE WOMAN DIDN'T EARN FORGIVENESS — SHE RESPONDED TO IT.**
- **JESUS DOESN'T RECOIL FROM SINNERS; HE WELCOMES REPENTANT HEARTS.**

### **ANALOGY — BIBLICAL / CONTAMINATION TIE**

IN JESUS' CULTURE, TOUCHING A SINNER MADE YOU CEREMONIALLY "UNCLEAN." PEOPLE AVOIDED CONTACT OUT OF FEAR OF CONTAMINATION.

BUT JESUS FLIPPED THAT COMPLETELY. WHEN HE TOUCHED THE UNCLEAN, THEY DIDN'T MAKE HIM DIRTY — HE MADE THEM CLEAN. THAT'S WHAT FORGIVENESS DOES: HIS PURITY OVERPOWERS YOUR PAST.

**BIG IDEA: FORGIVENESS ISN'T ABOUT WHAT YOU'VE DONE — IT'S ABOUT WHO HE IS. JESUS LOVES FIRST, AND THAT LOVE LEADS TO FORGIVENESS.**

### **ROMANS 5:8 (CSB)**

BUT GOD PROVES HIS OWN LOVE FOR US IN THAT WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS CHRIST DIED FOR US.

### **PSALM 103:10–12 (CSB)**

10 HE DOES NOT DEAL WITH US ACCORDING TO OUR SINS, NOR REPAY US ACCORDING TO OUR INIQUITIES. 11 FOR AS HIGH AS THE HEAVENS ARE ABOVE THE EARTH, SO GREAT IS HIS FAITHFUL LOVE TOWARD THOSE WHO FEAR HIM 12 AS FAR AS THE EAST IS FROM THE WEST, SO FAR HAS HE REMOVED OUR TRANSGRESSIONS FROM US.

### **1 JOHN 1:9 (CSB)**

IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS, HE IS FAITHFUL AND RIGHTEOUS TO FORGIVE US OUR SINS AND TO CLEANSE US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.

**DISCUSSION QUESTION: HOW DOES UNDERSTANDING GOD'S LOVE FIRST CHANGE THE WAY YOU SEE HIS FORGIVENESS?**



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## POINT 2: FORGIVENESS REDEFINES YOUR WORTH

### LUKE 7:40–47 (CSB)

40 JESUS REPLIED TO HIM, “SIMON, I HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY TO YOU.” HE SAID, “SAY IT, TEACHER.” 41 “A CREDITOR HAD TWO DEBTORS. ONE OWED FIVE HUNDRED DENARII, AND THE OTHER FIFTY. 42 SINCE THEY COULD NOT PAY IT BACK, HE GRACIOUSLY FORGAVE THEM BOTH. SO, WHICH OF THEM WILL LOVE HIM MORE?” 43 SIMON ANSWERED, “I SUPPOSE THE ONE HE FORGAVE MORE.” “YOU HAVE JUDGED CORRECTLY,” HE TOLD HIM. 44 TURNING TO THE WOMAN, HE SAID TO SIMON, “DO YOU SEE THIS WOMAN? I ENTERED YOUR HOUSE; YOU GAVE ME NO WATER FOR MY FEET, BUT SHE HAS WASHED MY FEET WITH HER TEARS AND WIPED THEM WITH HER HAIR. 45 YOU GAVE ME NO KISS, BUT SHE HASN’T STOPPED KISSING MY FEET SINCE I CAME IN. 46 YOU DIDN’T ANOINT MY HEAD WITH OIL, BUT SHE HAS ANOINTED MY FEET WITH PERFUME. 47 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.”

### BREAKDOWN

- THE PHARISEE SAW HER HISTORY; JESUS SAW HER HEART.
- HER WORTH WASN’T IN WHAT SHE’D BEEN, BUT IN WHAT JESUS MADE HER.
- HER PAST DIDN’T DEFINE HER — JESUS DID.
- AND IT WASN’T BECAUSE OF ANYTHING SHE DID, BUT BECAUSE OF WHAT *HE* DID — AND WHAT *HE’S* ALREADY DONE FOR US.
- BECAUSE OF THAT, WE CAN OPERATE IN FORGIVENESS AS FORGIVEN PEOPLE.





**BIG IDEA: FORGIVENESS REDEFINES YOUR WORTH.**

**IT'S NOT ABOUT WHAT YOU DID OR DO — IT'S ABOUT WHO YOU ARE IN CHRIST.**

**EPHESIANS 1:7 (CSB)**

IN HIM WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, THE FORGIVENESS OF OUR TRESPASSES, ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE.

**COLOSSIANS 2:13-14 (CSB)**

13 WHEN YOU WERE DEAD IN YOUR TRESPASSES AND IN THE UNCIRCUMCISION OF YOUR FLESH, HE MADE YOU ALIVE WITH HIM AND FORGAVE US ALL OUR TRESPASSES. 14 HE ERASED THE CERTIFICATE OF DEBT, WITH ITS OBLIGATIONS, THAT WAS AGAINST US AND OPPOSED TO US, AND HAS TAKEN IT AWAY BY NAILING IT TO THE CROSS.

**2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 (CSB)**

HE MADE THE ONE WHO DID NOT KNOW SIN TO BE SIN FOR US, SO THAT IN HIM WE MIGHT BECOME THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

**DISCUSSION QUESTION: WHAT CHANGES WHEN YOU STOP TRYING TO EARN FORGIVENESS — AND START LIVING AS THE FORGIVEN?**



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### POINT 3: FORGIVENESS LEADS TO FREEDOM

LUKE 7:48–50 (CSB)

48 THEN HE SAID TO HER, “YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN.” 49 THOSE WHO WERE RECLINING AT THE TABLE BEGAN TO SAY AMONG THEMSELVES, “WHO IS THIS MAN WHO EVEN FORGIVES SINS?” 50 HE SAID TO THE WOMAN, “YOUR FAITH HAS SAVED YOU; GO IN PEACE.”

#### BREAKDOWN

- **FORGIVENESS ISN'T JUST A LABEL — IT'S A LIBERATION STATEMENT.**
- **JESUS DOESN'T SAY, “TRY HARDER,” OR “COVER IT UP.”**
- **HE SAYS, “YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN — GO IN PEACE.”**

#### ANALOGY — LIVING IN FREEDOM

THINK OF A BIRD THAT'S BEEN CAGED FOR YEARS. EVERY TIME IT STRETCHES ITS WINGS, IT REMEMBERS THE BARS AND HESITATES. THEN THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN. THE CAGE IS GONE. THE SKY IS WIDE. THE BIRD DOESN'T HAVE TO EARN ITS FLIGHT; IT JUST FLIES.

FORGIVENESS GIVES YOU THAT SAME KIND OF FREEDOM — THE PAST IS GONE, THE DEBT IS PAID, AND THE PATH AHEAD IS WIDE OPEN.

#### ANALOGY — BIBLICAL / CULTURAL TIE

IN HIS CULTURE, SIN “CONTAMINATED” YOU AND MADE YOU UNTOUCHABLE. JESUS TOUCHED THE UNTOUCHABLE, FORGAVE THE UNFORGIVABLE, AND MADE FREEDOM TANGIBLE. YOU DON'T JUST GET A CLEAN SLATE — YOU GET A LIFE THAT CAN ACTUALLY MOVE FORWARD, FREE FROM CHAINS.



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**BIG IDEA:** WHEN YOU'RE FORGIVEN, YOU'RE NOT JUST RELEASED FROM YOUR PAST — YOU'RE EMPOWERED TO LIVE DIFFERENTLY. FREEDOM IS THE NATURAL RESULT OF FORGIVENESS. YOU CAN'T EARN IT, BUT YOU CAN WALK IN IT EVERY SINGLE DAY.

**JOHN 8:36 (CSB)**

*SO IF THE SON SETS YOU FREE, YOU REALLY WILL BE FREE.*

**MICAH 7:18–19 (CSB)**

*18 WHO IS A GOD LIKE YOU, WHO PARDONS INIQUITY AND PASSES OVER THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE REMNANT OF HIS POSSESSION? HE DOES NOT HOLD ON TO HIS ANGER FOREVER, BECAUSE HE DELIGHTS IN FAITHFUL LOVE. 19 HE WILL TAKE US BACK IN LOVE; HE WILL TRAMPLE OUR SINS UNDERFOOT. YOU WILL CAST ALL OUR SINS INTO THE DEPTHS OF THE SEA.*

**ROMANS 8:1–2 (CSB)**

*1 THEREFORE, THERE IS NOW NO CONDEMNATION FOR THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST JESUS.*

*2 FOR THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS HAS SET YOU FREE FROM THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH.*

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** WHAT WOULD IT LOOK LIKE TO ACTUALLY LIVE AS A FORGIVEN PERSON — NOT JUST IN THEORY, BUT IN EVERY PART OF YOUR LIFE?



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## **CLOSE: WHAT IT MEANS TO BE FORGIVEN**

FORGIVENESS ISN'T EARNED — IT'S RECEIVED.

JESUS DOESN'T JUST ERASE YOUR PAST; HE REWRITES YOUR FUTURE. YOU'RE NOT DEFINED BY YOUR FAILURES — YOU'RE DEFINED BY HIS FORGIVENESS.

### **LAST THOUGHT:**

YOU CAN'T OUT-SIN GOD'S GRACE — BUT YOU CAN MISS IT BY NEVER ACCEPTING IT.

### **FINAL CHALLENGE:**

DON'T LIVE LIKE YOU'RE STILL IN DEBT WHEN JESUS ALREADY PAID IT IN FULL.

**YOU ARE FORGIVEN. LIVE FREE, LOVE BIG, AND WALK IN PEACE.**



# REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. WHEN YOU MESS UP, WHAT'S YOUR FIRST REACTION — HIDE IT, FIX IT, OR OWN IT? WHY DO YOU THINK THAT'S YOUR DEFAULT?
2. HOW EASY OR HARD IS IT FOR YOU TO BELIEVE THAT JESUS ACTUALLY FORGIVES EVERYTHING — EVEN THE STUFF YOU'RE EMBARRASSED ABOUT?
3. HAVE YOU EVER FELT STUCK IN GUILT OR REGRET? WHAT HELPED YOU FINALLY LET GO OF IT (OR WHAT'S STILL HARD ABOUT THAT)? HOW MIGHT CARRYING GUILT OR SHAME FROM PAST MISTAKES KEEP YOU FROM FULLY LIVING OUT YOUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST?
4. JESUS DIDN'T RECOIL FROM THE WOMAN'S PAST. ARE THERE PARTS OF YOUR PAST THAT MAKE YOU FEEL "UNTOUCHABLE" OR UNWORTHY? HOW DOES HIS FORGIVENESS SPEAK TO THAT?
5. HOW WOULD YOUR RELATIONSHIPS LOOK DIFFERENT IF YOU TREATED PEOPLE LIKE JESUS TREATED THE WOMAN IN LUKE 7 — WITH GRACE INSTEAD OF JUDGMENT?
6. DO YOU THINK IT'S EASIER TO FORGIVE OTHERS OR YOURSELF? WHY?
7. WHEN LIFE FEELS MESSY OR YOU KEEP REPEATING MISTAKES, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO REMEMBER THAT FORGIVENESS ISN'T EARNED — IT'S RECEIVED?
8. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT YOUR WORTH ISN'T BASED ON WHAT YOU'VE DONE BUT ON WHAT JESUS HAS DONE? HOW DOES THAT IMPACT DAILY DECISIONS AND ATTITUDES?

