

**THE BOOK OF LUKE SERIES**  
**STUDY FOURTEEN (LUKE 7:36-50)**  
**"JESUS AND WOMEN - THE SINFUL WOMAN"**  
**APRIL 20, 2008**

**MEMORY VERSE**

Luke 7:47, "Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven -  
for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little."

**INTRODUCTION**

This story of the sinful woman anointing Jesus' feet with her tears and perfume is a love story, pure and simple. Not some cheap romance novel or soap opera love, but one that is much deeper and heart-felt. It is a story that portrays the amazing love and forgiveness of sins that is offered to all who will place their trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The setting for this story is a dinner party being hosted by a wealthy Pharisee named Simon. Jesus has been invited as the guest of honor. However, Simon does not extend to Jesus the customary treatment for a guest in that day. He does not greet Him with a kiss, anoint His head with oil, nor wash the dust from His feet. A sinful woman (most likely a prostitute) had heard Jesus was dining with this rich man and had been moved to come see Him. She had seen in Him a unique kind of grace and forgiveness. He spent time with the tax collectors, the poor, the rejects of society and others who were known as sinners. This woman knew she was one of these cast away people and she sensed in Jesus a genuine love, forgiveness, acceptance and hope. Although the sinful woman was not an invited guest, she courageously enters the house and approaches Jesus from behind with an alabaster jar of perfume to anoint His feet. Before she could even open the jar, she began to weep uncontrollably. Her tears fell on His feet and she began to wipe them away with her hair. She then started kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume. The very intimacy of her attentions would have appeared to many of the guests as shocking. Combine this with the woman's reputation in the community, and this whole scene was scandalous. Simon observes this outrageous act and begins to think to himself if Jesus really was a prophet He would know who this woman was and put a stop to her offensive actions. Jesus senses Simon's struggle and tells him a parable. The story Jesus told concerned two men who owed money to a lender. One man owed significantly more than the other. The lender forgave both of them of their debt. Jesus asked Simon which of the two would love the lender more for canceling their debts. The obvious answer was the one whose debt was significantly larger. Jesus used this parable to contrast the love of the sinful woman to Simon's lack of love. Instead of judging the woman, as Simon did, Jesus focuses the judgment to Simon. Jesus continues to build on this brief parable by turning the focus from love to forgiveness. In an act of tender love and grace, Jesus forgives this woman of her sins and sends her away with a blessing of peace. As we study this amazing story, impress on your hearts the wideness of God's mercy and grace and offer to Him praise, from a grateful heart, for the unbelievable forgiveness extended to you through Christ's death on the cross.

## LEARNING FROM GOD'S WORD

1. Hospitality was a highly valued practice in Middle Eastern culture. Read Judges 19:21; Psalm 23:5; Matthew 26:49. What do these verses reveal to us concerning common ways guests were greeted in those days? According to Luke 7:44-46, how did Simon greet Jesus? Based on this information, how do you think Simon viewed Jesus?
2. Under these circumstances, what risk was this woman willing to take by entering the house of the Pharisee uninvited? What does this reveal to you about her emotional state?
3. The Pharisee lived a very self-righteous life. He viewed himself as being a pretty good guy, a leader in Jewish religious society, a person whose good points far outweighed his bad. He believed he had little need for forgiveness and repentance. How do you think he viewed the sinful woman in his house? What reaction do you think he had when Jesus turned the judgment from her to him?
4. What does Jesus see in this woman that Simon does not? How important would it be to this woman that Jesus forgives her? What does this tell you about Jesus?
5. According to verses 48-50, what was the reaction of the other dinner guests to the words of Jesus? Why do you think they reacted in this way? What was the true significance of the words Jesus said to the woman and Simon (Acts 5:31, 13:38; Isaiah 43:25, 55:7; Jeremiah 33:8)?

## OUR WALK WITH GOD

1. How difficult is it for you to be demonstrative in your relationship with Jesus? What hinders you from being more open with your love for Him? What attitude or belief do you need to change in order for this to change in your life?
2. Based on the example of Jesus in this story, who is it in your life that you need to forgive? Ask your small group to pray for you and commit to take this step of obedience in your life this week?
3. Simon was a self-righteous man. What are some of the trappings or bad thinking that cause people to have self-righteous attitudes today? How might one know when they begin to travel down this dangerous road? What are some changes that need to be made when people struggle with this attitude in their lives?
4. What are one or two truths or areas of conviction that impressed you from the study this week?

## **GOING DEEPER**

The sinful woman came to Jesus in complete desperation and humility. She was overcome with conviction and emotion. She wept uncontrollably and unwound her hair to wipe the tears from His feet. She displayed a brokenness and heart of complete love and devotion to Jesus. What do the following verses reveal to us concerning the attitude we should have as we approach Jesus for forgiveness (Psalm 34:18; Isaiah 57:15, 66:2; Matthew 11:28; Hebrews 4:15-16)? Do you approach Christ in this way?

## **SERVING AND BEING SERVED**

Examine your own heart before the Lord. Have you allowed a self-righteous attitude to creep into your life? Do you approach the Lord with a flippant attitude concerning your sin and His forgiveness? Spend time in your small group confessing any of these attitudes and praying for one another. Additionally, honestly evaluate your life and determine if there is anyone you need to forgive. Christ set the example of forgiveness and has commanded us to follow His lead. Tell your small group and ask them to pray that you would have the conviction and courage to deal with this situation during the coming week.

**SUGGESTED SMALL GROUP STUDY FORMAT**  
**"JESUS AND WOMEN: THE SINFUL WOMAN"**  
**STUDY FOURTEEN - APRIL 20, 2008**

**CONNECT ..... 25 MINUTES**

Time of Fellowship

Opening Prayer

Icebreaker Questions:

1. As a kid, what was your impression of God? How has that changed as you have grown older?
  
2. When did you feel most alive this past week?

**MEMORY VERSE (Memorize and say aloud in your group) ..... 5 MINUTES**

*Luke 7:47, "Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven - for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little."*

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ..... 35 MINUTES**

**PRAYER AND PERSONAL SHARING ..... 30 MINUTES**

1. Examine your hearts before the Lord and determine if you have allowed self-righteousness or a flippant attitude toward sin and God's forgiveness to creep into your life. Confess these before the Lord and pray for one another in your small group.
  
2. Determine if there is anyone whom you need to forgive. Tell your small group and ask them to pray you would have the conviction and courage to take care of this matter during the coming week.
  
3. Pray for the personal needs of one another in your small group.