

Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table.³⁷ When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at 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 wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

³⁹ When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

⁴⁰ Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you."

"Tell me, teacher," he said.

⁴¹ "Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.⁴² 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?"

⁴³ Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled."

"You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

⁴⁴ Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.⁴⁵ You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet.⁴⁶ You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet.⁴⁷ Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."

⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

⁴⁹ The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

⁵⁰ Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." (NIV84)

Theme: Be Assured of Forgiveness.

1. Know your many sins.
2. Know your free forgiveness.

When I was growing up there was a movie that came out called, "I Know what you did Last Summer." The premise of the movie was that someone was harassing and trying to kill a group of friends who, the summer before, accidentally hit a man with a car and dumped his body in the ocean. They thought that no one was around but apparently someone knew about it. And he was seeking revenge. They were scared that their secret sin would be revealed. But he only knew what they did last summer. God knows much more. He knows what you did last summer, 10 summers ago, when you were a teenager, He knows what you did last week, last night—he knows everything you have done. This may not bother some of us—thinking that we are pretty good when compared to other people. But the rest of us are afraid—thinking how God is going to judge us for everything we have ever done. But today you can be assured of forgiveness. First you must know your sins, then you can know your forgiveness.

Jesus was in Galilee during the second year of his ministry when a Pharisee invited Jesus to come to his house for a meal. There were plenty of other guests invited to the meal. And there was at least one inside the house who wasn't invited. A woman—a sinful woman. We don't know exactly what this woman did. Some people think she was a prostitute—that could be the case, but we can't say for sure. But what we do know is that her sins were many. And that she had the reputation around town of being a sinner.

This sinful woman stood at Jesus' feet as he was reclining at the table. She started crying. Tears dripped onto his feet. And she took a jar of perfume and poured it all over Jesus' feet. Then she wiped his feet dry with her own hair. This is something she kept on doing.

The Pharisee was appalled. She was a sinful woman. And she was all over Jesus. Crying, pouring, wiping. How could Jesus let this woman do such a thing? How could he even associate with her? He was much better person. After all he was a Pharisee. That is what Pharisees were famous for. They loved to emphasize their man-made laws. They thought they were better people simply because of what they did. They thought that because they did this and that, and didn't

do some of those other things, they were better than others. He was certainly better than that sinful woman.

At times you may think like this Pharisee. It's self-righteousness. It is the thought that you are superior to others. You haven't committed some horrible act. You are not guilty of some great crime. You have nice to others, you treat them with love and respect. You go to Church quite often, perhaps you even volunteer to take care of God's house. You look down upon others because they don't seem to have the same love and dedication to God's Word as you do. When you compare yourselves to many others, you feel pretty good about yourself. You are much better than others—especially one who is known around town to be a sinner.

But notice what Jesus said about the Pharisee. When Jesus compared him with the woman, who looked better? **You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet.**

This Pharisee who prided himself in going the extra mile, in doing more than was necessary, didn't do anything for Jesus. But this horrible sinner? She couldn't stop showing love to Jesus. The Pharisee didn't do anything for Jesus. He was no better than her; not to mention anyone else.

We may fall into the same self-righteous attitude of the Pharisee. And yet, when we take an honest assessment of things, we realize that we are no better than others. We sin just like everyone else. So what if you are nice to others. So what if you worship all the time. So what if you attend Bible Class. So what if you never committed some horrible crime. Don't get me wrong, those things are still great and pleasing to God. But the point is whether you do those or not—you're still a sinner. You are still detestable in God's eyes. You still need a Savior.

Now we don't know exactly what happened with this Pharisee. We don't know if this man, named Simon, repented or not. We don't know if he ever realized his sin. We don't know if he ever confessed his wrongdoing and his need for a Savior. But we do know what would have happened if he did. He would have been told of his forgiveness. For Christ would go on to pay for that man's sins. For he

lived a perfect life in his place. He suffered and died even for the sins that man didn't know he committed. Jesus forgave the sins even of this self-righteous Pharisee.

He does the same for us. For even though we commit many sins—some we don't even know about, we are still forgiven. God even forgives our self-righteousness. And that is true, whether we believe it or not. As we read in Romans 3, **all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.**

In order to be assured of your forgiveness you must first know your sins—then and only then can you know your forgiveness.

We don't know much about the woman of our text. We know that she was a sinner. Everyone around knew that she was a sinner. She had that reputation around town. The Pharisee knew. And so did the others. Jesus knew her too. Not only was she was a sinner. And it seems as if she sinned often. For Jesus himself said about her that her sins were many.

We don't know exactly what her sins was. But it was horrible and disgusting. It was something that must have caused her much guilt and remorse. She was disgusted with herself. She wanted to stop. Eventually her guilt was too much. No one wanted anything to do with her. So she turned to the only one who could help her. Jesus. So we see her standing at Jesus feet. Tears pouring from her eyes. Unable to control herself. Her remorse was just to great. But here she was at the foot of her Lord. He was her God and Savior. So she poured expensive perfume all over his feet. And wiped them dry with her hair. It was an act of remorse—she was truly sorry for her sins. It was an act of love—she loved the one who would forgive her.

At times you may feel like a Pharisee. At other times you feel like the sinful woman. After all, you know what you have done. All the sins you have committed. The horrible things you have said to and about others. How you have mistreated the helpless. You know the things you do in secret. Those things you don't want anyone else to know about. They things you keep secret from your family and closest friends. And then there are your thoughts. All those horrible thoughts

that pop up in your mind from time to time. Those disgusting things that you think about.

And so you are overcome with guilt. And then you realize that there is someone else who knows about them too. God. For he knows all things. He knows what you did. He knows everything you have ever done. He knows all your sins. And not only that, but he knows all the sins which you don't even know that you have committed. And so you hang your head in shame. You are disgusted at all our horrible sins.

The sinful woman was disgusted at her sins. And so like the sinful woman, we confess our sins before our God. We will never have the opportunity to show our sorrow and love for him in the same way as the sinful woman. We will never be able to cry on his feet and wipe away perfume with our hair. But we can still show our remorse and love. We go before God on bended knee. We confess our numerous and horrific sins. We know we don't deserve his love. Rather we deserve his wrath and punishment for each and every one of our sins. And we show love to him. How? Not by kissing his feet and pouring perfume on them. But by singing his praises. By obeying his Word. And telling others about him. Giving back what he has given us. Showing love to him as he showed love to us.

We show love to him because he is the one who takes away the guilt of all our sins. Through his perfect life and innocent suffering and death our sins have been paid for and we are declared not guilty in the eyes of God. And because of this Jesus was raised from the dead. Through his life you too will be raised on the last day. Through Christ your sins have been forgiven. Jesus said about the woman, **her many sins have been forgiven.** Have been forgiven—It has already been accomplished. And since that work was as good as done, her forgiveness still stands. As Jesus said to her, **Your sins are forgiven.** And Jesus told the woman, **Your faith has saved you.** Through faith we receive what Christ has won for us. Through faith we make the objective truth of Christ's saving work our own. **For whoever believes and is baptized shall be saved and whoever does not believe will be condemned.**

And so we don't have to despair over our sins. We don't have to weep or mourn. But rejoice. For we are freely forgiven. Christ has done away with our sins so that we may live with him forever. When Jesus

assured the sinful woman that the guilt of her sins had been removed, he told to **go in peace.** The same stands for us. Go in peace—the peace of mind knowing that our sins cannot return to us. They will never again haunt us. For we are forgiven through Christ.

Jesus knows what you did. He knows everything that you did. You can't be self-righteous before him. Yet there is no reason to be afraid. For he has forgiven your many sins through his perfect life and death. Your many sins have been removed. So you have nothing to fear. Just rejoice. Praise Christ and show love to him. For you have been forgiven of much so you love him much. Rejoice—for you are assured of your forgiveness. Amen.