

LifeGroup Discussion Questions

Luke 7:36-39

May 17, 2020

Overview:

People approach Jesus for a variety of reasons and in various ways. Some people come to Jesus to see what He can do for them. It is not out of reverence or worship, but out of selfish desires. This makes Jesus seem like a means to an end. Others approach Jesus out of pride and arrogance. For them it is not about what Jesus can do for them but it's what they can do for Jesus. They feel like they have earned, by works and good behavior, a place of honor before Him. They feel Jesus is lucky to have them on His side. Another way people approach Jesus is out of fear. While it is good to have a level of fear when coming into the presence of your creator there also needs to be a relationship. This group doesn't grasp grace and lives in fear.

How are you supposed to approach Jesus? The woman in today's passage approaches Him out of humility, worship, and a level of boldness. Jesus was being invited to a dinner at a Pharisee's house. This was common practice for the day to invite a traveling Rabbi over for dinner. People of the town would have wanted to see and hear what was going on during this meal. The person who didn't belong was a woman. She had a sinful reputation and shouldn't have been at the Pharisee's house.

For her to step out of the crowd and approach Jesus was a very bold move. In tears, she let down her hair, poured out her perfume and washed Jesus' feet. Imagine how awkward this would have been to be in that room. Within this single act she broke several social norms. She was a sinful woman entering into a Jewish leader's house. She let down her hair which was grounds for divorce during this time. She was using her most prized possession and her tears to wash Jesus' feet. This was as awkward then as it would be today.

Picture you are having a nice meal with your family. A woman with a bad reputation comes into your house as the meal is taking place. She proceeds to take off your husband's shoes and wash his feet with her hair, perfume, and tears. Now that is an awkward situation. This woman didn't care what others thought. She wanted to offer Jesus her repentant heart. Her behavior might not have changed yet, but her heart was going toward Jesus.

She didn't come to Jesus to see what He could do for her. She didn't approach him with paralyzing fear. She didn't come to Him out of pride. The only true thing of value she had to give was her heart. She was approaching Jesus with unhindered worship. She still had the bad reputation, but was facing Jesus in

worship. Her actions far outweighed anything Simon the Pharisee could have done. He had the right actions, but his heart was nowhere near Jesus.

Jesus tells a story in Luke 18:9-14 about a Pharisee and a tax collector going to the temple to pray. In this story the Pharisee prays to God about all his good behavior. He thinks God is lucky to have him. The tax collector recognized the holiness of God and prayed about his sin. Just like in the passage about the sinful woman there are two portraits described here about how to approach God. The Pharisee relied on his good behavior. The tax collector was relying on God's grace. The Pharisee left the temple with self-justification. The tax collector left the temple being justified by God.

Both behavior and heart matter. If your heart is going toward Jesus, then your behavior will follow. If your behavior is going away from Jesus, then your heart will follow as well. They are intertwined. Approach Jesus with humility, unhindered worship, and boldness. He knows your heart. By approaching Him any other way you are only fooling yourself.

Bible Study: Luke 7:36-39, Luke 18:9-14

1. Read Matthew 15:8. In what ways do people today honor God with their mouth, but not give Him their heart?
2. The sinful woman in Luke 7 didn't care what anyone thought about her as she worshiped Jesus. What hinders people from this kind of worship today?
3. The sinful woman was very bold in the way she approached Jesus. Do you feel you can approach Jesus with this level of boldness? Why or why not?
4. Why do some people think they need to completely correct any sinful behavior before deciding to follow Jesus?
5. Does God care more about the condition of your heart or your behavior?
6. Read Luke 18:9-14. What role does recognizing the holiness of God have in keeping the correct perspective in prayer?
7. Have you ever prayed like the tax collector? Why or why not?

