

At the Table
“Party Crasher”
Luke 7:36-50
Small Group Discussion

Intro Question:

- *(Leaders: the goal of these introductory questions is to help break the ice—they give everyone the chance to “loosen their tongue” by answering a safe, non-threatening question, that also begins orienting to the topic at hand).*
 - Have you ever been at a party or dinner where someone crashed the party? What was the response of the host? If not, have you ever had an uninvited guest show up at your house? How did you respond?
1. Read Luke 7:36-38
 - From your own study or from Sunday’s sermon, what do you remember about the Pharisees? What were they known for?
 - What positive observations could you make about Simon the Pharisee at the outset of this story?
 - In what ways is the woman, who enters in v. 37, the antithesis of Simon and the Pharisees?
 - How would the other guests have interpreted the woman’s display of affection in v. 38?
 2. Read v. 39.
 - What conclusions does Simon draw about Jesus here?
 - What underlying assumption leads him to his conclusions? (Leaders: If Jesus really knew who she was, he would not associate with her).
 3. Read v. 40-43.
 - What do you note about Jesus’ approach to Simon in v. 40? Does Jesus’ tenderness surprise you?
 - The gist of the parable is fairly clear. Why does it matter that neither borrower had the money to repay his debt, even though the amounts owed were very different?
 - By bringing Simon to this answer (v. 43), what is Jesus trying to get him to see?
 4. Read vv. 44-50.
 - Why does Jesus point out Simon’s lack of hospitality in these verses? What does his neglect show about his understanding of Jesus?
 - In what way does the woman’s lavish display make up for Simon’s lack of hospitality?
 - Based on v. 47, what does the woman’s extravagant love say about her understanding of Jesus? *(Note: it is not that her acts of affection have merited her forgiveness, but that they are an expression of the fact that she realizes how much she’s been forgiven).*

- At the end of v. 47, Jesus says, “Whoever has been forgiven little loves little.” What do you think he means? (Below are some options, in case you need prompts). Does he mean...
 - That Simon has few sins to forgive, therefore he can’t love Jesus as much?
 - That Simon has not been forgiven?
 - That Simon is not aware of his great debt to God for sins of the heart, therefore he doesn’t appreciate God’s forgiveness?
 - Pastor Josh claimed that the big idea of this story is, “**Extravagant love flows from the experience of extravagant forgiveness.**” Discuss what this means.
 - Why does Jesus re-state, in vv. 48-50, that the woman is forgiven? What claim is he implicitly making here?
 - What important distinction does Jesus bring out in v. 50, about the nature of the woman’s salvation?
 - Why do you think that Jesus speaks in a gentle, persuasive way to Simon, rather than condemning him for self-righteous exclusivity?
5. Bringing it home
- Do you identify more with the woman in the story, with Simon, or with neither? Why?
 - What invitation do you think Jesus issues to you if you feel more like the woman?
 - If you identify with Simon, Pastor Josh suggested that Jesus would give you a two-part invitation.
 - 1) *To realize the costly forgiveness that Jesus has given to you. Your love for him will flow in direct proportion to your realization of his costly forgiveness for you.* How could you go about becoming more in touch with Jesus’ costly forgiveness for you?
 - 2) *To welcome the people (such as the woman in the story) whom Jesus welcomes.* In what ways do you already see this happening in your life or in our church family? In what ways could we do it more intentionally or more generously?
 - In what way(s) do you feel challenged by this story?

Sharing and Prayer:

- Share about any prayer needs you may have. Pray for one another based on those needs and what has been shared throughout your meeting.