

Text— Luke 7:36-50

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Our Scripture selection is a very interesting portion of God's Holy Word in which we view two people meeting with Jesus, and those two people had totally opposing views of themselves. One individual was quite self-righteous and thought he had no need of the forgiveness of sins; the other individual had a low opinion of herself as she knew her awful condition of being full of sin and in dire need of forgiveness.

My friends, we all have a view of ourselves that matches one of the aforementioned sinful human beings or the other, or we have a view of ourselves which falls somewhere in between those two people. Nevertheless, the truth of the matter is, as Ecclesiastes 7:20 plainly states, "there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." Yes, whether we fully realize it or not, we are ALL sinners in need of forgiveness which the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, provides, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

Now, simply knowing that a good man named Jesus walked on earth some 2,000 years ago is not saving faith, nor is simply believing Jesus is God saving faith, for Luke 4:34 reports that even devils have confessed to Jesus, "Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God."

Therefore, we can all benefit from a careful consideration of our sermon text which in effect urges:

"HAVE THE RIGHT CONVICTION CONCERNING CHRIST"

With that as our theme, may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) What is the right conviction to have concerning Christ
- 2) Why all people actually need to have the right conviction concerning Christ
- 3) How the right conviction concerning Christ is shown, and why it happens

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Verse 36, ----- (Luke 7:36)

Here we observe a Pharisee who invited Jesus over to his house for a meal. It's evident later in our text that the Pharisee did not consider Jesus a real prophet, so he most likely invited Jesus to his home because he was curious as to why Jesus was considered an interesting character who had become popular with the people at large. In any case, *Jesus went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.* Yes, Jesus did not pass up any invitation to touch a soul with the truth, for Luke 19:10 informs us, "the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

My friends, every naturally conceived human being is lost in sin and is in need of the only Savior from sin, the Lord Jesus Christ, for Romans 3:23-26 reports, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Hence, we ALL need Jesus Christ!

Verses 37 & 38, ----- (Luke 7:37-38)

In those days and in that place, a dining table was not surrounded by chairs but was placed much lower so people could recline around that table as they would rest on one elbow and their feet would be stretched out behind them away from the table; the people would then eat and drink using their free hand to partake of the meal. We learn

later in verse 49 of our text that besides Jesus there were other guests at the Pharisee's table that day. So, picture the scene in your mind: Jesus and a Pharisee with some other folks reclining around a dinner table with their legs stretched out behind them.

Subsequently, an interesting thing happened, *behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.*

Here, the woman being a "sinner" refers to the fact that she was notoriously wicked. We are not given the woman's name, but we know she had a reputation for sinfulness. Nevertheless, the woman's actions toward Jesus indicate that she had the right conviction concerning Christ— she knew He was her only hope for forgiveness of her sins. Oh, that woman did not merely consider Jesus to be an interesting character who had become popular with the people at large; no, that sinful woman knew Jesus is indeed the Christ, the promised Messiah, the Savior of sinners, for she humbled herself before Him.

Observe that the woman did not dare approach Jesus to his face; she was content to remain at his feet, shedding tears of sorrowful repentance, wiping His feet with her hair (a woman's crowning glory), and anointing His feet with costly ointment, for such were the ointments sold in alabaster jars in those days. You see, alabaster was a somewhat soft stone which was carved into a box or jar to hold perfumes and such. Hence, the woman showed humility and love toward the Lord Jesus Christ. The woman knew Jesus was her only hope for forgiveness of her sins, the only Savior from sin. Accordingly, the woman had the right conviction concerning Christ.

Verse 39, ----- (Luke 7:39)

Consider the Pharisee's conviction concerning Christ, for he did not even hold Jesus to be a genuine prophet of God! As the Pharisee beheld the sinful woman's humble acts of repentance toward Jesus, he was disgusted, for our text relates: *Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.*

Notice at this point that the Pharisee did not speak aloud regarding his disapproval of the woman and of Jesus permitting her to touch Him. No, the self-righteous Pharisee *spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.* The Pharisees for the most part held such a high opinion of themselves that they believed the mere touch of a notoriously sinful person would contaminate them. The Pharisees were like many people today who have their nose up in the air as they consider themselves much better than other folks.

My friends, let us beware of being Pharisaical, for the truth is that we are ALL SINNERS in need of the ONLY SAVIOR from sin, the LORD JESUS CHRIST! We must never forget that in themselves even our best and finest works are sinful since we are sinners who do the works, for Isaiah 64:6 plainly states, "we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." Accordingly, we need to have the right conviction concerning Christ: we need to know and acknowledge we absolutely need the Lord Jesus Christ and the forgiveness of sins He provides. We need to approach Jesus in humility and sincere repentance regularly.

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As we ponder the next two verses of our text, let us see why all people actually need to have the right conviction concerning Christ.

Verses 40 & 41, ----- (Luke 7:40-41)

Recall that Simon had said within himself concerning Jesus Christ: *This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.*

Well, the fact is that Jesus is much more than a prophet, for Jesus is Christ the Lord, and therefore He read the Pharisee's very thoughts, for *Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.*

Jesus' remarks here make the point clear that Simon was a debtor, a sinner, even though he had not sinned in the same manner the woman had sinned. Jesus' remarks also make the point clear that WE are ALL DEBTORS in God's sight; WE are ALL SINNERS in God's sight! Yeah, some commit smaller sins, some commit bigger sins, but WE are ALL SINNERS, for 1 John 1:8 clearly states, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Furthermore, the Lord God says in Ezekiel 18:4, "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." Indeed, regardless of the number of our sins or the greatness of our sins, we ALL sin and consequently we ALL NEED THE ONLY SAVIOR FROM SIN, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST!

There are some who falsely claim there is no such thing as big and little sins; they say things like, "if one has thought about fornicating, one might as well go ahead and fornicate, for it's sin either way." Well, it's true that we can and do sin in thoughts and words, and not only in deeds. But, it's also true that there are greater and lesser sins, for Jesus Himself said to the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, when standing before him on trial by false accusation, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee

hath the greater sin." (John 19:11) So, there are indeed greater and lesser sins, albeit any sin can damn a person if it is not sincerely repented of.

Getting back to our text, we see that Simon the Pharisee addressed Jesus as "Master," and he thereby admitted Jesus was a teacher. Nevertheless, Jesus is much more than a teacher—Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God! Jesus is the only Savior of sinners!

Thus, ALL people actually need the right conviction concerning Christ because any sin will damn a person if that person does not personally receive the forgiveness of sins which Jesus Christ alone supplies, for Holy Writ declares, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (Acts 4:12; John 3:16-18; 1 John 1:9-10)

Accordingly, it is certain that ALL people actually need the right conviction concerning Christ. God grant that we place and keep our full trust and confidence in Christ Jesus as our personal Savior and Lord.

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As we ponder our text to its conclusion, let us see how the right conviction concerning Christ is shown, and why it happens.

Verses 40-43, ----- (Luke 7:40-43)

Jesus here began to teach Simon the Pharisee about forgiveness and gratefulness for being forgiven, for Jesus said to Simon: *There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.* Yeah, Simon got it right: a person who has been forgiven a greater debt shows more love than a person forgiven a lesser debt. And, it follows that if one does not even realize one has been forgiven a debt, that one shows no love at all to the person who has done the forgiving.

Verses 44-47, -----. (Luke 7:44-47)

Consider Jesus' application of the point He had made to Simon in relating the incident of the creditor who had two debtors, and the fact that the one who had been forgiven the greater debt showed more love in return to the creditor, for Jesus *turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.*

Think about it. Although Simon the Pharisee had invited Jesus over for a meal, he did not even show Jesus the basic courtesies normally shown to guests. On the other hand, the woman with the reputation of being a notorious sinner showed Jesus the greatest respect and love since she had the right conviction concerning Christ— she knew Jesus is the Christ, the only Savior of sinners, her only hope for forgiveness.

Jesus did not hide the fact that the woman's sins

were many. But, despite the woman's great number of sins, she relied on Jesus to forgive her sins, and her actions showed that her reliance, her faith in Jesus, was real. The woman shed tears of repentance, she was humble before her Lord, and she was self-sacrificing in bringing costly ointment and applying it to Jesus' feet. Sadly, Simon the Pharisee apparently felt he had no need for forgiveness, which is why he showed no love toward the Lord Jesus since he had no faith in Him.

Simon was like most of the Pharisees in that he was stuck on himself and his own works, for he failed to realize what Galatians 5:6 reports, that being, "in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."

My friends, let us never forget the words of Ephesians 2:8-10, which reads, "by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Let us keep our faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and Lord, and let us show our faith is the real deal by being fruitful in the same since the right conviction concerning Christ is shown by being fruitful in a God-given faith that relies on Jesus for the forgiveness of sins and salvation.

Verses 48-50, -----. (Luke 7:48-50)

It's beautiful and was undoubtedly comforting to the penitent woman that Jesus assured her, saying: *Thy sins are forgiven.* There were NO REQUIRED acts of penance laid on that woman; NO, Jesus freely forgave her sins for He would and later did pay for her sins – yea, the sins of the whole world – with His holy and precious blood He shed while nailed to the tree of the cross.

Simon the Pharisee's other friends at the table undoubtedly shared the same high-opinion of themselves which Simon had, for they *began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins*

also? Oh, the sanctimonious snobs did not voice their objections aloud, but they held them in their impenitent hearts and minds.

Jesus did not permit the objections of the unbelievers to dampen the beauty of what had happened with the woman, for *he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.*

The woman now had peace of heart in knowing her sins were forgiven and salvation was hers by God's grace through faith in Christ. Yes, faith saves in that it is the God-given means by which the individual sinner personally receives the forgiveness of sins and salvation which Jesus has won for the world. It's as Mark 16:16 plainly states: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

My friends, let us daily and sincerely repent of our sins. Let us have heart-deep living faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and Lord. Yes, let us have the right conviction concerning Christ. Amen.

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