Understanding Jesus: The Surprising Truth about Love

Do you love? Seriously, do you genuinely love God and the people He has put in your life in both word and deed? Would you say that love is what fills your heart and characterizes your life and interactions? Or would you say at times that you are love-deficient? What would the people around you say? In the passage we are looking at today Jesus gets to the very core of what fuels our love for God and for other people. Let's look at this surprising truth about love.

Opening Discussion: What is a one of your most memorable dining experiences?

Read Luke 7:36-50

- 1. Describe what happens at the dinner (vv. 36-39)?
- 2. What does the Pharisee say to himself about the woman and Jesus' response to her (v. 39)? And then reading between the lines of the Pharisee's thoughts, what is he really thinking? What does it reveal about him?
- 3. What is the point of the parable that Jesus tells to address Simon's thinking?
- 4. What do you think Jesus means when he says that "he who is forgiven little loves little" (v. 47)?

Steve said:

There is a distinctive type of love that only Christians can show. And it begins with a *love for God*. Remember in Jesus' parable, the one who was forgiven the large sum of money loved the moneylender who canceled that debt. Christians love God because he is the one who has cancelled their debt. The repentant woman loved Jesus (God in the flesh) so extravagantly because he had canceled her debt. The love of Christian is distinct because it comes from a deep, deep gratitude over the fact that God has canceled a crushing debt that I could never repay. [John wrote in 1 John 4:19, "We love because God first loved us."]

5. Do you believe that you have been forgiven a "crushing debt that [you] could never reply (do you believe this at a heart-level)? Why or why not?

Steve said:

My question is do you think about yourself the way the Pharisee did or the way the repentant woman did? *If you think of yourself like the Pharisee did*, you tend to compare yourself to others; your honest, unbiased, objective evaluation is that you are superior to almost everybody you know. You feel very justified in viewing other people (or whole groups of people) with contempt. You may or may not call yourself a follower of Christ, but what he has done for you on the cross is really an afterthought. *If you think of yourself like the repentant woman did*, you live your life very conscious of the fact that because of your faith in Jesus, God has cancelled the crushing debt of sin that you could never repay. As a result, you love the Lord your God with everything you've got. Like Paul (1 Timothy 1) you've never gotten over the fact that "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." And you also love other people well - in your home, in the church, in your workplace, and in friendships in general.

- 6. What does your current expression of love for God and others reveal about whom you think more like right now, the Pharisee or the woman?
- 7. The surprising truth about love is that love is proportional to forgiveness (and our remembering of that fact). Every believer has been forgiven the larger sum, but sometimes we fail to remember this truth. We fail to remember what Jesus has done for us. And so, what helps you remember at a heart level how much you've been forgiven?

Practicing the Rhythms of Rooted this Week

Daily Devotion u Prayer u Repentance u Sacrificial Generosity u Serve the Community u Share Your Story u Worship

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Daily Devotion: Take time to read and reflect on the truth about how God has forgiven you (Psalm 103:10-12; Isaiah 43:25; Ephesians 1:7-8; 1 Timothy 1:15-16; 1 John 1:9)



Prayer: Spend time praying through the above passages giving thanks for what they reveal about God's love and forgiveness in your life.



Repentance: If God shows you that you love little, and you've developed Pharisee-like thinking in your life, confess it to God. Invite God to renew a deep appreciation for how God's has lavishly forgiven you in Christ.