

Great Love
Luke 7:36-50
June 8, 2025
Boston Presbyterian Church

Opening Illustration

Someone please understand me.

Introduction

There was another woman who was labeled, and no one took her seriously. She was a prostitute, and all the ‘respectable’ people saw her only as a sinner. She came to Jesus in search of the only One who would understand and bring healing to her.

Three Qualities that Demonstrate Great Love

1. Great Love is willing to risk rejection.

*³⁶ When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, He went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. ³⁷ A woman in that town **who lived a sinful life** learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. ³⁸ 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. Luke 7:36-38*

Jesus went to the home of a Pharisee. This was a man who had little respect for Jesus and was investigating. Jesus accepted the invitation and went to Simon's house. While there, a woman who lived a sinful life came into the house.

She had probably been a prostitute and everyone in town knew what she was. It was a scandal to the host that she would dare to enter his house. She came because she wanted to thank Jesus for saving her and giving her a new life.

She took a risk in coming to the house where she wasn't welcome, but Love does that. It takes risks. It risks being judged, criticized, rejected, and condemned by others.

Simon saw only her sins because he refused to accept the change God brought into her life. He refused to give her mercy.

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." Luke 7:39

Paul understood his feelings because once, he too harboured such resentment toward "sinners"

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. ¹⁶ But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. 1 Timothy 1:15-16

Illustration

I'd make more mistakes next time.

2. Great Love is expressed through actions.

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—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.” Luke 7:44-47

Simon’s problem was blindness. It was easy to say, “She is a sinner!” But he couldn’t bring himself to say, “I am also a sinner!” This judgmental man was also guilty of his own sins. Though, her sins were public, his sins were private. They were the sins of pride, and a judgmental spirit, and God saw it all.

To try and open Simon’s eyes, Jesus told him a parable about a moneylender and two debtors who couldn’t pay him back. One owed a huge sum and the other much less. The moneylender forgave them both and Jesus asked Simon which of the two would love the moneylender more? He said that he thought the one who was forgiven more would love more and Jesus agreed.

Simon did nothing to show Jesus respect, but she did everything to express her gratitude for what Jesus did for her. She showed great love, but Simon showed no love. She didn't know it but Jesus came to earth for people like her.

*Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who **need a doctor**, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."*
Mark 2:17

Simon's great sin was pride. He, like many today, see no need for Jesus and what He offers. They use their own standard of goodness and aren't willing to surrender their will to Jesus. But their standard is too low, and they've deceived themselves because we all need God's gift of grace.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8-9

Illustration

Knute Haugland's love.

3. Great Love is honoured by Jesus' authority.

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." Luke 7: 48-50

Jesus forgave her sins and then He told her they are forgiven. This is a hard thing for many people to grasp. Our sins were forgiven when Jesus died on the cross. Yet, we still cling to them and allow them to disturb us, because we don't truly believe God has forgiven us. As long as you hold onto your sins, they control you and you miss the new life Christ has for you.

Let go of them and start living in the freedom that is ours in Christ! Jesus gave her three profound gifts that He gives to us as well when we let love for Him guide our every action.

This woman was given three profound gifts

1. She was given release from her past.

*Then Jesus said to her, “**Your sins are forgiven.**”*

Making peace with God includes making peace with your past. Past choices, past regrets, past guilt, are all prisons that hold us in captivity. The first gift of Jesus is to release from our past...all of it. Then we can live the new life in Christ.

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20

2. She was given reconciliation with her present.

Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you.”

It no longer mattered what others thought of her. She was now a new creation in Christ and could live in newness of life from this point forward.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 2 Corinthians 5:17
English Standard Version

3. She was given reassurance for her future.

Jesus said to the woman... “go in peace”

Jesus cares about our past and present, but He cares even more about our future. “Go in peace” is His final declaration to her. He is saying, “Your future is safe and secure.”

When we’ve been fully forgiven of our sins, we are released from the past and reassured of our future in Christ.

Do you have this reassurance? Its available for you but you must choose it. Jesus has done everything necessary for you to possess it, but He waits for you to choose it.

Closing Illustration

Unfailing love.