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THE LOOKOUT

APRIL 2022

Unit: LUKE (Part 1)

Theme: PERFECT HUMANITY

Overview: Jesus' humanity and divinity were in perfect balance, and his deeds and words were in perfect harmony. The lessons from Luke over the next two months will emphasize what Jesus did (miracles and encounters) and what he said (stories). Students will learn of Jesus' care for the bereaved and broken and hindered. The resurrected Christ applies his divine nature to our human dilemma.

HOW TO USE

Each week has a **lesson aim**, **lesson text**, and **supplemental text**.

WEEK OF APRIL 2, 2022

LESSON AIM: Let your heart go out to those who are suffering; be tender-hearted and sympathetic.

UNIT: Luke 9:1-12
THEME: Perfect Humanity
LESSON TEXT: Luke 17:1-2
SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT: 1 Peter 3:2; Colossians 3:14

STUDY

PERFECT COMPASSION
 BY AARON SCOTT

In the Holy Bible, Jesus, who is perfect in both nature and character, is described as being "full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). He is the perfect image of the Father, and he is the perfect revelation of the Father's love for the world. Jesus is the perfect example of how we should live, and he is the perfect teacher of how we should love. Jesus is the perfect teacher of how we should love, and he is the perfect teacher of how we should live. Jesus is the perfect teacher of how we should love, and he is the perfect teacher of how we should live.

Vertical tabs on the right side of the page indicate the week of each lesson.

Each week features three sections: **Study**, **Application**, and **Discovery**.

APPLICATION

WED CARET
 BY DAVID PAUST

The Bible teaches us that we are to love our neighbors as ourselves. This is a commandment that is repeated throughout the Bible. It is a commandment that is simple in its language, but it is a commandment that is difficult to live out. We are to love our neighbors as ourselves. This is a commandment that is simple in its language, but it is a commandment that is difficult to live out.

DISCOVERY

BY MICHAEL C. PRICE

1. Study the passage and ask a group of four or five people to read it aloud.
2. Read the passage and ask a group of four or five people to read it aloud.
3. Read the passage and ask a group of four or five people to read it aloud.
4. Read the passage and ask a group of four or five people to read it aloud.
5. Read the passage and ask a group of four or five people to read it aloud.
6. Read the passage and ask a group of four or five people to read it aloud.
7. Read the passage and ask a group of four or five people to read it aloud.
8. Read the passage and ask a group of four or five people to read it aloud.
9. Read the passage and ask a group of four or five people to read it aloud.
10. Read the passage and ask a group of four or five people to read it aloud.

Use the **Discovery** questions to study, discuss, and apply the Scripture passages in a group or class.

WEEK OF APRIL 10, 2022

LESSON AIM: Remember Jesus' mercy and forgiveness when dealing with troubled people.

UNIT: Luke (Part 1)

THEME: Perfect Humanity

LESSON TEXT: Luke 7:36-50

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT: Luke 6:37; Luke 7:24-35

PERFECT JUDGMENT

BY MARK SCOTT

People are broken. Jesus fixes broken people. In fact, when Jesus sees them about to snap in two or their flame of life about to be extinguished, he wraps his spiritual duct tape around the broken area and trims the wick so that the flame burns brightly again (Matthew 12:18-21 quoting Isaiah 42:1-4).

From time to time, something else gets broken (i.e., a person's judgment). Humans are depraved, so their judgment typically is flawed. But divine judgment is always spot-on. On more than one occasion Jesus had to repair flawed human judgments by providing his perfect judgment. That perfect judgment often included mercy—something very much lacking in human judgments.

The Penitent

Luke 7:36-39

We do not know how much time and distance was between Jesus' teaching about John the Baptist (Luke 7:18-35) and this incident with the penitent woman. But somewhere in Jesus' travels (Luke 8:1) this woman came to Jesus in evident repentance. There is no record of Jesus knowing this woman, healing this woman, or teaching this woman. She evidently came to him out of great need. Many roads in life lead to despair. Jesus was this woman's last hope.

This story is similar to when Mary anointed Jesus' feet (Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8). Some scholars connect the dots and belittle Mary's character—a sort of guilt by association. But differences outweigh the similarities. This woman is known as the "penitent woman."

The occasion of the narrative was dinner at Simon the Pharisee's house. Table fellowship (i.e., those with whom Jesus ate) was a big theme in Luke's Gospel. In came the unnamed woman. Her reputation was that of a "sinful one" (*lived a sinful life*). This may mean she was morally broken or that she did not give a fig about Pharisaic righteousness. She could easily access Jesus' feet due to him reclining *at the table*. She poured out her repentance in several ways—weeping (in contrition) over his feet, letting her hair down so she could use her "glory" as a towel (a real social taboo), kissing his feet, and pouring expensive perfume on them.

Simon was chapped, but due to the honor and shame culture of the first century, he did not express his dismay outwardly. Simon's inner thoughts concluded Jesus was no prophet, or else he would not have permitted such an error of righteousness.

The Parable

Luke 7:40-43

The Master Teacher, who had divine insight into the Pharisee's brain, schooled Simon with a three-point parable, with each point representing an allegorical character. The moneylender was God, the one who owed a huge debt was the penitent woman, and the one who owed a small debt was Simon. Neither debtor could pay the moneylender back (a subtle theological affirmation of Romans 3:23).

The parable sounded perfectly normal up to this point. But then, as was the case with so many of Jesus' parables, it broke into fictional analogy when Jesus said the moneylender *forgave the debts of both*. The word for *forgave* in verse 42 is the verb for "grace." The moneylender "graced" her. No doubt everyone reclining at the table was shocked at such a story. Who would do such a thing? Such extravagant grace.

Simon was invited by Jesus to render his verdict on the story (and thus slice his own throat). Which debtor will love the moneylender more? Simon's answer was on-target—I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven. Jesus affirmed Simon's judgment. Intellectually, Simon's judgment was perfect.

The Point

Luke 7:44-50

Sometimes the Master Storyteller left his parables open-ended (Luke 15:32). This was not one of those times. Jesus drove home the point with twenty-twenty vision. Jesus looked at the woman as he taught Simon. His words to Simon were biting, but his look toward the woman was warm and loving. Jesus went back and forth about what Simon did not do—no water for his feet (a common courtesy), no kiss of greeting (think *handshake*), no oil (to remove the stench of travel)—and what the woman did do—tears, kiss, and perfume.

Verse 47 is the drumroll conclusion. Her sins *have been forgiven* (sent away—a different word than in verse 42). Underneath this declaration is a sad principle—i.e., love for God and others is most often in proportion to one's sense of gratitude for grace. Jesus declared forgiveness to her directly—even before Calvary. The *other guests* were amazed, but the woman, having given evidence of her faith, walked away *saved* and *in peace*. Simon's sense of judgment needed adjustment. Jesus' judgment was perfect. ■

APPLICATION

WHAT WE ALL HAVE IN COMMON

BY DAVID FAUST

They appeared to have nothing in common at all. People treated him like gold and they treated her like dirt.

Scripture mentions her reputation but not her name, identifying her simply as a “woman in that town who lived a sinful life” (Luke 7:37). Was she a prostitute? Perhaps. Simon, on the other hand, was a well-regarded Pharisee. Their social circles never intersected. Her group of friends never interacted with his, and he meticulously avoided people like her. But when Simon hosted a dinner party with Jesus as a guest, she slipped into the house uninvited.

Jesus’ words and deeds that evening moved the woman to cry and moved the Pharisee to criticize (see Luke 7:36-50). The woman wept so hard that her tears poured down on Jesus’ feet, and she grabbed the only towel available (her own long hair) to dry them. Spontaneously, she kissed Jesus’ feet and poured perfume on them. The Pharisee looked on with disdain, angry at the awkward way this uninvited guest had interrupted his dinner party with all her weeping, wiping, and wailing.

Answering Unspoken Questions

Notice Simon’s train of thought and his faulty conclusions. “If this man were a prophet,” he said to himself . . . but Jesus was a prophet, and more! “He would know” . . . ah, but he *did* know! . . . “who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner.”

Jesus knew exactly what kind of woman she was. He came to seek, serve, and save people like her. The real problem? Simon didn’t realize what kind of Savior Jesus was, nor did Simon recognize what kind of sinner he himself was.

“Jesus answered him” (v. 40), although the Pharisee hadn’t spoken his skeptical thoughts out loud. How startled Simon must have been when Jesus directly

addressed his unspoken criticisms! The Lord told a little story to illustrate a practical point: Someone who has a large debt canceled appreciates it more than someone who has a small debt canceled. The more we recognize the magnitude of our sin-debt, the more we appreciate God’s forgiveness.

Our Common Problem

The unnamed woman and the self-righteous Pharisee had more in common than it appeared, for they were both sinners. And by the end of the evening, Jesus surprised everyone by turning the situation around. The man most viewed as righteous turned out to be the one who failed, and the woman known for her sin was commended for her faith. That evening, Simon hadn’t even shown Jesus common courtesies, but the woman honored the Lord by washing and kissing his feet. Forgiven more, she loved more.

This story is a wake-up call when we’re tempted to slip into self-righteousness. Without Christ, we are all in the same boat and it’s sinking. Some sins are more obvious than others, but we all desperately need God’s grace. How will we respond to Christ, the grace-giver? Will we be like cynical Simon, looking down our noses at others and even daring to criticize the Lord himself? Or will we be like the tearful woman, moved to sincere and uninhibited repentance?

This story teaches us to lay aside our pride and fall humbly at Jesus’ feet. Only then can we fully appreciate the Master’s words: “Your faith has saved you; go in peace” (v. 50).

Personal Challenge: How much has God forgiven you—a little, or a lot? How deep is your love for the Lord? How much do you appreciate his forgiveness? If you had attended the Pharisee’s dinner party, would you have joined the woman at Jesus’ feet, or would you have kept your distance and silently found fault? ■

DISCOVERY

BY MICHAEL C. MACK

1. Over the last several weeks or so, how has God been curing you in some way (physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually)?
2. To whom did you share “what you have seen and heard” about Jesus and his love and power last week?

Ask two people to read aloud **Luke 7:36-50** one after the other, preferably from different Bible versions. Then ask a third person to restate the passage quickly and simply.

3. How does Jesus deal with broken people in this passage?
4. Let's dig deeper:
 - How would you describe the unnamed woman? What was her reputation? What was her flaw?
 - How would you describe the Pharisee (Simon)? What was his reputation? What was his flaw?
 - What change in Simon's perspective or beliefs was Jesus trying to achieve through his parable and subsequent three comparisons of Simon and the woman?
 - The sinful woman was saved by her faith in Jesus (v. 50). Her outrageous actions (vv. 37-38) that flowed from her “great love” (v. 47) were in response to the great forgiveness she had freely received. How does her story illustrate God's grace?
 - How have you experienced the connection between God's forgiveness and your love for Jesus?
5. What do you learn about God from this passage (especially from Jesus' story about the moneylender)?
6. What do you learn about yourself and others?
7. In response to God's forgiveness, what outrageous action could you take to honor and obey Jesus?
8. How does God's forgiveness compel you to love other people around you?
 - With whom can you share the good news of God's forgiveness this week?
9. Based on our study and discussion, complete this sentence: “This week, I will . . .”
10. What “broken” area of your life needs mending?

For Next Week: Read and reflect on **Luke 23:44-49; 24:1-12**. You can also read next week's supplemental texts as well as the Study and Application sections as part of your personal study.