

Beth Moore Explains Why You're Not Unforgivable After All

Luke 7 invites us to dine at the table of contrast. We witness Christ in relation to two people, both equally loved by the One who sent His Son to dinner that night. Take a moment to read that Scripture passage.

First we sit across from the Pharisee. Try to avoid stereotyping him. Many Pharisees were devoutly righteous men of God. Some were hypocrites, but others were genuine, striving desperately to keep the law.

The Pharisee who invited Christ to dinner possessed volumes of scriptural knowledge. He could have recited literally hundreds of verses. He could have debated every Old Testament subject with intelligence and confidence. Let's give him the benefit of the doubt and assume he was a good man—and probably a curious man.

The host and his guest scarcely had time to greet each other and get comfortable before an intruder walked through the door.

The host was appalled that a woman of the streets would enter his home. Imagine his embarrassment when the uninvited guest got down on her knees, wept at Christ's feet, and anointed them with perfume!

After delivering a mental verdict of "guilty" over her, the Pharisee placed Christ on the stand as well. He judged, "Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw it, he said to himself, 'If this Man were a prophet, He would have known who and what kind of woman she is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner'" (Luke 7:39).

I wonder if just once the Pharisee had ever used the term to describe himself. You see, to a man who lived a righteous life, the word never applied to him—always to someone else. The Pharisee could not comprehend the sinful woman's actions because he could not comprehend the depth of her love.

He had everything to offer Christ that evening: a spotless record, knowledge, stimulating conversation—but he had no love. She had nothing to offer Christ that evening but a terrible record. She was almost assuredly illiterate, and she couldn't talk for crying.

But she had love.

We could interpret this encounter to mean the more we sin, the more we'll love Jesus. It seems to support depraved living as the key to deep loving. Not so!

The woman's deep love did not flow from deep sin. It flowed from deep forgiveness.

"Therefore, I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little loves little" (Luke 7:47).

The level of intimacy her repentance required plummeted her to a depth of love. The Pharisee was also a sinner, but he was blinded by pride and strangled by self-righteousness.

God's mercy does not make sin tolerable; it makes sin forgivable. The proud and the depraved alike must kneel at the same feet for mercy. For those willing, God turns sin's empty cistern into a deep wellspring overflowing with love.

Do you have something in your life for which you feel God cannot forgive you? Perhaps you cannot forgive yourself. Open your heart to God's forgiving, redeeming love. He can forgive you—and He will—if you ask Him. His Word declares it. {eoa}

Beth Moore is an author and Bible teacher of best-selling Bible studies and books for women. She is the founder of Living Proof Ministries and speaker at Living Proof Live women's events. Beth's mission is to guide women everywhere into a richer, more fulfilling relationship with the Father.

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