

07172022 He Turns Pain into PASSION....Jesus was very popular. And why not? When had there ever been anyone like Him? He healed every kind of disease, He cast out demons, he made the blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear and the dead live again. But as His popularity increased, so did the opposition against Him. The Jewish religious leaders, the Pharisees, Sadducees and Teachers of the Law had for many years been in the driver's seat. ..now their place was threatened

- And no one opposed Jesus more than the Pharisees. The Pharisees were a strict religious sect that was based on separation. In fact, that is the meaning of their name, to separate. There were about 6000 of them spread throughout the country.
- They were teachers in the synagogues and appointed themselves guardians of the proper observance of the law. They had great influence and even the Roman rulers did not want to antagonize them.
- They considered their tradition as binding as God's Word, and many times it directly contradicted God's Word. For instance, the Pharisees despised sinners. And they felt that they reflected accurately God's attitude towards sinners. By "sinners", of course, they meant tax collectors, prostitutes, thieves and murderers.
- In their thinking, God hated sinners and withdrew... Himself from them. Since Christ welcomed sinners and even ate with them the Pharisees generally concluded He could not be from God.
- The last thing a Pharisee thought himself to be was a sinner.
- Keep this in mind as we read about their invitation to dinner from a Pharisee named Simon.

NLT LK 7:36 One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to have dinner with him, so Jesus went to his home and sat down to eat.

Why did Simon invite Him? Was it because he believed in him? Was it because he sincerely wanted to observe Him and check Him out? Or was it because he had already made up his mind and wanted to get more evidence to support his presupposition?

³⁷ When a certain immoral woman from that city heard he was eating there, she brought a beautiful alabaster jar filled with expensive perfume. ³⁸ Then she knelt behind him at his feet, weeping. Her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing his feet and putting perfume on them.

In those days, people did not sit around the table in chairs as we do. They reclined on couches with their heads near the table and their feet extending away from it.

In that town was a woman, a sinful woman, most likely a prostitute. She obviously had integrated with Jesus before, Maybe she even witnessed some of His miracles.

In any event, she had believed in Him as he had changed her life.. When she heard that He was right there in town at Simon's house, she wanted to show her love and gratitude and must have noticed he was not being treated as an honored guest...that was not working for her!

- Imagine the scene? Jesus is eating and conversing at the table. Suddenly he feels something on His feet.
- There is a woman, weeping. Her tears are falling on his feet. She came to anoint Him with an expensive perfume, but before she could even open the jar, she is overwhelmed with emotion. These are tears that expressed love and gratitude.
- Then she stoops and in an act of deepest intimacy and humility, she kneels, takes her unbound hair and wipes his feet. Then she kisses His feet over and over and pours perfume on them.

- Jesus, who knew her heart and her motives, calmly stays as he is and lets her express in her own way her love for Him. He is not embarrassed nor uncomfortable.
- He accepts her love after she received his love.
- The fragrance of her devotion filled the room. No one could miss what was happening.
- Simon, the host is observing the scene with icy disapproval. What is this notorious woman doing in HIS house? And why has Jesus let her do this to Him? Does not he know what kind of woman she is?

LK 7:39 39 When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman is touching him. She’s a sinner!”

- Does Jesus not know what kind of woman she is? She is a sinner...we don’t talk to these people let alone have them touch us...

LK 7:40 40 Then Jesus answered his thoughts. “Simon,” he said to the Pharisee, “I have something to say to you.” “Go ahead, Teacher,” Simon replied.

- **First of all heard his thoughts... his self talk...that is scary**

41 Then Jesus told him this story: “A man loaned money to two people—500 pieces of silver to one and 50 pieces to the other. 42 But neither of them could repay him, so he kindly forgave them both, canceling their debts. Who do you suppose loved him more after that?” 43 Simon answered, “I suppose the one for whom he canceled the larger debt.” “That’s right,” Jesus said.

- He tells a simple story. Two debtors. One owed about \$50,000 and one owed \$5000 by today's standards. But neither could pay their debt. Instead of throwing them into prison, or making them work as slaves to pay it off, the creditor just canceled the debts. Both of the debtors were now free of obligation and could go on with their lives.
- **But Jesus' question was not dealing with the law, but with the heart. Who would love the most?** Simon gave the obvious answer but reluctantly..."I suppose". ...yet *He gave the correct answer...*
- Now Jesus makes a very relevant application...

LK 7:44 ⁴⁴ Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Look at this woman kneeling here. When I entered your home, you didn't offer me water to wash the dust from my feet, but she has washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You didn't greet me with a kiss, but from the time I first came in, she has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶ You neglected the courtesy of olive oil to anoint my head, but she has anointed my feet with rare perfume. ⁴⁷ "I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love."

- **First Simon's polite reception of Jesus into his home had no real welcome. His lack of basic hospitality showed what he really thought of Jesus.**
- **And demonstrated that Jesus was consider by him no more than a lowly servant** And self-righteous disdain and lack of belief in Jesus Christ.
- **Jesus in no way implied that Simon's sins were little, as in the story he still had a debt he could not pay. Simon did not consider himself in need of forgiveness because he did not believe he was a sinner in debt.**
- Simon did what you and I sometimes do. We compare our sins with other people whose sins we deem more blatant and offensive:

- But We are sinners because we have a sin nature. The ways we choose to express that nature differ.
- In fact, it is often harder for the moral unbeliever to admit that he is a sinner and must come to God the same way as the worst sinner in the world.
- Jesus freely acknowledged that her sins were many. And they were ALL forgiven.
- **How do we know she had been forgiven? ? Because she loved Jesus? No, her love was the RESULT of being forgiven, not the BASIS for forgiveness.**
- **She was already forgiven and she already knew and felt free of her guilt, shame and condemnation...and this freedom it welled up in love and gratitude...**

LK 7: 48 Then Jesus said to the woman, “Your sins are forgiven.”⁴⁹ The men at the table said among themselves, “Who is this man, that he goes around forgiving sins?”

- **They don’t believe he is the Messiah...so who is he? She had no such doubt...**

LK 7:50 And Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

- **both the giving of forgiveness and receiving forgiveness are acts of Faith...and She knew what it meant of be forgiven... Not being condemned any longer and the freedom it brought to her life...**
- **When the call of God does come to a life, it is a call for that person to sever all ties with the past faithless life. To leave the old life behind and to begin a new life of faith, which is lived in dependence upon the Lord who will meet every need...**

- **That is the nature of the divine call! God's call is for you to follow without your being concerned about the destination.**
- **His call is for you to leave the details to Him. His call is for surrender to His call, regardless of what it costs, where it leads or how much it hurts. His call is still follow me and his promise are for me...!)**
- **Life is still a battle for the Christian but it is no longer a battle against God – it is fighting for Him and with Him.**
- Simon, on the other hand, because he was self-righteous and blind to his own need for forgiveness...had little love
- Therefore like the Grinch his heart was two sizes too small!!
- **You see God's enormous capacity to forgive is based on his love for individuals....God knows of no undesirables....**
- **Which takes us to chapter 8..**
- **Where we meet some women whose life also changed from aim to passion and a new purpose**

8 Soon afterward Jesus began a tour of the nearby towns and villages, preaching and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom of God. He took his twelve disciples with him, ² along with some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases. Among them were Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons; ³ Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's business manager; Susanna; and many others who were contributing from their own resources to support Jesus and his disciples.

Women in Jewish society did not typically carry important roles, which makes their involvement in Jesus' ministry more radical than normal for the time they lived in. In every stage of His steps on earth, He modeled love for all, even the least in society.

Let take a look at Mary Magdalene... Though there are not a lot of details recorded about this event, her [name is among the few mentioned](#) in

the recordings of Jesus' healings. The deliverance that took place in her life on account of His miraculous presence inspired the rededication of her life to follow Jesus to His burial as all four attest that Mary Magdalene witnessed Jesus' crucifixion and burial. [Her name is mentioned 12 times in the Gospels, more than most of the apostles.](#)

- Mary was a Jewish woman from the fishing town Magdala, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. The name Magdalene likely indicates that she came from Magdala, a city on the southwest coast of the Sea of Galilee.
- Luke's account suggests that Mary was a woman of means. the meaning of "Magdala" as 'tower' or 'castle.'
- *"Seven is biblical number suggesting 'completeness,' implying that when the evil spirits dominated Mary the suffering was extremely severe."*
- Imagine the shame and trauma Mary suffer the relational devastation the psychological torment, and the bodily degradatrion because of this demon possessionwealth is no shield from the devil...
- One can only speculate what it was like at the moment Jesus looked upon Mary in her state of desperation. Only He could have seen who she really was regardless of her derailed state.
- Not only did he recognize her, but commanded the demons to leave her. The friendship forged from the freedom she suffered through led to Mary's entire life henceforth serving as a reflection of her gratitude.
- Some historians claim that it was Mary Magdalene that poured out perfume onto Jesus' feet.
- Her pain turned into passion to help support Jesus and the disciples help others. ...her life had Holy Purpose now..
- Her wealth however gained was now used for good..
- Three Gospel accounts record Mary Magdalene at the foot of the cross.

- And it was Mary Magdalene who mistook the Resurrected Jesus as a Gardner outside the tomb...being the first to witness his resurrection.
- Two record her staying to watch Jesus' burial, and so she knew the exact location he had been laid to rest. So, Mary knew the path and was able to trace her steps back there in the dark days later.
- John records it was Mary who peered into the empty tomb, and saw the two angels at the head and foot of where Jesus had lain. the empty tomb...saw where Jesus laid but was gone...she is the wone who
- Mary was the first to announce the Resurrection of Jesus!! The first Evangelist!!
- All this In a society where women were not held in equal regard to men. In fact Women were not called to testify in that age in court, and their word didn't hold credibility.
- Only Jesus would place a woman at the center of the Gospel account — Once possessed ed by Demons the God who loves the despised!

This woman held a special place in the story of Christianity and she was placed there by God. Through her eyes, we learn a little more about who Jesus was. He found her in her darkest place and healed her miraculously. She was one of His friends and a faithful follower. Mary's actions speak loudest, supporting Jesus' ministry with all she had to give.

Through your eyes may people learn more about Jesus and may your actions speak loud to our generation about Jesus!!

End

Joanna is mentioned right after Mary Magdalene, which shows her importance among the women who followed Jesus. She was one of the women who went to prepare his body, found the empty tomb and told the disciples the grave was empty.

As is often the case, scripture does not provide insight into Joanna's life after this snapshot. She would have continued to serve the early church alongside the women. The Greek Orthodox church honors her as Saint Joanna the Myrrhbearer.

History tells us Herod Antipas fell from power and died in exile. How this effected the life of Chuza and Joanna and their ministry with the early church we can only imagine.

Joanna had the courage and the dedication to stand up for the truth about Christ. We can all learn how to be more courageous in our journey through life allowing Jesus to be at the helm. Standing up for the truth about Jesus especially in this time when Jesus is never mentioned except at the cost of truth.

Joanna was the wife of Chuza, who was the house steward of Herod Antipas, king of the Jews from 4 BC to 39 BC., the Tetrarch. Joanna was among the disciples that followed Jesus. She was devoted to Jesus and is mentioned along with Mary Magdalene and Susanna. Luke 8: 2 mentions these threes had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities.

It is not known if Joanna had been demon possessed or had some kind of a physical or mental disability. She was healed and was grateful to Jesus Christ for that healing. So grateful for getting her normal health back that she traveled with Him and the twelve disciples.

Joanna was among the women at the crucifixion of Jesus. Joanna also was one of the women who prepared the spices and ointments for the body of Jesus. She was also among the women who had gone to the sepulcher. Joanna was with the other women; Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, who discovered the tomb was empty. Because Joanna was privileged to be close to Jesus in small groups and remembered what Jesus had taught them and understood the truth about the death and Resurrection of Jesus. The biblical account tells that Joanna was among the last of those who were at the cross of Jesus. Then among one of the first to witness the empty tomb and proclaim that Jesus Christ had risen.

There are some assumptions that one can make with the information that has been shared about Joanna. She was the wife of a house steward of Herod Antipas, who reigned in Galilee. He was a son of Herod the Great. This is the same Herod who beheads John the Baptist at the demand of Salome.

The word "steward" means one who has charge of the domestic affairs of a family or the household, even the land. A steward is an overseer of whatever they are instructed to do. Chuza, was probably a responsible official of Herod Antipas: whether in the household or in government as the chancellor is uncertain. (Wood, 1996).

This could mean that Joanna and her husband had social prominence and was seen as a wealthy couple in their time. This meant that Joanna could have spread the gospel of Jesus Christ within the palace of Herod and gain entrance when many others could not. She did not have to worry about finance.

Tradition suggests that Chuza lost his position in Herod's palace because of his Wife's conversion to Christianity and her courageous testimony among Herod's servants. (Lockyer, 1967). This does seem logical because while in the service of Herod, who had beheaded John the Baptist, would have shared his fear that the Jesus was John the Baptist coming back from the dead.

Joanna had been placed in a perfect position in the court of Herod. She had the opportunity to reveal the truth about Jesus Christ among the court who only hears lies from the mouth of fear from Herod. Not only does the character of Joanna teach us loyalty to Jesus Christ her character is that of bravery and conviction to spread the truth about the Master. She was a loyal witness to the crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ and was in a position to share the truth of Him.

We live in a time where the lies of Jesus are worse than in any other time in history. The character of Jesus is always slandered especially by those who are trying to spread that Jesus is a myth. The attack of His Resurrection still is questioned today. The truth about Jesus is not enough for the worldly who need the *ispinî* on the life of Jesus. They want to think about Jesus being married to Mary Magdalene who had to become the leaders of the disciples to help feed the frenzy of the liars toward Christ.

Joanna had the courage and the dedicated to stand up for the truth about Christ. What will it take for you to stand up against the lies toward our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? Has the LORD put you in a place where you can share the truth about Jesus?

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Susanna was a disciple of Jesus that followed him from Galilee, witnessing his ministry and learning from him alongside the twelve and many others (Luke 8:1-3).

We don't know much about Susanna unfortunately, but scholars agree she was likely a woman of means from the upper class of society who chose to support Jesus with her own finances. The name Susanna was unusual in her time, which is likely why the gospel writer didn't specify who she was with a surname, or with connection to another relation.

Women like Susanna and the other disciples embraced their gifts in the early church, and the result was a revolutionary movement that stoked the fire of Christianity.

The Greco-Roman and Jewish culture of Susanna's time was society that embraced an honor/shame ideology that worked against women. It reinforced the silencing and subordination of women of all classes, however the Christian church did just the opposite.

The church is where women were invited to be active members and impactful leaders.

They put their identity as women of God before the identity of the culture that had previously defined them and relegated them to domestic spheres alone.

Jesus & His Disciples

Jesus had many female followers and did not shy away from their company.

Jesus did not place the responsibility on his female disciples to bear the burden of the suspicion of others.

He and his teaching were accessible to all those who followed him.

Jesus' kindness to women he encountered in his ministry was transformative for Christian women's roles in society.

He had deeply meaningful connections with women like Mary and Martha of Bethany, Mary Magdalene, Salome, Joanna and Susanna and many more disciples whose names remain unknown.

He took special care to go out of his way to heal and include the ritually unclean women and tend to their very personal and sometimes very sensitive needs.

End

How do you classify people? Do you think of some people as more “worthy” of hearing the Gospel? Are there some people you think are such terrible sinners that they are sort of hopeless cases? Sometimes, when you read the paper about a person that has committed a terrible crime, do you almost hope that he never has a chance to be forgiven, because he really deserves to suffer eternal punishment? We human beings have such a different way of looking at each other than God does. I think that there is a little of the attitude the Pharisee in our story displayed in all of us, if we are honest.

Jesus was becoming very popular. And why not? When had there ever been anyone like Him? He healed every kind of disease, He cast out demons, he made the blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear and the dead live again. But as His popularity increased, so did the opposition against Him. The Jewish religious leaders, the Pharisees, Sadducees and Scribes or Teachers of the Law had for many years been in the driver’s seat. They were the arbiters of what was right and wrong. They considered the common people ignorant rabble. They were very particular about whom they associated with and judged others the same way.

The Pharisees were a strict religious sect that was based on separation. In fact, that is the meaning of their name, to separate. There were about 6000 of them spread throughout the country. They were teachers in the synagogues and appointed themselves guardians of the proper observance of the law. They added hundreds of rules to interpret the Mosaic Law in order to attain a legal righteousness. They had great influence and even the Roman rulers did not want to antagonize them. The major distinction of the Pharisees was that they gave equal authority to the oral law as they gave to the Scriptures. They considered their tradition as binding as God’s Word, and many times it directly contradicted God’s Word. We have similar things today. We must always make a distinction between what God’s Word says and the way it is interpreted and applied by men. That is why it is so important to check what anyone tells you with the Scripture.

For instance, the Pharisees despised sinners. And they felt that they reflected accurately God's attitude towards sinners. By "sinners", of course, they meant tax collectors, prostitutes, thieves and murderers. They considered themselves righteous because they obeyed the hundreds of rules they had made. They actually taught that there is joy before God "when those who provoke him perish from the world." In their thinking, God hated sinners and withdrew Himself from the. Since Christ welcomed sinners and even ate with them the Pharisees generally concluded He could not be from God.

[Luke 5:29-32](#)

This is just one place where we hear their complaint. Of course, Jesus did not mean that there was anyone so righteous that they did not need His salvation. But only a person who admits that he is a sinner is open to the Gospel. The last thing a Pharisee thought himself to be was a sinner.

[Luke 7:29-30](#)

They had not repented when John the Baptist preached and consequently **rejected God's purpose for themselves**. Jesus exposed their closed minds and contradictory standards by His comments in

[Luke 7:33-34](#)

Purpose: Not Faith, But Judgment

Keep this in mind as we read about their invitation to dinner from a Pharisee named Simon.

[Luke 7:36](#)

Why did Simon invite Him? Was it because he believed in him? Was it because he sincerely wanted to observe Him and check Him out? Or was it because he had already made up his mind and wanted to get more evidence to support his presupposition?

In those days, people did not sit around the table in chairs as we do. They reclined on couches with their heads near the table and their feet extending away from it. It was permissible in that day for uninvited guests to come and listen when an important person was a guest in someone's home. The needy could also come to receive some of the leftovers. In that town was a woman, a sinful woman, most likely a prostitute. She must have heard Jesus speak on previous occasions. Maybe she even witnessed some of His miracles. In any event, she had believed in Him. When she heard that He was right there in town at Simon's house, she wanted to show her love and gratitude and did the only thing she knew how to do.

[Luke 7:37-38](#)

Can you not imagine the scene? Jesus is eating and conversing at the table. Suddenly he feels something on His feet. There is a woman, weeping. Her tears are falling on his feet. She came to anoint Him with an expensive perfume, but before she could even open the jar, she is overwhelmed with emotion. These are tears that expressed repentance and gratitude. Then she stoops and in an act of deepest intimacy and humility, she kneels, takes her unbound hair and wipes his feet. Then she kisses His feet over and over and

pours perfume on them. Jesus, who knew her heart and her motives, calmly stays as he is and lets her express in her own way her love for Him. He is not embarrassed nor uncomfortable. He is not annoyed by a crying woman. He accepts us as we are. He knows our motives. He accepts our worship. He knows just what each of us is offering in sacrifice to Him. This woman came with an expensive perfume and poured it all out on Him. The fragrance of her devotion filled the room. No one could miss what was happening.

Can you not see Simon, the host? He is observing the scene with icy disapproval. What is this notorious woman doing in HIS house? And why has Jesus let her do this to Him? Does not he know what kind of woman she is?

Luke 7:39

You see, this just gave him the evidence he needed to support his foregone conclusion. His reasoning was that if Jesus were a prophet, He would know what kind of woman was anointing His feet. If He knew what she was He would not let her do it. Since He did let her do it He was no true prophet. This of course was based on his presupposition that God HATES sinners and will not accept them. He did not have to say anything. Jesus knew what he was thinking and spoke to him.

Luke 7:40-43

Such a simple story. Two debtors. One owed about \$50,000 and one owed \$5000 by today's standards. But neither could pay their debt. Instead of throwing them into prison, or making them work as slaves to pay it off, the creditor just canceled the debts. Both of the debtors were now free of obligation and could go on with their lives. But Jesus' question was not dealing with the law, but with the heart. Who would love the most? Simon reluctantly gave the obvious answer. Now Jesus makes a very relevant application.

Luke 7:44-47

Simon's polite reception of Jesus into his home had had no warmth of real welcome. His deficiencies as a host showed what he really thought of Jesus. Simon did not consider himself a sinner, therefore he had no need of forgiveness and consequently felt no love for Jesus. But what sins does he display in just this episode?

Pride, hypocrisy, harsh, judgmental attitude, self-righteousness, coldness, lack of generosity as a host, lack of compassion and unbelief in Jesus Christ. These are just the sins we see demonstrated HERE! Jesus in no way implied that Simon's sins were little, but that Simon did not consider himself in need of forgiveness because he did not believe he was a sinner.

Simon did what you and I usually do. We compare ourselves with other people whose sins are blatant and offensive: the prostitute, the homosexual, the thief, the rapist, the murderer, the pornographer, the drug dealer and of course we come out looking very good. But that is because we are comparing on a horizontal basis.

If we are walking down Main Street, we would see people who are shorter or taller, thinner or heavier, younger or older than we are. But if we went to the top of one of those new buildings and looked down, everyone would look like bugs about the same size.

When God looks down from heaven, he knows that we are ALL sinners. That is why He says:

Romans 3:10-12, 22b-23

There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one... There is no difference, for ALL have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (NIV)

We are sinners by nature. The ways we choose to express that nature differ. But that gives us no reason to assume that we have a better chance with God because we are not as bad as other people. In fact, it is often harder for the moral unbeliever to admit that he is a sinner and must come to God the same way as the worst sinner in the world.

Jesus freely acknowledged that **her sins were many**. And they were ALL forgiven. Why were she forgiven? Because she loved Jesus? No, her love was the RESULT of being forgiven, not the BASIS for forgiveness.

Luke 7:48-50

Then Jesus said to her, Your sins are forgiven. (NIV)

Your immorality, your greed, your impurity, your infidelity, your breaking of all the laws of God are ALL forgiven. Can you not see the other guest turning to each other and saying, **“Who is this that even forgives sins?”** They knew that God alone could forgive sins. [Luke 5:21](#). But they refused to acknowledge that Jesus was God in spite of all the miraculous evidence they had seen.

Why was this woman forgiven?

Your faith has saved you. Go in peace. (NIV)

It is faith alone that saves. Faith in who Jesus Christ is God. And faith in what He has done died in our place on the cross and rose again.

She believed in the Lord Jesus and she was forgiven and saved from a sordid life which had no escape hatch. He could say, “Go in peace,” because He not only forgave her many sins, but gave her a clear conscience as well.

Consider the prevailing trend of "wrong doing" among some of the Bible's greats that necessitated forgiveness... The Bible is R rated...because God's kids are...listen

- **Adam**, the first man, was a blame shifter who couldn't resist peer pressure. (Genesis 3:12)
- **Eve**, the first woman, couldn't control her pride thinking she could be like God, (Genesis 3:6)
- **Cain**, the first born human being, murdered his brother. (Genesis 4:8)
- **Noah**, the last righteous man on earth at the time, was a problem drinker occasionally. (Genesis 9:20-21)
- **Abraham**, the forefather of faith, let other men walk off with his wife on two different occasions. (Genesis 12 and 20)
- **Sarah**, the most gorgeous woman by popular opinion, encouraged her husband sleep with another woman and then hated her for it. (Genesis 16)
- **Lot**, who lost his father early in life, had a serious problem with choosing the wrong company. (Genesis 18-20)
- **Job**, supposedly a contemporary of Abraham and the epitome of faith, suffered from the nagging of a faithless wife. (Job 2:9)
- **Rebekah**, the first "mail order bride," turned out to be a manipulator. (Genesis 27)
- **Jacob**, whom the People of God...Israel would be named after, was a calculating deceiver. (Genesis 25, 27, 30)
- **Rachel**, who wrote the book on love at first sight, was a kleptomaniac. (Genesis 31:19)
- **Reuben**, the pride and firstborn of Jacob, was a pervert who slept with his father's concubine. (Genesis 35:21)
- **Moses**, the humblest man on the face of the earth (Numbers 12:13), had a very serious problem with his temper and murdered a man. (Exodus 2, 32:19; Numbers 20:11)
- **Aaron**, who watched God triumph over Pharaoh and was the first priest, formed an abominable idol during an episode of people pleasing. (Exodus 32)
- **Miriam**, the sister of Moses a beautiful songwriter, was jealous and greedy for power. (Numbers 12)
- **Samson**, whose strength would put Arnold Schwarzenegger to shame, betrayed God and his people for a woman—and ended up taking his own life. (Judges 16)
- **Eli**, who ruled over Israel, was a neglectful father who lost his sons to immorality—and to an untimely death. (1 Samuel 2, 4)
- **David**, the friend of God, committed adultery and concealed it with murder. (2 Samuel 11)
- **Solomon**, the wisest man in the world, was arguably a sex addict with 1,000 sexual partners. (1 Kings 11)
- **With rare exception, all the kings that followed Solomon had mammoth issues in their lives.**
- **Hosea**, an incredibly forgiving man, grappled with the pain of a wife who could best be described as a serial adulterer.

- The prophets, even as they spoke for God, struggled with impurity, depression, unfaithful spouses, and broken families.
- But God forgave all these representatives of him...their sins recorded their forgiveness recorded...

How does this apply to us????

1. First of all it is comforting that the best among us can do the worst of things... Everyone messes up so everyone needs forgiveness...so we all ought to be become excellent forgivers...
2. It is exactly what God says to each one of us...in mercy he says I see you as more than someone deformed by sin.... And I want you as my son or I want you as my daughter...that can only be done through a heart of forgiveness...

*MT 18:21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother(someone in relationship with me) when he sins against me? Up to **seven times**?"*

*MT 18:22 Jesus answered, "I tell you, not **seven times**, but **seventy-seven times**.*

- An infinite number of times...or as long as they are human... **God invented forgiveness in order to keep alive his romance with fallen humanity, but at infinite cost. His justice was fully satisfied at Calvary.**
- it is how we keep alive our love with each other
- All sin is sin against God first of all. All wrong done to others is done first against God...all sin is breaking the command to love...it is a wrong against love...

1. Jesus ministry emphasized Mercy...so as his representatives our ministry must emphasize compassion also.

- **Mercy is giving what is not deserved...**
- **Scripture plainly teaches that you will reap what you so...**
- **I need a lot of mercy...so I am going to sow a lot of mercy...**
- **I do not want judgment ...so I will sow little judgment...**
- **I want lots of love...so I will sow lots of love...**
- **I want lots of patience...I will sow lots of Patience**
- **I want good...so I will sow good**
- **Get the picture...**

*MIC 6:8 He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love **mercy** and to walk humbly with your God.*

In this sense, the scripture love your neighbor as yourself is clearly based **on the concept of Mercy...**

- Mercy says to a person ...you are valuable...
- it reclaims, affirms that people are more than what they have done at a particular time in their lives...
- So when we choose not to forgive we choose to be disobedient to God...continuing in the sin of being the Judge of not only people but also God...he will not forgive that.

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus showed his recognition of this by including our request for God's forgiveness, and our offer of it to others, as part of our regular praying.

MT 6:12 Forgive us our debts, (forgive us what we cannot payback...presently) as we also have forgiven our debtors. (As we have already done... please do the same)

MT 6:13 And lead us not into temptation, (what temptation? to hate those who owe us) but deliver us from the evil one. ' (...as the evil one would lead us to do)

- John 8:44 he was a murderer from the beginning...kills relationships...and nothing kills relationships like Unforgiveness..
- There is a difference between earth and heaven...in heaven no evil ...on earth a mixture of good and evil therefore the ongoing need to forgive ourselves and others

*******Unforgiveness puts us in a pickle with God**

MT 6:14 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. (and because of our capacity to do evil...we are commanded to forgive)

1. Without forgiveness, we will never be able to form deep relationships. And yet it is not easy.

- a. A good marriage is one where there are two good forgivers ...
- b. Many people struggle with forgiving others because they do not understand the value of it...

- First, there is the forgiveness of God, which assures us of our worth and strengthens us to take this practice to heart in our doings. Then there is the forgiveness we extend to others, especially those who have harmed or wronged us in some way.

- Finally, there is acceptance of forgiveness which enables us to release our guilt and self-perfectionism. No matter how much we practice these three, it never gets any easier to do.

Forgiveness is a way to heal relationships, but also a way to heal ourselves. We are called to forgive even if the person who hurt us isn't sorry.

You want to be forgiven...then forgive...the decision to forgive is God imitating...the healing of the emotions takes time...the decision is what is important now....

EPH 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

EPH 5:1 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children² and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

- That my friends is a fragrant...beautiful smelling sacrifice (gift) why a sacrifice it cost us...
- And it is good for us... and it is truly loving your neighbor.....
- It makes you a friend of God...why he forgives you ...and you forgive yourself and others...

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Do you realize...Your capacity to love is in direct correlation to your capacity to forgive...

Luke 7:47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."

- A spiritual principle... little forgiveness...little love...great forgiveness...great love
- She knew what it meant to be a mess...so she could identify with the messy.
- She also knew what it meant of be forgiven.... Not being condemned any longer and the freedom it brought to her life...
- So to forgive others would bring freedom to tem...
- Freedom to what?? Freedom to love and be around anyone...to longer less than but equal..
- Simon, on the other hand, had little regard for Jesus considered himself at the least equal to Jesus ...and much more worthy as a human being than this known sinner... and because he was self-righteous and blind to his own need for forgiveness...had little love or forgiveness to the human condition...
- Therefore like the Grinch his heart was two sizes too small!!

It is interesting that the deeper our wounds the greater capacity to empathize with the pain of others followed by a deeper well of love toward God and others.....an understanding of the real human condition...

Why? Because all human relationships require ongoing forgiveness in order to thrive. Except one...our relationship with God...

- He never needs to be forgiven...for he neither wrongs anyone by commission of sin...by actions of wrong perpetrated against us
- Nor wrongs by the omission of sin.... By inaction of good toward us

The one who never needs to be forgiven...is the source of forgiveness,,

- God's Mercy is based on his enormous capacity to love and to forgive.
- You see God's enormous capacity to forgive is based on his love for individuals....
- God knows of no undesirables.... Look at the lives of some of his greatest servants recorded in the Bible...
- because the place where love resides in the heart is also the place where Unforgiveness resides...they displace one another...
- Unforgiveness diminishes the capacity to love
- forgiveness increase the capacity to love...
- God is love..an infinite capacity to forgive

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Your capacity to love is in direct correlation to your capacity to forgive... It is A spiritual principle... receive little forgiveness... give little love... receive great forgiveness... give great love..

Luke 7:47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."

- She knew what it meant to be a mess...so she could identify with the messy.
- She also knew what it meant of be forgiven.... Not being condemned any longer and the freedom it brought to her life...
- So to forgive others would bring freedom to them...
- Freedom to what?? Freedom to love and connect with othethers...to feel no longer less than but one of..

It is interesting that the deeper our wounds the greater capacity to empathize with the pain of others followed by a deeper well of love toward God and others.....an understanding of the real human condition...

This is why forgiveness is so important... Forgiveness reconnects us to God ourselves and others... therefore The goal of forgiveness is connection and reconnection... Connectedness is essential to a healthy life...period. We must be connected to God, connected within ourselves and connected to others and connected to absolute values like honesty, goodness and forgiveness. **Connection gives life meaning and purpose...and frees us to live a life worth living....Forgiveness Frees our Heart/emotions to embrace life again..**

Once forgiveness is offered and our heart wounds exposed and we pour out the cup of our grief and pain... right there in our hearts becomes the free space for God to enter in and begin the healing of the hurt and pain...

Wounds go deep but Gods healing goes deeper... changes our hearts...

*Ezekiel 11:19 I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their **heart of stone** and give them a heart of flesh*

- **He excises the hardened heart of woundedness and makes our hearts soft again...**
- **Your heart will grow soft again... you will feel again...and....**
- **Your wound will become the means to lighten the burdens of the pain and sufferings of other.....**

God is the Great healer...I stand before you today as a testimony to that fact, what he has done for me he has done for countless others...in the world I am nobody but to God I am his precious child...and what he has done for me He will do for you!!!

What were once deep wounds are now just scars...indicators of past hurt... no longer effecting me negatively...just a scar an indicator of a wound once suffered ...that can help someone else who is hurting know healing is available