

Luke 7 • (Part 2): 31-50 • Choosing to Embrace Who We Really Are

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Life Bible Ministry

Luke chapter 7. Now we're going to do what I like to do best and that's teach the Bible. So, turn your Bibles please to Luke chapter 7 and we're going to be picking it up in verse 31.

We're going to be finishing the chapter this morning, Lord willing, but I want to begin here by just reading the first few verses. Let's read 31 through 35 and then we're going to take the latter section in just a moment because it's this last chapter. This end of the chapter is broken up into two sections, although they are greatly connected. Verse 31,

“To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? ³² They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, “‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.’ ³³ For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ ³⁴ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ ³⁵ Yet wisdom is justified by all her children.” (ESV)

Let's stop there for just a moment. Let's pray, and then we'll move on.

Father, thank You so much for Your Word. Thank You for the blessing of Your Word. Lord, as we opened the Bible, may You help us to also open our hearts to hear Your voice. Speak to us and teach us, for You are the Teacher in this place. We ask that You would guide and direct us in the name of Jesus, who is Savior, amen.

Really, these first few verses of this latter part of Luke 7, it goes a long way toward helping us understand the objections that people have to Christianity, to the message of the Gospel, to Christians in general.

Because what we see in this passage is that the religious leaders, they hated John, they hated John the Baptist, and they hated Jesus. And they regularly

criticized both of them but what Jesus is bringing out in this passage is that they were not very consistent in their criticisms and here's why.

John the Baptist lived a fairly reclusive kind of a lifestyle. We're told that he was raised in the desert. He ate only a very select things, which sounds pretty gross to me, like locusts. Oh, the honey sounds good. I guess you got to put a lot of honey on a locust to get it down. Maybe that's the deal.

But anyway, he lived in such a way that he fasted regularly, and because he had taken a Nazirite vow, actually his parents were told that he was to be a Nazirite from before he was even born. And what that meant was he was never to drink wine or any alcoholic beverage, and so there was a pretty rigid, a strict sort of a lifestyle.

The religious leaders criticized him, and they even suggested that his rigid, austere kind of a lifestyle was demonically induced or influenced, along those lines.

And then you've got Jesus, on the other hand, who frankly lived a very different kind of a lifestyle from the standpoint in that He joined in all of the Jewish celebrations. We have records of Him going to weddings, and we know that the wine flowed at weddings. And guys, it was more than just grape juice, okay? I'm sorry if that bothers you, but it was wine and He partook, and He ate and He drank.

And so when the religious leaders looked at Jesus, they said, He's a glutton and He's a drunkard, and I'm sure Jesus never drank to drunkenness, but oh, and of course they obviously criticized Him for running with the wrong crowd or hanging with the wrong crowd eating and drinking with sinners.

And so what Jesus is doing in this passage is He's likening them, He's characterizing them, and He says, *"to what shall I like in this generation?"* He says, you're like children, and basically what He means is, He's talking about the fickle nature that goes along with the lives of children. He says you guys are like children who pout when people won't play your game. Have you ever remember that when you were kids, when somebody, some kid wanted to play a game and you're like, no, I don't want to do that, and so they pout. We always play what you want to play.

Yeah, this is just what Jesus is suggesting with these people, but what He's saying is that the message behind it is, no matter what ministry God brings to you, you don't like it. You're unhappy with it and you find fault with it.

But here's the deal. All of their criticisms and all of their problems that they had with whether it was with John because of his austere lifestyle, or whether with Jesus in what they thought was His opulent lifestyle related to eating and drinking. It was all just a smokescreen.

It was all just a front because basically their real issue had nothing to do with dietary habits, and what people ate and drank. What the religious leaders couldn't stand was having these men essentially expose who they were. This is what they didn't like.

Remember what John went around doing? He was calling people to repentance, and Jesus basically continued that same message. He preached repentance in the kingdom of God, and what these religious leaders didn't like was the fact that these men were exposing their hearts for what was really there, and who they were deep down.

And that's frankly the problem that we all have. When we look at the Pharisees and the religious leaders of Israel, we can tend to go, yeah, what a bunch of jerks, blind jerks. Hey man, I can see myself in the reflection of a Pharisee, to be completely honest with you, because the problem that they had is the problem that I think that all of us have.

We don't like looking at who we are and the Word of God shows us who we are. I've said many times, the Word of God is likened to a mirror, and when we read it, when we hear the Word of God, we see ourselves, and what we see isn't terribly impressive. In fact, sometimes it's downright discouraging.

The question is, are you willing to look at your reflection in the mirror of God's Word or are you going to turn away and say no, I refuse, because if you do, I'm here to tell you that the Word of God is just going to bounce off your heart, and that's exactly what was happening to the religious leaders.

John came preaching repentance. Jesus came continuing that message of repentance and the kingdom of God, and because they were unwilling to listen and they were unwilling to receive what the Word of God had to say, the Word of God just bounced off their heart, and it was like, I'm not going to hear it.

So, what do you do? What do you do when you hear somebody saying something you don't like? You criticize them, because I have to find some way to justify the fact that I'm not going to listen to what you have to say. And so I'm going to like, I'm going to criticize you. And you say to me, you're a sinner. And I say, yeah, and you're ugly or something like that, or, you talk too much.

Or you start making up stupid things like the Pharisees did. John has a demon. He never even drinks wine. They knew exactly what a Nazirite vow was, for heaven's sakes. They knew what it meant.

Yeah, but they had to concoct criticisms because you see, if I can criticize you effectively, that deflects my responsibility to receive what you have to say because I've just basically put you in a light where really nobody should listen to anything you say, because you see, you're weird, and that's exactly what they were doing. And this whole latter part of the chapter is really all about that.

You remember the last 2 verses we read last week in this chapter? Just so we can see them all together, I want to put them up on the screen, and this time I'm going to put it up on the, from the NIV, because I like this. And this is all a parenthetical comment that Luke is making. And he says,

Luke 7:29-30 (NIV)

(All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been baptized by John. But the Pharisees and the experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.)

(All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been baptized by John. (Remember these from last week? And then He said, conversely) But the Pharisees and the experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.)

And all that means is, the people who got baptized by John were the people who received what He had to say, and you know what He had to say? You're a sinner. John did not have a deep message, it was; get ready, He's coming, you're a sinner, prepare your hearts. That was it. That was the essence of his message.

And so the people who received that message came down into the water and they were baptized by John, and as a result, we're told they had a recognition that God's ways are right, good, proper, true, and so forth, because their hearts had been adequately prepared through repentance and recognition of who they were.

But the people who heard John preach and they said, I'm not getting in that water. I don't need to get in that water because all this talk about sinner junk doesn't apply to me, it might apply to those people.

And I can even imagine some people who came to hear John preach when they saw the tax collectors making their way down into the water, they thought, well, good for them. They need to be in there. They need to get a good dunking. Hold them down, John, because they need to be clean. But me, I've heard his message, and that just doesn't apply.

That's fine, he can preach that message, it just doesn't apply to me, and they walked away unchanged, because they justified themselves, and that is such an important thing to understand here. If we refuse to recognize our sin, we're never going to feel the need to repent, obviously, and that is why the Jewish religious leaders hated John; it's why they hated Jesus; and it's why they criticized their lifestyles so much because they refused to recognize their sin.

So the only thing left to do is discredit the messenger, and that's why people hate you too, who don't know the Lord and have heard you talking about God or just even know that you're a Christian.

You might wonder why somebody at work talks so badly against you. They don't, you're like, they don't even know me. Yeah, but they probably know something about you. They probably know you're a believer, and you represent that simple message that people are sinners and they need a Savior. And they don't want anything to hear about it. It's like, just be quiet, I don't want to hear it. And so they'll discredit you if not in there just in their own mind, they'll do it to others as well.

If people are thinking up all kinds of excuses why they don't like you, or why they don't want to go to church it's just, remember it's all an elaborate smokescreen for the simple reality that they don't want to see themselves in the light of God's revealing Word.

How, man, I was where did I hear this? Somebody was telling me recently about, I can't remember if it was an email or what. Somebody was telling me about how he'd been invited to go to church over a protracted period of time, and he kept putting off, making excuses, making excuses, making excuses, and then finally, this guy who was persevering and inviting him to church asked at a time when he just didn't, he didn't have an excuse. So, he's like, okay. But in the days leading up to going to church he did his best to repent of every sin he knew about because he wanted to make sure when he went to church he wasn't going to get, I guess, struck down maybe when he walked through the doors or something.

But, that's the idea that there it, here's the question. Where does that come from? Where does that idea, where does that feeling come from that I can't go to church because I'm not worthy? I can't pick up the Bible and read it because I'm not, where I haven't been living the life that is consistent with reading the Bible or I really don't deserve to pray to God and have Him answer my prayers because you see I haven't been living the life that goes along with that stuff.

If you're going to it's like you want to pray for me fine, whatever, but I'm just not there yet. Where does that come from? Well, it comes from a deep-seated understanding that we are unworthy. And by the way, it's true. We are unworthy and that means all of us, but there's this misunderstanding about how we get worthy, because we're humans we think it's up to me.

Here's this guy telling me that when he finally got invited to church and decided to go, he had to get his life squared away first. And I bet people have said something like that to you. Well, I'll go to church when I get my life put together a little bit. That's like saying, I'll go to the hospital when I get well. It makes about as much sense, right?

I'll go to the doctor as soon as I'm feeling better. No, you go to the doctor because you're not feeling well. You go to church because you're a sinner and you need Jesus, right? Ah, we're just so weird, we people. But it's this deep entrenched sort of a thing like I got to get my life in order, but if people aren't willing to even think about it, if they don't want to get their life in order, and they don't even want to entertain the idea that they might possibly need to get their life in order, even though it's there, believe me, it's there. It's down there. They're just pushing it down.

I want to think about it, and so what I'm going to do to not think about it is I'm going to discredit you, and I'm going to do my best to have as much fun in this life as I can to get my mind off what's swirling deep within me, and that is this deep, disturbing idea that I am not okay. I don't know if you guys are aware of it.

Back in the 1970s, a book came out that just absolutely hit the bestseller list as quickly as I think any book could. It was called, I'm OK--You're OK. Anybody know about that? Yeah. I heard about it, and I heard people talking about it. Is it any wonder a book like that hit the bestseller list? I'm OK--You're OK.

The Bible has for years has been saying God's okay, you're not, and we don't like it. People don't like to read that particular book, but because, who wants to

think about it? Let me show you how John, the apostle worded this so beautifully in John chapter 3.

John 3:19-20 (ESV)

...this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.

...this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.

And that beautifully summarizes this whole idea of why the religious leaders hated John, why they hated Jesus, and why people today don't like Christians or Christianity or you, even if they don't know you because they don't want to come into the light.

Remember what Jesus said? He said, I am the Light of the world but then later on toward the end of His ministry, He said, you are the light of the world. He passed that baton to the church. You are now the light. We are the light of the world and we shine that light through Jesus Christ. And guess what? It gets the same response to us as it did to Him.

Turn off the light. Who wants to look at themselves? It's ugly. And you know what? They're right, aren't they? It is ugly. But I'm trusting that everybody in this room has dealt with the ugliness. at the cross because that's where we deal with it. We admit that there is ugliness there when the light shines into our lives. Grave ugliness. That's a terrible thing to have to admit, isn't it? In my life, I had to admit it through my own personal failure, and God had to show me just how far I could fail for me to look at my life and go, yuck.

But then we're presented with the cross where there is forgiveness and restoration and the life of Christ that begins to take hold where the life of self has been wallowing for all those years before.

Let's move on. Verse 36 in your Bible. If you look with me there. Really very much the same theme. *“One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him and he went into the Pharisees house and reclined at the table.”*

And I find that interesting. First of all, that Jesus, yeah, He did eat with sinners, but He also accepted invitations from Pharisees.

³⁷ *“And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, ³⁸ and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. ³⁹ Now when the Pharisee who invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner.”*

⁴⁰ *And Jesus answering him (isn't that interesting, answered his thoughts) said to him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” And he answered, “Say it, Teacher.” ⁴¹ “A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?” ⁴³ Simon answered, “The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt.” And he said to him, “You have judged rightly.”*

⁴⁴ *Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. ⁴⁶ You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷ Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.” ⁴⁸ And he said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” ⁴⁹ Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, “Who is this, who even forgives sins?” ⁵⁰ And he said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.””*

I have to tell you; I love this story. It has to be, without a doubt, one of the most beautiful accounts to come out of the Gospel narratives. But it starts with a very simple dinner invitation, of all people, from a Pharisee. And Jesus had been actively denouncing the Pharisees right along, so, it's hard to believe that this is a friendly invitation. We know that there were a few Pharisees who were friendly toward Jesus, Nicodemus being one of them, and so forth, but you wonder what's going on here.

More than likely, it was an invitation to watch Jesus to see if He was going to make any sort of errors of speech or whatever that they could bring against Him. But one thing's for sure, whenever you ask Jesus in for dinner, one thing is

it's never going to be boring. By the way, here's a side note. Don't get this woman confused with Mary, the sister of Lazarus.

This is not the same thing. That was a different event, and that took place at Bethany and she also anointed Him at dinner. But it wasn't a Pharisee who had a problem with it then, it was His own disciples, and their objection was that she had wasted a great deal of money on the anointing.

But anyway, this is a completely different event, and in case you're trying to wrap your head around what's happening in the story, you need to know that it was the custom in those days when you had a dinner party in a community, that it was a community event if, in fact, you were entertaining a well-known rabbi.

So if you invited the rabbi to your home and he chose to accept your invitation, you knew that your door was open to the town and anybody could come in and they weren't necessarily going to sit down at the table, but they could stand and they were invited to come into the room because it was assumed that the rabbi was going to share some pearls of wisdom during the dinner, and you didn't want to keep that just for yourself, that would be impolite.

You'd let people come in and actually come into your home, and that's how this woman was allowed into Simon, the Pharisees home in the first place. Normally she wouldn't have been welcomed because this woman was known in the community, but really she was only known for her sin. She was known to be a sinner. And in fact, twice in the passage, you'll notice she's called a sinner.

Now, you need to understand, that that term was used to describe notoriously ungodly people. It wasn't necessarily suggesting that she was the only sinner in town or that everybody else was good. It simply means that her behavior was bold, it was flagrant, it was public.

She wasn't trying to hold back the kind of a lifestyle that she had lived in the past. No attempt to hide it from public view. So let's read again what happens when she enters into the room.

Verse 37, again, it says, *“that a woman of the city who was, (again, a notorious) who lived a notorious, sinful lifestyle when she learned that Jesus was there at the table with the Pharisee, brought in this alabaster flask of ointment (and you'll notice in verse 38, it says) and standing behind him at his feet...”*

Now, I want you to get the picture of this and get the positioning correctly. When guests would come to dinner or would not just guests, when you'd sit

down with your family for dinner, the table would be very low to the floor. It's like an oriental sort of settings as well. The table might only be a foot or so off the floor, and rather than sitting up to the table, Indian style or something like that, what we call that cross legged or whatever, they would actually lay down and they would hold themselves up by their left elbow and they would eat with their right hand, holding themselves like this so the front of their body is facing the table and their feet are behind them.

Everybody is laying around the table and their feet are all stretching out behind them. That's how this woman was easily able to reach Jesus' feet. They were back here. So she comes walking around the back and she stands over Him and begins to weep and wet His feet with her tears. It's interesting. If you get online and you look for images of this woman anointing Jesus in the home of Simon the Pharisee, you'll see all kinds of really unbiblical pictures of this. Either Jesus is lying on this really tall couch, or He's sitting in a chair, and they didn't do that. His feet were behind Him.

So that's why it says in verse 38, “*she is standing behind Him,*” and you'll notice what she brought. It says in verse 37 that, “*she brought an alabaster flask of ointment,*” and this was a container that had a long neck which actually had to be broken off when you decided to use it. Once you decided to use the ointment, there was no going back, so you had to break off the neck and then pour it out. And frankly, these things were fairly expensive, and they weren't used unless there was some very special reason to use them, and the person was so moved to use it.

And this woman was moved because she had been told that Jesus was in town and no doubt she had heard Him speak, and then she hears that He is in the home of this Pharisee, and so she comes, she enters the house holding this expensive perfumed oil, and by the way, that's better than really ointment. It was perfumed oil. And she comes in there, I don't know, maybe planning on anointing his head. I'm not sure what her original intention is, but when she gets into the room and she catches sight of Jesus sitting at this table she is just immediately moved to tears.

She bursts into tears and begins to weep. I don't know if you've ever wept in the presence of Jesus but it can be a very beautiful thing, and all she could do was just weep. She started crying. It's weird. You've got this dinner party going on and you have a guest, and this woman comes in and begins to cry. And as she cries, her tears fall on his feet as she stands behind Him.

And so she gets down on her knees next to the feet of Jesus, and she begins to take her hair and wipe His feet with her hair and then pours the perfumed oil onto His feet.

What's interesting about this story is it contains for us a healthy dose of mystery, particularly as it relates to this woman, because we don't know exactly what happened that she became so moved to come and to do this to the Lord. We don't know exactly. We don't know if she had met Jesus face to face, or if she had just heard him teaching, preaching, we don't know.

We don't know if she'd just seen Him healing the sick. All we know is that something life changing happened in this woman's heart. That's all we know, and we know that she could not rest until she had expressed her heart to Him.

And the way she found to do that was by going to Him in this place and anointing Him with this expensive oil. And all of this, I'm sure, got, very much got the attention of everybody in the room, and all of the guests there, and all the other people, and we know it certainly got the attention of the host. We're told in verse 39 that, when the Pharisee whose home this was, saw all this taking place, it says, "*he said to himself,...*" He begins to have this conversation with himself.

Yeah, if this guy was any kind of a real prophet He'd know, He'd know, she's touching Him. She is a filthy, rotten, no-good sinner, and He's letting her touch His feet. That just wasn't done. Ah, if He knew. If He knew.

And so, Jesus begins to answer him right away. By the way, when God ever says something to you, I have something to say to you, you know you're probably into, for the woodshed. I have something to say to you.

Jesus goes on here, tells this story, this parable about this money lender who has two debtors. One owes him 500 denarii. I tried to figure that out. By the way, a denarii is about a day's wages. 500 denarii today's amount about \$85,000. The other person owed this man 50 denarii, somewhere around \$8,500 in today's amount, give or take.

But the one significantly less than the other, and the moneylender, we're told, realized that neither of these individuals could pay him back, and he decided to forgive both of the debts, and Jesus asked the simple question to Simon, which of the debtors is going to love the moneylender more after all that is done? A pretty simple question, actually.

The Pharisee got it right. He said, yeah, it's probably going to be the one who owed him the most, will probably have the most appreciation. And so Jesus says, you're right. And then He comes to the application, and this is so beautiful. The way Jesus handled this is so beautiful.

Verse 44, again, in your Bible, *“then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, Do you see this woman?”* Because I think that a lot of people just looked past folks like that. Do you see what's going on here, Simon? He says, *“I entered your house;”* and you didn't give me any water for my feet, but look what she's done. You didn't give me a friendly kiss as a greeting. But look what she has done. You didn't anoint my head with oil, but look what she has done.

Here's the deal, you need to understand that when you had dinner guests at your house back in those days, common courtesy, if you have any manners at all, you were going to do three things for that dinner guest.

First, you're just going to give them the kiss of peace. And even men to men. A man would reach out and put his hands on the shoulders of a man and he would give them a kiss on the side of the cheek and it was just, it was done. It was never omitted, and especially if you had a distinguished rabbi come to your home, you would make sure and do that.

Secondly, because the roads were dusty and people's shoes basically consisted of a soul strapped onto their foot, their feet get very dusty as they go to and fro, and so if you have a dinner guest you pour water into a pan and you let them, wash their feet. And you just, it's, you just do it. It's manners. It's good manners.

And then finally, a little bit of fragrant oil would be poured upon the guest's head to cool and refresh them. And remember when David prayed to the Lord and he said you make a table for me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil. He was talking about the way that a guest or a host would treat his guests to honor and refresh them from the difficulties of their day and their journey and so forth, and it's his good manners. And this guy didn't do one of those things for Jesus.

Didn't do one of them, and yet this sinful woman did all of them. She did all of them for Jesus, and she did it because her heart was filled with such a sense of gratitude, such a sense of the freedom that comes into the life of someone who sees Jesus, and I mean really sees Him for the first time, and they understand, I'm free. I didn't deserve to be set free, but I am free. I was lost, and now I'm found. I was blind, and now I see. And what's happening in this woman's heart, that's really the story here. It's the story under the story, you know what I mean?

What's taking place in this woman, this beautiful picture of what has happened in her heart and it's the story about the power of forgiveness to change a life.

Did you hear me? This is the story about the power of forgiveness to change a life. And that's why I love what Jesus said to her in verse 47. Will you look with me again in your Bible at verse 47?

“Therefore I tell you, her sins, (and he's like, and I know there are many they) which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, (and that means the one who sees little need for forgiveness) loves little.” ⁴⁸ And he said to her, *“Your sins are forgiven.”*

And this story so beautifully illustrates for us the powerful way that the two attitudes of the heart that tend to emerge as a response to Jesus Christ are played out. It started with our first story that we looked at where Jesus was talking to the people about, what am I going to liken you people to? You're like fickle children that are pouting. And then we have this beautiful, narrative in Simon, the Pharisee's house, and this woman that comes in, who's been changed, and so we see these two responses, these two responses to how people saw their need of a Savior.

Simon, the Pharisee, who doesn't recognize his need. He doesn't really think that he has anything to be forgiven from, and so he's forgiven little, and as a result, he loves little. But here's this woman who comes into the home and she knows beyond a shadow of a doubt that she is a wretched sinner and she deserves judgment. And as a result of hearing the words of Jesus and trusting in Him and receiving forgiveness for all of that sin, all of that sin, she loves much because she has been forgiven much. And we're reminded in this story that the one thing that shuts off a person toward God is their refusal to see themselves as the truly needy person that they are, right?

If you refuse to see yourself as the person that you are, you're not going to come to God for forgiveness and therefore you're not going to love Him very much. But when you see yourself as you are and you come to Him for forgiveness and you know you've been forgiven. Wow. You forgave me for all that?

There's a very strange truth that we find actually corroborated in the pages of Scripture and in our own lives, and that is that the closer that we get to knowing Jesus Christ, the more aware we become of the fact that we are sinners.

Did you know that? I think there's this picture that we have in our minds that the closer we get to Jesus, the more we become saintly. I think the closer we get to

Jesus, the more we are made aware of just how sinful we really are, but just how much He has forgiven our sin. And frankly, that's one of the reasons Paul said to Timothy, let me put this on the screen for you from 1st Timothy 1.

1 Timothy 1:15 (NIV)

Here's a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-of whom I am the worst.

Here's a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-of whom I am the worst.

People, the apostle Paul is not just saying that to garner your pity or your appreciation. Oh, Paul, what a wonderful thing to say. I know you don't mean it, but it's sure nice to hear you say it anyway. No, no, no, he meant it. He meant it because here was a man who came to a place of recognizing his sin, and the more he got closer to Jesus, the more he was shown the reality of his heart, and the more he realized, oh how I need Him, how I need Him every day. Right?

I'm going to ask the men who are serving communion to go ahead and ready themselves to do that. Jane, if you'd bring the house lights down just a bit, if you could, because we're going to take a moment to apply the things that we've been talking about here this morning because communion is a wonderful time to once again reiterate to the Lord our God, this is why you came to die for me on the cross. It wasn't because the person sitting next to me was a sinner. It wasn't because my neighbor is a sinner. You came to die on the cross because I am a sinner, and you've revealed that to me.

But you don't reveal it in condemnation, does He? He doesn't reveal our sin to us in the form of condemnation because there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. He reveals it to us to understand the depth of His love.

Yes, you are a sinner, my child, He says. But look what I did. Look what I did to take care of your sin. Look what I did to make sure that sin never ever gets in between you and me. I sent My Son. I sent Him to be condemned so that you would never have to be. I sent Him to be forsaken so you would never be forsaken.