



August 29, 2021  
"Relatable Like Jesus"  
Luke 7:36-50  
Pastor Gary Hamrick

Jesus had a unique way of loving and relating to people so that both sinful, secular people, as well as righteous, religious people were drawn to him. He had a wonderful way of helping people feel welcomed and valued in the eyes of God that endeared them to him. How can we live our lives in a similar way so that people are drawn to Jesus through us? Sometimes Christians are living dangerously like the world, and other times Christians are living in a Christian bubble with no influence on the world. Both extremes are wrong. In this message Pastor Gary helps us understand more about finding the balance that Jesus had so that people are drawn to him through us.

## 1. Simon, Jesus, and the Unnamed Woman

### a. The background

- i. Pastor Gary said, "This story is found only here in the Gospel of Luke. There is a very similar story to this found in the other Gospels, but it is not the same. The other stories speak about a woman who also [brought] fragrant oil to a dinner party, but that particular dinner party [was] at the home of Simon the Leper, [who] was different from Simon the Pharisee. The other Gospels that talk about a similar story mention that the woman who [anointed] Jesus with this fragrant oil was Mary of Bethany, [which] is where that story [took] place. She was a righteous woman, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, and she [anointed] the head of Jesus. ... It is believed that this story [took] place in Capernaum although it doesn't specifically say."

### b. Simon the Pharisee

- i. Within Judaism, just like denominations in Protestant Christianity today, there were different sects.
- ii. Pharisees were known for their strict adherence to the Mosaic law.

- iii. Pastor Gary said, “There’s nothing wrong with wanting to obey God’s law except when being right is more important than doing the right thing, and there’s a big difference.”
  - iv. In [Matthew 23:1–36](#), Jesus “called out” the Pharisees for three specific things: 1) lording their authority over people; 2) seeking public recognition; 3) strictly adhering to the minutia of the law while at the same time neglecting the more important aspects of the law, such as justice, mercy, and faithfulness.
  - v. The Pharisees were always in conflict with Jesus because they didn’t think he was as religious as they were.
  - vi. The Pharisees rejected Jesus’ claim that he was the Messiah.
- c. The Unnamed Woman
- i. Jesus was reclining at the table, as was the custom in that day, which is why [Luke 7:38](#) tells us that this woman came and “*stood at His feet behind him.*”
  - ii. [Luke 7:39](#) tells us that this unnamed woman was a “*sinner,*” which means that she was a prostitute.
  - iii. This uninvited woman came to the dinner gathering with an alabaster flask filled with fragrant oil.
    - 1. It is believed that this reddish-colored fragrant oil came from India.
    - 2. A single flask of this oil would have cost one year’s salary!
  - iv. This woman was broken in spirit, and she brought a remarkable gift that demonstrated adoration.
  - v. Not only did she kiss his feet, she wiped the tears that fell on Jesus’ feet with her hair.
- d. The Guests
- i. When the guests at Simon’s house saw a prostitute anointing Jesus’ with this expensive and fragrant oil, there’s no doubt that everyone stopped eating to watch what was taking place.
- e. Jesus
- i. Pastor Gary said, “One of the things from this story that I want us to see is not only what Jesus did but what Jesus didn’t do, and what he didn’t do was withdraw from her. He didn’t recoil; he just allowed her to touch him, and [he allowed her to do what she was doing]. But this would have been normally something that otherwise would have been a very awkward moment, except not with Jesus. ... [This woman was] now remorseful and repentant about her life. [All she had] ever known as a prostitute [were] men who had abused her, taken advantage of her, and rejected her. ... Perhaps, for the very first time, she met a man who genuinely, sincerely loved her and not rejected her. So, what [Jesus didn’t] do was just as important as what he [did] do. ... [She

was] flooded with emotion that was probably a combination of remorse and repentance and regret over her sin, and on the other hand, overwhelming love and gratitude and adoration for the only one who could forgive her of her sin. ... The shame that bound her was broken by the love that found her. ... When she had this encounter with Jesus, she began to realize that her past and her sin and the guilt of it and the shame of it and the weight of it, the dirt of it, all of that was being washed [away] miraculously by this encounter with Jesus...

f. The parable

- i. Simon disapproved of Jesus' response to the sinful woman, and Jesus, being aware of Simon's feelings, spoke a parable about a creditor and a debtor.
- ii. Pastor Gary said, concerning the meaning of Jesus' parable, **"Your love for God will be in direct proportion to your understanding of how much he has forgiven you. If you don't love God much, it's not because you haven't sinned much; it's because you don't understand your need for forgiveness much.** (Emphasis added)
- iii. Pastor Gary said Jesus had a "unique appeal" to "both sinful, secular people like the prostitute and righteous, religious people like the Pharisees. Think about how Jesus was able to relate to both. What was it about Jesus that made it possible for sinners and saints to feel welcomed around him? And here's the important question for all of us: if you really want to be a Christ-follower, how well do [you] follow Jesus' example in that regard? Now, I'm not talking about this as some kind of a popularity contest like how well [we are] loved or liked by all types of people. ... Jesus had a certain way with people that made him both relatable and approachable regardless of who the person was or even how they lived. Don't misunderstand me, I'm not suggesting that by being relatable and approachable, that somehow Jesus condoned their sinful behavior or overlooked it because he didn't. [Jesus had] a wonderful way of loving people and relating to people that made both prostitutes and Pharisees feel like their lives mattered. ... It takes work to find that balance in our lives where we can be relatable and approachable to those who don't know Christ as well as to those who do. ... This will not come easily. If we don't find balance in this regard, we will end up gravitating to the extremes. Life can be more easily lived in the extremes [but] it shouldn't. ... **You will end up partying with the prostitutes, living like the world and [then] showing up for church on Sunday, or you will end up fellowshiping with the Pharisees.** You will know your Bible inside and out, and you will go to church regularly, but you will have little to no impact on a world that needs him. ... My challenge to all of us when I read this story is to look at Jesus'

wonderful, tactful, balanced way that he had with people who were in completely different extremes of life. ... We should all be challenged by this. ... The fact of the matter is that there are some Christians who are living dangerously like the world, and there are other Christians who are living in a Christian bubble with no influence on the world. (Emphasis added)

## 2. Live a consistent, uncompromised life

- a. Jesus didn't change based on whom he was with; he was consistently uncompromised.
- b. Jesus knew who he was, he knew what he believed, and he knew what his mission was.
- c. Pastor Gary said, "Even though their motives were wrong, their observations were right. The observations they had about Jesus were [that he was a man of integrity, he always spoke the truth, and he wasn't swayed by people]. If we want to live consistent, uncompromised lives we've got to learn [these] three things. ... {This} is not always easy, especially when you are rubbing shoulders with people who don't share your values and share your faith."
  - i. [Matthew 22:15-17](#) - *"Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk. And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, 'Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?'"*

## 3. Don't be judgmental

- a. Jesus never looked down on people, and he never treated anyone like he was better than anyone else, even though he was.
- b. Pastor Gary said, "[This] was Simon the Pharisee's problem... He was bothered by [the prostitute who came to his house], and he was disappointed that Jesus allowed her to touch him. ... Simon couldn't see his own sinfulness because of his own righteousness, which itself is a sin. ... So, let me get this straight, a gossiping, bitter, glutton is a better Christian than somebody who might have a foul mouth, and drink too much, and have anger issues. In other words, here's the deal: I'm not condoning any of that... **What I am saying is that a sign of Christian and spiritual maturity is when you are more concerned about your own sin than the sin of other people.**" ... **When we see ourselves as much in need of grace as the next person, then [we] won't be judgmental.**" (Emphasis added)
  - i. Some people are bothered by people cussing, but they themselves are a gossip.
  - ii. Some people are bothered by people who are angry too often, but

they themselves have unresolved bitterness.

- iii. Some people are bothered by people who drink, but they themselves eat too much.

#### 4. Don't be legalistic

- a. Pastor Gary said, "There are some things in the Bible that are clearly spelled out as right and as wrong. But there are other things that the Bible defers to an individual's sanctified conscience to determine. Legalism happens when [we] want [others] to live by [our] conscience, and then [we] look down on [others] or think less of [others] when [they] don't. ... The problem we get into is when we have a certain conviction and somebody else doesn't, and we think they should. [It's then that] we have [a] legalistic attitude, which is not honoring before God. We have to make allowance for the fact that whether you like it or not, some people will have some liberties in some areas that [we] don't, and [you will] have some liberties in some areas that other people don't... Jesus led with grace and the Pharisees led with legalism. Legalism will do nothing but alienate you with people. ... [Legalism] is the sister of judgmentalism."

#### 5. Don't become isolated

- a. Jesus went wherever sinners were, which angered the Pharisees.
- b. Jesus was accused of associating with sinners after he chose Matthew, the tax collector, as one of his disciples.
  - i. [Luke 5:27-32](#) - *"After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi; sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, 'Follow Me.' So he left all, rose up, and followed Him. Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them. And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, 'Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.'"*
- c. Pastor Gary said, "[We] can't isolate ourselves within the four walls of the church and become exclusive in our Christian lives. It's dangerous, it's unhealthy, it's antithetical to the kingdom."

#### 6. Love people

- a. We have to love people.
- b. We don't have to love what they do, but we do have to love their souls.
- c. When the Lord provides opportunity, we must tell them about Jesus and tell them our story.

- i. [1 Peter 3:15-16](#) – *“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience...”* (NIV 1984)

### Discussion Questions

1. Read [Luke 7:36-50](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
3. Read and discuss the background of Simon, Jesus, and the unnamed woman. (See #1a through #1e above)
4. Spend time talking about the character and nature of Jesus that makes people sense they are welcomed and valued. (See #1e-i above)
5. Invite the people in your group to share of times when they encountered a person who had a way of making them feel valued the way God values them.
6. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's remarks about finding balance in our lives where we can be relatable and approachable to those who don't know Christ very well. (See #1.f.iii above)
7. Invite the people in your group to share examples of their own challenges and the work it takes, to find balance between living in the world and living in a Christian bubble.
8. Read and discuss the three things that Jesus was known for. (See #2c above)
9. Invite the people in your group to share about times when, they were or currently are, challenged to live a consistent, uncompromised life and how they have responded.
10. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments to not be judgmental. (See #3 above)
11. Invite the people in your group to share of times they were challenged to find balance between a judgmental perspective and grace.
12. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments to not be legalistic. (See #4 above)

13. Invite the people in your group to share of times they were challenged to find balance between a person's liberty of conscience in contrast to what the Bible defines as right and wrong.
14. How did you sense God increased your spiritual maturity during times of finding balance?
15. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments about not becoming isolated and instead influence the world by loving people they way Jesus loved you. (See #5 and #6 above)
16. Read and discuss [Luke 5:27-32](#). (See #5i above)
17. Do you rely on the Holy Spirit to minister to you as you live in the world but not of the world?
18. Read and discuss [1 Peter 3:15-16](#). (See #6c-i)
19. Are you prepared to share the gospel?
20. Are you prepared to share your testimony?
21. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)