

SEVEN RIVERS

— CHURCH —

Sermon Discussion Guide

Love Walked Among Us: The Guest

Luke 7:36-50

April 17 & 18, 2021

Part 1: Pray

The primary goal for our Life Group meetings is to *experience Jesus in our midst in his presence and power*. We want him to be at work by His Spirit ministering to us and through us to one another so that people are cared for, encouraged to lead God-pleasing lives and equipped to be the faithful presence of Jesus' love in the world. Ask God to reveal his truth in this passage to transform you through your discussion time.

Part 2: Read the Text

Read the passage from the sermon. Keep a focus on key words, repeated phrases, or major themes.

Part 3: Reflect on the Sermon

Introduction

1. We all keep a scorecard for ourselves and others. Punctual people take note of who is late. Those who wear masks look with scorn at those who don't (and vice versa) Grammarians bristle at the misuse of an infinitive. What kind of scorecard do you keep?

The Failure of Religion: Judging

1. How did Brandon define judging? How can we see this in the Pharisee host?
2. Brandon explained that when others do something wrong, we tend to blame their character. (They were late because they don't care about making other people wait.) When we fail, we tend to blame our circumstances or environmental factors. (There was a lot of traffic.) Do you find this to be true of you? Why is that?

3. Consider the following Henri Nouwen quote:

We have to give up measuring our meaning and value with the yardstick of others. To die to our neighbors means to stop judging them, to stop evaluating them, and thus to become free to be compassionate. Compassion can never coexist with judgment because judgment creates the distance, the distinction, that prevents us from really being with the other.

How does a judgmental spirit block our ability to love?

The Failure of Religion: Self-righteousness

1. Self-righteousness never appears in a vacuum. It's always us comparing ourselves to other people. A self-righteous person believes they are morally superior to others. Is this a positive or negative trait in your eyes?
2. Brandon said that self-righteousness is hard to see in ourselves, like having bad breath. How can you become more self-aware about your own self-righteousness?
3. How does self-righteousness block our ability to love?

The Failure of Religion: Legalism

1. Legalism involves living by a set of rules to justify yourself, like abiding by proper etiquette, avoiding places or practices that are taboo, or even strictly adhering to a certain diet. Can you think of rules you abide by or were taught as a child? Have you used these rules to feel good about yourself or better than others who don't follow them?

2. The problem with legalism is that it never addresses the heart, never deals with motivations. How is Jesus's ethic different? (See Matthew 5.)
3. How does legalism hinder our ability to love?

The Failure of Religion: Forgiveness

1. Why can't religion offer you the hope of forgiveness?
2. Why did Jesus tell the Pharisee the parable of the two debtors? What was his point? How does it apply to us?
3. Reflect on the following quote from John Newton, the former slave trader turned pastor and author of 'Amazing Grace'. Personalize his words into your own prayer. Press in and rest upon the gospel he heralds.

Alas! My dear friend, you know not what a poor, unprofitable, unfaithful creature I am. So much forgiven, so little love. So many mercies, so few returns.

Such great privileges, and a life so sadly below them. Instead of rejoicing in God, I go mourning for the most part.

Indwelling sin presses me close.

When I would do good, evil is present with me.

I can attempt nothing but it is debased, polluted, and spoiled by my depraved nature.

My sins of omission are innumerable.

In short, I am a riddle to myself; a heap of inconsistency.

But it is said, 'We have an Advocate with the Father.' (**1 John 2:1**)

Here hope revives. Though wretched in myself, I am complete in Him.

He is made of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. (**1 Cor. 1:30**)

Part 4: Summarize the Message

How would you summarize the sermon to someone who has not heard it? What are your two or three key takeaways from the message and your discussion? How does this sermon change your perspective on God? Your own heart? And/or, how to follow Jesus?