

not a fan.

COMPLETELY.
COMMITTED.
FOLLOWER.

Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

Luke 7.36-50
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I. Connecting With One Another

Have you ever heard or used the phrase “yada, yada”? It can be used in place of explaining oneself further. For instance, “I had to run some errands, you know, yada yada...”

If you haven’t used this phrase before, try using it in a sentence.

II. Introduction to this Series and Study

Last week, we began a Lenten series entitled Not a Fan: Becoming Completely Committed Followers of Jesus (learn more at gspc.org/not-a-fan). Again, fans are great: They fill stadiums to cheer on their favorite sports teams, tune into award shows to applaud beloved actors and musicians, or stand in line for a popular author’s latest book. But Jesus never calls us to be His fans, cheering from the sidelines, tuning in when “there’s nothing better on,” or getting involved when it’s convenient. No, Jesus isn’t looking for *fans* – He’s calling *followers*, people who model their lives after His.

We continue our Lenten journey in Luke 7, at the home of Simon, a good, successful, church-going kind of guy who has invited Jesus and some friends over for dinner. “You know, just an informal get together, yada yada.” In the midst of this comfortable setting, however, Jesus differentiates between being a fan and a follower, and in the process, reveals a deeper kind of “yada.”

III. Study the Text

- a. Read Luke 7.18-35. Where do you notice a growing tension in these verses? Between whom? Why do you think this tension exists? Where is Jesus in all this tension?

Recall that John the Baptist – who sends two of his disciples to inquire of Jesus – is the son of Zechariah, who served faithfully in the temple. And in the first century, the temple was the place – THE place – where the sick were proclaimed well and forgiveness was pronounced to the sinner, thus allowing the (previously) sick and sinful proper restoration into society.

How does recalling that further inform your understanding of Luke 7.18-35?

- b. What do you think Jesus means in verse 35, “But wisdom is proved right by all her children”?
- c. Read Luke 7.36-50. What do you find interesting or surprising in this passage? How do you think you would have reacted if you were sitting – or rather, reclining – at the table that evening?
- d. Scholars note that the phrase “who had lived a sinful life in that town” is a first century Semitic idiom or phrase meaning, essentially, “publicly” or “well known.” Luke most likely uses “sinful life,” then, as a sort of euphemism for “prostitute.” (Throughout history, some have concluded that this woman was none other than Mary Magdalene. While it’s possible, we simply have no way of knowing with certainty, since Luke does not include her name.)

Notice, again, “the Pharisee’s” response to this woman’s actions in verse 39. Would you have reacted similarly – or differently? Why?

- e. In verses 37-38, this “sinful woman” anoints Jesus with perfume from an alabaster jar (probably previously used to attract men), wets His feet with her tears, dries His feet with her hair, and kisses His feet.

Why do you think she responds this way to Jesus? Is there anything that could prompt you to act in a similar manner, with a bold, extravagant display of love and affection?

- f. In verses 44-47, Jesus himself juxtaposes the “sinful woman’s” actions with Simon’s hospitality (or lack thereof). Each of the actions Jesus mentions were common ways of graciously welcoming a guest into one’s home in the first century. And yet, who was the true host? Or, to put it another way, who has truly welcomed Jesus? Who’s his fan – and who’s his follower?

The first part of Jesus’ statement in verse 47 (Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven – for she loved much) seems to imply that her actions have *earned* her forgiveness. Notice, however, the second half of the verse: “But he who has been forgiven little *loves* little.” So, were her actions what led to her forgiveness – or were her actions the response of being previously forgiven? How do you understand it?

- g. In verses 41-42, Jesus seems to imply that this woman was “more sinful” than Simon, the Pharisee. Do you think He means it that way? Or is that how Simon understood it (for which Jesus engages from a Pharisaic perspective)? To engage this from another angle, see Romans 5.20.
- h. When this woman departs in verse 50, is she still the “sinful woman” we met in verse 37? Why – or why not? What – if anything – has changed?
What do you think Simon thought of her? Why?

IV. Reflect and Respond

- a. In what ways are you like Simon the Pharisee? In what ways are you like the sinful woman?
- b. How does your life look differently now that Jesus has forgiven you of your sin? Are there times you question whether you’re actually forgiven?
- c. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the word *yada’* means “to know.” But’s not just knowledge *about*, it’s a kind of intimate knowing. In fact, the word is used to describe the intimate knowledge between a husband and wife.

It could be said that Simon the Pharisee *knew about* Jesus, but that the sinful woman *knew* Jesus. What’s the difference? Read Philippians 3.1-11, where Paul appropriates the concept of *yada’* to our walk of faith. How could you more fully seek to know Jesus in His death and resurrection this Lenten season?

V. Spend some time in prayer:

- a. Lift up the faith community of Good Shepherd: the babies, children, students, parents, adults and senior adults, that all would connect with God, grow in faith, and serve in love, seeking to become a follower of Jesus; that all would not only know *about* Jesus, but know – *really know* – Jesus,
- b. Pray for the pastors, elders, deacons and staff of our church, that the Spirit of God would lead their discussions and decisions for His glory,
- c. Ask God to draw us into His presence at our three worship gatherings this weekend – that it wouldn’t just be another church service (*yada, yada*), but that we would experience *yada’*, that we would know God through His Word.