

# Luke 7b: HG Bishop Youssef

His Grace Bishop Youssef ~ فسوي ابن الالة فاين تاطع · LUKE 7: 29 - 50 ~ Bible Study (English & Arabic - يبرع)

## John the Baptist Sends Messengers to Jesus

00:00

**29** And when all the people heard *Him*, even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. **30** But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.

- Justified God
  - Publicly declared and confessed the goodness and justice of God.
  - They approved of what God had done and blessed His name for sending among them such a great prophet like John the Baptist.
  - They received the word of God and listened to the preaching of John the Baptist and were baptized by him
  - Those who believe and obey the message that God sends, we declare the righteousness and justice of God.
- Those who had repented and received the ministry of St John the Baptist found it easy to accept the message of salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. But those who did not, would accuse and condemn God.
- The will of God was that all who heard John's teaching would repent and then accept the message of salvation
- The Pharisees and lawyers did not believe the testimony of John the Baptist, and thus rejected the will of God and the economy of God relating to their salvation. That's why they were not saved.

**31** And the Lord said, "To what then shall I liken the men of this generation, and what are they like?"

**32** They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, saying:

'We played the flute for you,  
And you did not dance;  
We mourned to you,  
And you did not weep.'

**33** For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' **34** The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' **35** But wisdom is justified by all her children."

- The Lord uses an image to explain the leaders of Israel's conduct
- They have been exceptionally blessed with two great divine messages:
  - One by John the Baptist, the servant of God
  - One by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah and Incarnated Son of God
- He chose an everyday scene from the people's life that they had witnessed often:
  - Children played simple games in the open air (e.g. a marketplace)
  - The resentment of a group of children who refused to take part in or approve of any game
    - So there are a group of children and when they see the children playing a happy game like a wedding - they refuse to participate. (The flute)
    - So the children play a different game like a funeral - and they still refuse to participate. (The mourning)
    - You resent every act
  - The children that played the flute and were happy represent the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ
  - The children that played the mourning and grieving part represent John the Baptist and his disciples who preached the doctrine of repentance
  - The children who refused to join both groups are the Scribes and Pharisees who were not pleased with either one
- They condemned John the Baptist for his asceticism and said "He has a demon."
- They condemned the Lord Jesus Christ for His tenderness and said "He is a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners"
  - This doesn't mean that the Lord would get drunk... it was a false accusation just as John the Baptist did not have a demon.
  - "Friend of tax collectors and sinners" - in their mind they meant that He participated in their sins. This is also a false accusation.
  - In reality, He was truly their friend in that He loved them and did not despise or push them away. Rather, He wanted them to change and abandon the sinful life and consecrate themselves to the Godly life. He wanted to rescue them from the guilt, shame, power and penalty of their sins.
- Wisdom is justified by all her children
  - The wise man is proved to be wise by his wise actions
  - The wise person is the one that accepted God's will by:
    - Repenting at the hand of John the Baptist
    - Rejoicing at the message of the Lord Jesus Christ
  - In our contemporary time, those who are opposing the teachings of the Scripture are not children of the wisdom of God. They are like the contentious children of Israel that the Lord said to them "You are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, saying: 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we mourned to you, and you did not weep.'"
    - Let us study and examine ourselves:
      - Are we the children of wisdom or not?
      - Are we attending to the commandment of God?
      - Are we attending to the Mysteries of the Church?
      - Are we following the glad tidings of the Gospel of Salvation?

- Or are we like the Scribes and Pharisees rejecting the will of God toward ourselves?

## A Sinful Woman Forgiven

17:03

- The story of the sinful woman who went to the house of Simon the Pharisee is about repentance and the relationship between forgiveness and love, so we pray it every day as the gospel of the Midnight Hour

<sup>36</sup> Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. <sup>37</sup> And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, <sup>38</sup> and stood at His feet behind *Him* weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped *them* with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed *them* with the fragrant oil. <sup>39</sup> Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw *this*, he spoke to himself, saying, "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman *this is* who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."

<sup>40</sup> And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you."

So he said, "Teacher, say it."

<sup>41</sup> "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. <sup>42</sup> And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?"

<sup>43</sup> Simon answered and said, "I suppose the *one* whom he forgave more."

And He said to him, "You have rightly judged." <sup>44</sup> Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped *them* with the hair of her head. <sup>45</sup> You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. <sup>46</sup> You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. <sup>47</sup> Therefore I say to you, her sins, which *are* many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loves little."

<sup>48</sup> Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

<sup>49</sup> And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

<sup>50</sup> Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

- The invitation of the Pharisee seems to show the relationship between the Lord Jesus Christ and the religious leaders of Israel.

- Although He knew they were against His ministry, He did not waste any opportunity to bring someone to salvation
- He accepted the invitation
- Maybe this Pharisee heard about His teaching and acknowledged Him as a Prophet and invited Him to know Him more.
- The Lord did not seek such feasts but did not refuse them because He saw opportunity to speak to people about the Gospel of Salvation
- He sat down to eat
  - The word there is actually "he laid down" which was the typical way of eating in the East
- The woman who was a sinner
  - The "who was a sinner" usually denotes sins of chastity
  - Who is she?
    - Opinion 1: Mary Magdalene
      - There is no evidence in Scripture or the Early Tradition of the Church to tell us that this woman was Mary Magdalene
      - Origen the Scholar rejects that opinion
      - Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine were doubtful
      - The first one to say this was probably Gregory the Great - Roman Catholic Patriarch
    - Opinion 2: Mary the sister of Lazarus
      - There is no evidence in Scripture or the Early Tradition of the Church to tell us that this woman was Mary the sister of Lazarus
      - We know that Mary anointed the feet of the Lord with oil in a separate instance just before Palm Sunday (John 11)
      - In reality, we don't know who she is
  - The preaching of the Lord moved her heart towards repentance
- Costly Fragrant Perfume
  - She had costly fragrant perfume with her - most likely she used it in her ungodly life to seduce men
  - Proverbs 7:6-27 about the Crafty Harlot
  - "I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloe, and cinnamon." (Proverbs 7:17)
  - She is taking the tools of her harlotry and breaking them at the feet of the Lord
  - The Lord is smelling the perfume of repentance and telling her that this perfume of repentance is better than all spices (Song of Solomon 4:10)
- How did she express her love to the Lord
  - She stood at his feet from behind Him
    - She felt unworthy to confront Him
    - The guests used to recline at their meals on the left side, with their feet extending from the table
  - She wept
    - "Give me, O Lord, many fountains of tears, as You gave, in the past, to the sinful woman."
    - "Godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation" (2 Cor 7:10)
  - She washed His feet
    - It was customary in those days for the host to wash the feet of the guests, but Simon the Pharisee did not

- She kissed His feet
  - This is a symbol of love and affection
- She poured the perfume on His feet
  - Customarily, the host should pour oil on the guest's head
- She dried His feet with her hair
  - At that time, leaving hair flowing was considered immodest
  - We can imagine how awkward this scene was, and how the people watched her in silence and condemned her
- Simon the Pharisee's Intentions
  - He invited the Lord but was very cold to Him - He did not do any of the customary things. When the woman does all of this, he feels relief because it gives him an excuse if someone asks "well why didn't you do these things"
  - He says to himself "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman *this is* who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."
    - This Man - reflects the arrogance of the Pharisee
    - If He were a prophet
      - He thought that He was a prophet, but now He doesn't think so
      - If He were a prophet, He would see the heart of this woman and would avoid her!
- Jesus' Response to Simon
  - Christ wants to show Simon that not only is He a Prophet, but He is God, Himself.
  - Maybe in the world she is known as a sinner and a harlot... but in heaven she is known as a repentant woman
    - Sometimes we judge people as sinners and hold it over their head... but before God, they are repentant
    - If you compare Judas, the disciple, and Demas the thief... which one is in Paradise and which one is not?
    - "He, Jesus, heard the Pharisees thinking. The emphasis is on these words: 'you have been thinking evil of Me... I have something to say to you.' Christ being all-knowledgeable knew not only the character of this woman - although this was not a big deal since she was known by all people - but knew also the secret thoughts and reasoning of Simon the Pharisee and answers them, showing that He is not only a prophet, but more than a prophet because He is the incarnate Son of God." - St Augustine
  - Christ gives an illustration from everyday life (lending and borrowing)
    - In both cases, the debtors could never hope to pay their creditor - 50 or 500 - they had nothing to repay. But the creditor forgave both regardless of their merits. Both are debtors and equally broke - which one will love the creditor more? He to whom he forgave more
    - The answer was too easy so Simon was perplexed and maybe uncomfortable to answer
    - But the Lord praised him and commended him "You have rightly judged."
    - The creditor is God and the two debtors are Simon and the sinful woman. Both are sinners (debtors) and have nothing with which to repay their debt... but the Lord will come and die on the cross for both of them and forgive both of them because of His love for them. Which one will love Him more?
  - The Lord makes a comparison between the woman and Simon

- He turned to the woman (since she's behind Him) and looked at Simon
- The Pharisee who did not even observe basic courtesy
  - To greet each guest with a kiss
  - To offer them a basin to wash their feet
  - To anoint their head with oil (especially an honored guest)
- The Lord asked him - Do you see this woman? Do you see her love? Do you see her repentance? Do you see her devotion? That's what I see but you are blind and cannot see...
  - You gave Me no water for My feet but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head
  - You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss my feet since the time I came in
  - You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed my feet with fragrant oil.
  - Why? Because she realized that her sins are many. And because she was forgiven more, she loved more. But you think that your sins are not many - there is nothing to be forgiven of you... so your love is so little.
- To whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.
- Jesus' response to the woman
  - Your sins are forgiven
    - Her sins, though many (she's the 500 debtor in the illustration), and though public, are forgiven
    - She loved Him BECAUSE of the forgiveness. He did not give her forgiveness because she loved Him.
    - He "freely" forgave her (like the illustration)
    - When you believe that the Lord forgave you, you will love Him more. The more you realize your own sins and see what the Lord forgives you for, the more you will love the Lord.
  - Your faith has saved you
    - He intended to confirm her faith by pointing to it when He told her "Your faith has saved you" to show that her faith is the grounds for her spiritual deliverance
  - The woman came in complete humility, but He did not want her to stay in this house where she's being condemned by these people - so He raised her up, acknowledging her faith and her love, forgave her sins and sent her in peace.
  - She showed to God greater gratitude in her love than the self-righteous Pharisee. Her repentance made her more open to God's mercy than the Pharisee who withheld the customary practices which he should offer to his Guest.

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