

Title: HOW CAN WE FORGIVE? LUKE 7:36 – 50
(Chatham, NJ; 06/16/13, AM) [S-P, Inductive Narrative Analysis]

Theme: Forgiveness pervades this entire episode, and forgiveness demands judgment first.

Purpose: To demonstrate that forgiveness transcends mere acceptance and that judgment against sin precedes forgiveness.

Introduction:

1. We are a society of misplaced compassion; we offer acceptance before forgiveness.
2. We presume to accept everyone no matter what.
3. Planet Fitness commercials offer a judgment free zone, except for “lunks.”
4. It isn’t judgment-free for them.
5. As soon as you exclude something, you judge it.
6. The story of the woman at Simon’s house depends on correct assumptions about forgiveness, repentance, and judgment.

I. If forgiveness isn’t offered, there is no controversy about Jesus’ authority to do so.

A. One of the centers of the controversy

1. The woman’s actions demonstrate repentance
2. Simon thinks Jesus should know about her reputation (39)
3. Jesus forgives her and sends her away in peace (48-50)
4. “Who is this?” they ask; he forgives sins

B. At the heart of the Gospel and of Jesus’ authority

1. Critics ask the same question in Mark 2:7
2. As in Luke Jesus perceives what they fail to express openly
3. He heals the paralytic to prove that he can also forgive
4. Paul in Colossians 1:19-22 expresses Jesus’ role as one of reconciliation
5. Eph. 1:7, redemption = forgiveness of sins
6. Forgiveness is central to Jesus’ mission

II. If forgiveness isn’t a central issue, the woman has no ability to love more than others (she is the other center of the controversy)

A. The parable and application

1. A story of two debtors (41-42)
2. Simon concludes the obvious answer
3. Jesus applies the story to the woman
4. She did three things that Simon should have done: tears/water, kiss, oil
5. Jesus admits that her sins were many (47)
6. Forgiveness is central to her behavior

B. More forgiveness = more love

1. She knew what she was; Simon didn’t
2. She perceived her sin; Simon didn’t
3. Amount of forgiveness resulted in a greater amount of love (I think it odd that Jesus puts love where gratitude might be; are they related?)
4. Grace should empower us as it empowered Paul, 1 Tim. 1:13
5. Forgiveness demands consciousness of wrongdoing

III. If forgiveness isn’t relevant, Jesus has entered a judgment-free zone

A. No better or worse

1. The woman cannot be judged to be better than Simon

2. Also, there can be no distinction between the righteous and the unrighteous
3. Either we are all Pharisees or we are all repentance sinners or something else
4. In a judgment-free zone who knows what we are?

B. Forgiveness founded upon judgment first

1. "This is the judgment: . . . people loved darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil." (John 3:19)
2. Repentance implies that something needs to change, something is wrong
3. Forgiveness is always precluded by this
4. This entire story hinges on that a judgment has been passed
5. Forgiveness has been conferred

Conclusion:

1. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, Romans 3:23.
2. Don't need "many" sins to recognize the importance of God's grace.
3. Forgiveness breeds thanksgiving and love.
4. Stinginess with mercy is usually a characteristic of the self-righteous.
5. "Blessed are the merciful."
6. Receive God's mercy; show God's love!