

WEEK 16:

UNSETTLING GRACE

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE:

Luke 7:36-8:3

RELATED SCRIPTURES:

Matthew 18:21-35, Colossians 2:6-7,

Revelation 2:1-5

In the first century, women were not even eligible to testify in a Jewish court of law. Josephus said that even the witness of multiple women was not acceptable “because of the levity and boldness of their sex.” Celsus, the second-century critic of Christianity, mocked the idea of Mary Magdalene as an alleged resurrection witness, referring to her as a “hysterical female... deluded by... sorcery.” This background matters because it points to two crucial truths. First, it is a theological reminder that the kingdom of the Messiah turns the system of the world on its head... Second, it is a powerful apologetic reminder of the historical accuracy of the resurrection accounts. If these were “cleverly devised myths”... women would never have been presented as the first eyewitnesses of the risen Christ.

- Andreas Köstenberger and Justin Taylor

PERSONAL STUDY:

What kinds of people do you consider to be the worst kinds of people? Have you ever tried to imagine their backstories and the factors that led them down their path?

Read Luke 7:36-8:3. Why is it historically important that Jesus welcomed in women, ministered to women, dignified women and named some of the specific women involved in His work and mission?

What differences do you notice between how the sinful woman approaches and treats Jesus (v. 37-38) and the way the Pharisee treats Him (v. 44-46)?

What can we piece together from the text describing this woman as being “of the city,” “a sinner,” and wealthy enough to own an alabaster flask of ointment?

Re-read Luke 7:41-50. What is the connection that Jesus makes between forgiveness and love?

Why does the woman’s humility and gratitude translate directly to acts of love? How is a deeper and deeper understanding of the gospel the foundation for spiritual growth and formation?

Read Matthew 18:21-35 and Luke 7:41-42. Compare and contrast these parables. Is there anyone you need to forgive in light of Jesus’ grace toward you?

SERMON NOTES:



LIFEGROUP DISCUSSION:

Where have you personally studied or been affected by gender issues in our culture? How does Jesus' interaction with women in this text shake up the cultural norms of their day?



Read Luke 7:36-38. What do we know about the woman who interrupts the dinner and washes Jesus' feet? What response would Simon the Pharisee and his guests have had to her?

Read Luke 7:39-40. What are Simon's assumptions? Where do you deal with the most self-righteousness and judgmental attitudes toward others?

Read Luke 7:41-47. Where is the gospel motivating love in your life towards Jesus and others? Does the normal rhythm of your life indicate that you think you've been forgiven much or little?



How do you need us to pray for and encourage you to:

... forgive those who have sinned against you?

... grow in your love for Jesus?

... grow in your compassion and love for others?

