

Daily Devotionals: With Jesus and His Wisdom | March 20, 2022

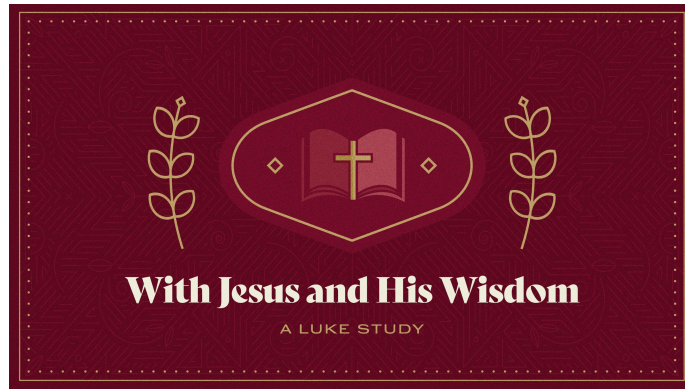
Day 1 – Devotion

When I was a kid, our family’s favorite movie was “What About Bob.” Our family has watched the movie together countless times and still 30 years later, regularly quote lines from the movie. The 1991 comedy stars Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfus. Murray plays Bob, the multi-phobic psychiatric patient of Dr. Leo Marvin, played by Dreyfus. The ever-needy Bob tracks down Leo while he’s at his lake house with his family. Leo is horrified to see Bob and does everything he can to get his unwanted guest to leave. Meanwhile, with a complete lack of self-awareness or respect for boundaries, Bob befriends Leo’s wife and children who welcome him warmly. This only irritates the doctor more. Throughout the film, Bob is oblivious to Leo’s inhospitality and continues to win the love and favor of the family and the surrounding community.

I came across the movie on one of our streaming platforms last week and decided to watch it. I thought of this week’s text and the themes of love, hospitality, and forgiveness. In the movie, Leo resists showing love or care towards Bob to the point of blowing up his life (quite literally) and I couldn’t help but wonder, are there people in my life who are unwanted guests in my life? Who do I withhold love and hospitality from?

I remember a personal experience of being an unwanted guest. Some years ago, a friend of mine told me about a group of women from church who were meeting weekly to pray. I knew everyone in the group and was excited when she invited me. The group met at another woman’s house, and I showed up to the prayer meeting the following week. It was clear from the response of the host and two of the women who were already there that my presence was not welcome. I was overcome with embarrassment and shame. I felt rejection and humiliation. What was worse was that the women pretended that wasn’t the case, that it was fine that I was there. But the body language and exchanged glances between two of the ladies told a different story. Their lack of hospitality towards me changed how I viewed our relationships and caused me to lose respect for them. It was a painful experience, and I can say definitively that I did not experience the love of Jesus through that interaction.

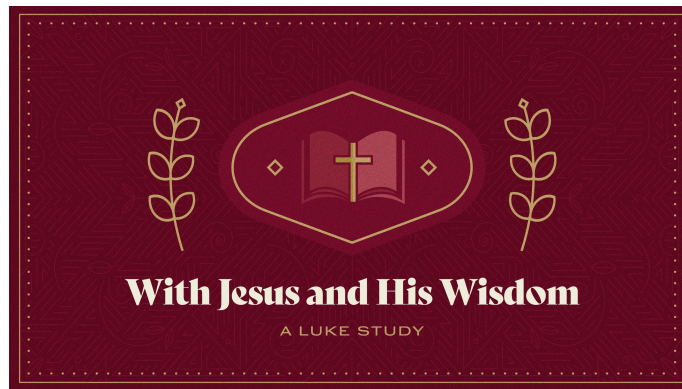
This week we are going to be looking at a story in Luke that is titled in most Bible translations as “Jesus Anointed by a Sinful Woman”. I can imagine some of the guests may have retold the story highlighting the crazy behavior of the unclean, unwanted guest whose actions were viewed as shameful as getting intoxicated or removing one’s clothing. Other guests left the banquet with a different story, the story we are going to focus on this week – a story where Jesus elevates the



lowly social outcast, and in doing so, explains who he is, what he has done for us, and how we should respond.

Questions for reflection:

1. **Read Luke 7:36-50.** What do you learn about love from Jesus in this passage?
2. Are there people in your life who you tend to want to withhold love and hospitality from?
3. How has God offered love and hospitality to you? Write out a prayer as a result of your reflection on your answer to this question.



Day 2 – Bible Study Breakdown

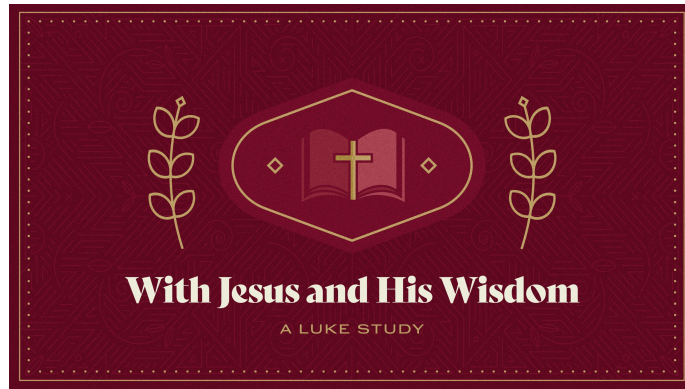
As you begin today, **re-read Luke 7:36-50.**

Let's take a closer look at what happened here. One of the Pharisees invited Jesus into his home to eat with him. The Pharisees were the largest and most influential religious party of Jesus' day. They also wielded significant political influence. The Pharisees were known for their strict adherence to tradition and law as demonstration of their righteousness. Simon the Pharisee invited Jesus into his home for a meal, an act that most of his contemporaries would not dream of. We can't be sure of the motivation behind Simon's invitation, but nonetheless, Jesus used the time together to demonstrate love.

Simon's invitation was significant since an invitation to share a meal communicated good will and hospitality. As a gesture of hospitality, it was typical for a guest to be welcomed into a home in three ways. They would remove their sandals and a servant would greet wash their feet. The host would greet them with a kiss on both cheeks and then often anoint the guests head with oil. These acts communicated love and were seen as an expression of the joy they anticipated in their visit. These were acts of basic hospitality in Jesus' time.

Simon's reception of Jesus was anything but hospitable. In fact, in those days, his behavior would have been considered rude and disrespectful. Enter the uninvited guest... the nameless sinful woman. Contrary to modern day culture, it was not out of the ordinary that this woman joined the dinner party. Doors to homes were often open and it was not unusual for strangers to wander into a dinner, especially when influential guests were present. However, it was expected that these additional guests would stay on the sideline of the banquet, keeping respectful distance. The sinful woman ignores this social contract and approaches the table to wash and anoint the feet of Jesus, all the while showering him with embarrassing amounts of emotion.

The response to the woman's behavior is significant. Simon is horrified by the woman's behavior. She represents everything Pharisees worked hard to avoid. She was impure and Jesus was allowing her to touch him. Furthermore, she had no towel to dry Jesus' feet, so she uses her hair. Letting down her hair in that culture was considered a shameful act. Simon is embarrassed by the woman's outrageous demonstration and because he doesn't put a stop to it, doubts Jesus' credibility in verse 39, "When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

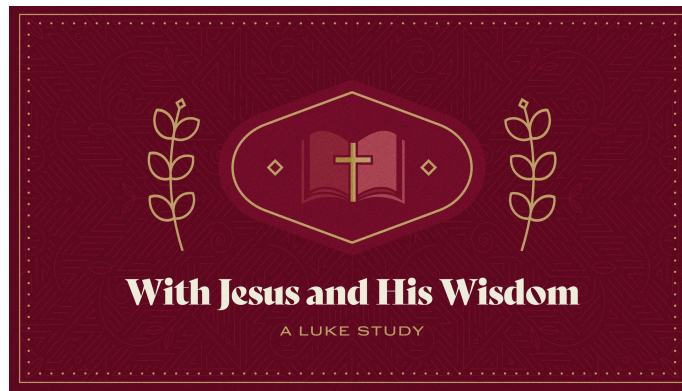


Jesus knows what Simon is thinking and responds with a parable explaining that the basis of love is a previously extended forgiveness. The one who has been forgiven little, loves little. Jesus explains that the woman's actions reflect her response to the forgiveness she has experienced.

Jesus explains the dynamic of his relationship with sinners and how forgiveness and faith lead to a response of love. Jesus has used this time at the table to explain who he is and what he has done in order establish reconciliation to God.

Questions for reflection:

1. What are some tangible and relational ways we communicate hospitality to guests in our culture?
2. Do you view these gestures of hospitality as an obligation out of duty or to demonstrate your love for the guest?
3. In what ways might your gestures of hospitality differ if you were hosting your boss, out-of-town relatives, a new neighbor, or your closest friends?



Day 3 - Scripture Survey

Yesterday we examined how Jesus used what could have been packaged as a shameful, cringe-worthy display of emotion to demonstrate his love for sinners. We could see this through the lens of hospitality which really was less about washing feet and more about the condition of the heart.

Throughout the New Testament we are reminded of how Jesus demonstrates God's love for us. He is not expressing an emotional love, but rather a volitional love. His love is not a feeling, it is an act of the will. His expressions of love set the bar for how we are to love him and love one another.

On more than one occasion, Scripture tells of times Jesus used a shared meal to demonstrate love and how we should respond to his love. As you read these passages, notice what stands out to you in the different interactions.

Luke 5:27-32

Luke 9:10-17

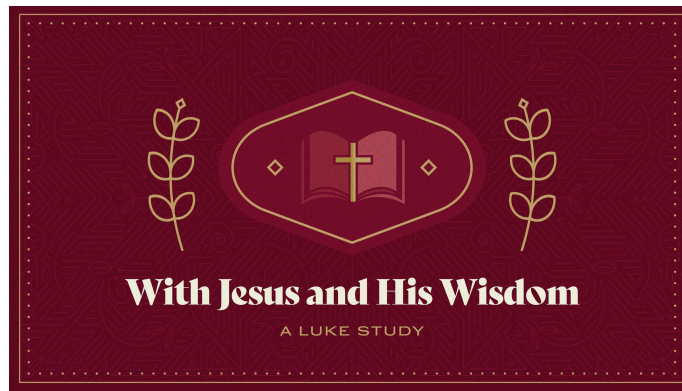
Luke 10:38-42

Luke 11:37-41

Questions for reflection:

1. What do these passages reveal about Jesus' love?
2. How do these passages prompt you to examine the condition of your own heart?
3. How does your heart need to be cleansed to receive others with love and hospitality?

As you close out your time today, **read Romans 5:1-11** aloud and pray for God to show you ways you can respond to his love as an expression of your faith and the forgiveness he has given you.



Day 4 – Story Work

The past few days we examined how Jesus demonstrated love, the ways we are invited to respond to that love, and how the condition of our heart affects our ability to receive Jesus' love. Today let's look at how our own experience influences how we respond to Jesus' love.

Go back and read **Luke 7:36-50** again.

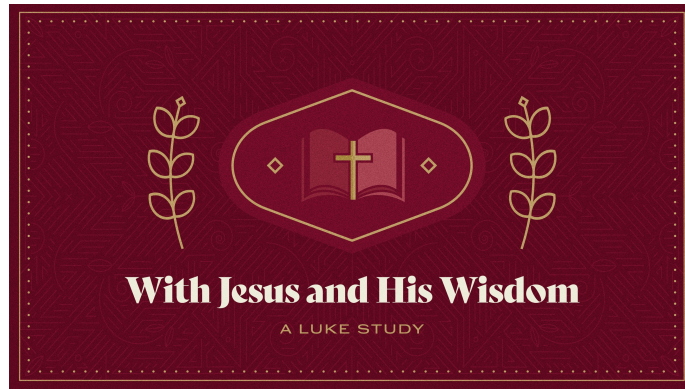
The uninvited and unwanted guest teaches us an important lesson about how we should respond to who Jesus is and what he has done for us. She has shown how to love in a way that sharply contrasts with Simon's lack of basic hospitality. In **Luke 7:47** Jesus speaks of the sinful woman's actions and says, "Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little." The sinful woman shows that she is aware of her sinful life and the forgiveness Jesus has offered her. Her demonstrative acts of devotion, worship, and care communicate her gratitude and faith.

In what specific ways do you identify with Simon, the Pharisee who struggles to see past his self-righteousness? Have you elevated yourself above others who modern culture would deem impure or sinful?

In what specific ways do you identify with the unnamed woman who is fully aware of her sinfulness and throws herself to Jesus' feet in response to his love and forgiveness? Can you identify a time you demonstrated love towards Jesus or another individual in response to the love and forgiveness you have received from Jesus?

Is there an experience or a relationship in your life that is hindering your ability to receive the love of Jesus? Is your heart a hospitable place towards Jesus?

As you close your time today, ask God how he may be inviting you to respond what you have read and written. Invite him to minister comfort to you as you pray through any difficult relationships or experiences that may serve as an obstacle to fully receiving his love. Ask him to show you how to cultivate a heart that is hospitable towards Jesus – not out of duty, but as a response to his love for you.



Day 5 – Application

This week we have spent time studying and responding to the ways Jesus demonstrated his love and invited us to respond in our faith and our love for others. Our awareness of our need for forgiveness should be directly reflected in our love for Jesus. In learning to live, look, and love like Jesus, we are called to love others. Again, this is not an emotional love, but an active love.

Think of a time you have been on the receiving end of wonderful hospitality and care. How did that make you feel?

One way we can communicate our love as a reflection of our love for Jesus is through offering hospitality and care. What would it look like to demonstrate the love of Jesus by loving an otherwise unwanted guest? Who do you need to create room in your schedule for?

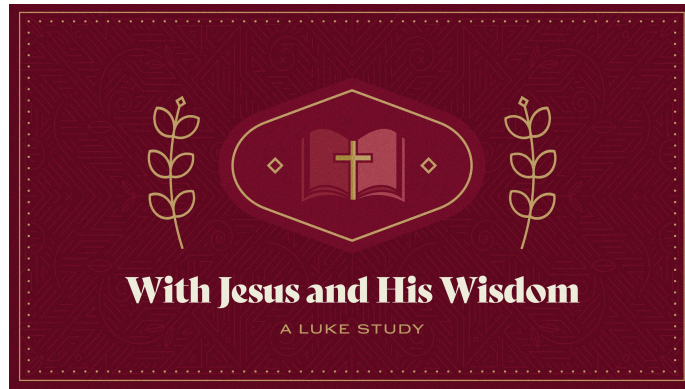
What makes a person an unwanted guest in your life? What about an unwanted guest in our society? Differing political or theological views? Conflicting values? Difference in faith? Unresolved conflict? Annoying behavior? Rudeness? Social status? Appearance/Dress? Past mistakes?

It's likely that there is at least ONE PERSON in your life who would be an unwanted guest in your schedule. God wants to transform our hearts and we invite that process when we love like Jesus – unconditionally, putting the good of another before ourselves.

Here are some ideas of how you can show love to people may be on your “unwanted guest” list:

- Invite them over for a meal with the sole intention of showering them with hospitality and love.
- Write the person a handwritten note letting them know you're praying for them.
- Volunteer with a ministry or organization that serves them
- Pray for them

Take a few moments now to write out the names of five people you want to be more intentional about being hospitable towards.



This week's devotional was not a study on etiquette or hospitality, but an opportunity for us to examine our hearts and see if our hearts reflect the reality of forgiveness and love of Jesus in our lives. Do we love little or love much?

Close in prayer.