

Bloomington Campus Sermon Study - 11.15.2026

Leader's Corner

It's not about the jar.
It's about the One who is worth it.

Luke 7:36-50

Main Idea: Generosity begins with seeing Jesus for who He truly is. When we understand the depth of His grace and forgiveness, generosity becomes an overflow of worship rather than an obligation.

Main Passage: Luke 7:36–50

Main Practice: Recognize God's grace in your life and respond with a tangible act of generosity.

Sermon Summary: At a dinner hosted by Simon the Pharisee, an unexpected woman approaches Jesus with an extravagant expression of love. While Simon sees a sinner whose presence is unwelcome, the woman sees a Savior worthy of everything she has. She pours out her perfume, tears, and dignity at Jesus' feet—not to earn forgiveness, but in response to the grace she has received.

Through the contrast between Simon and the woman, Jesus reveals that how we see Him shapes how we respond to Him. Simon offers Jesus a seat at his table but keeps Him at a distance. The woman approaches with nothing held back. Both are in need of forgiveness, but only one recognizes the depth of that need. Her generosity isn't measured by the value of her perfume but by the worth of the One receiving it.

The same invitation extends to us. Generosity isn't primarily about money, possessions, or even sacrifice. It's about recognizing the extraordinary grace of Jesus and responding with our whole lives.

Key Truth: Grace fills the heart. Generosity empties the jar.

Prayer and Praise

Opening Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your extraordinary grace and the forgiveness we could never earn. Open our eyes to see Jesus for who He truly is—not simply someone we admire or learn from, but our Savior who is worthy of everything. Forgive us for the ways we've kept You at a distance or allowed our familiarity with Your grace to diminish our gratitude. Help us approach You with honest hearts, free from shame, pride, and the need to have everything together. As we open Your Word, teach us to love deeply, trust completely, and live generously. May our lives become an expression of worship that brings hope and healing to those around us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Suggested Worship Songs:

* Worthy of It All – David Brymer

* Gratitude – Brandon Lake

* Living Hope – Phil Wickham

Group Discussion

Read Luke 7:36–50 together.

1. Two Perspectives (vv. 36–39)

Simon and the woman encounter the same Jesus but respond very differently. What stands out to you about how each person sees and approaches Him?

2. Coming Close (vv. 37–38)

The woman risks rejection and embarrassment to approach Jesus. What do you think gave her the courage to come close, and what sometimes keeps us at a distance from Him?

3. The Safe Place (vv. 37–38)

The sermon described Jesus as "the holiest man in the room" and "the safest place in the room." How does this picture of Jesus challenge or encourage the way you approach Him with your struggles, failures, or shame?

4. Recognizing Our Debt (vv. 40–43)

In Jesus' parable, neither debtor could repay what was owed. Why is it sometimes easier to recognize our need for grace in others than to acknowledge the depth of our own need?

5. The Heart of Generosity (vv. 44–47)

Simon offered Jesus a seat, while the woman offered Him everything she had. What does this contrast reveal about the relationship between love, gratitude, and generosity?

6. Forgiveness First (v. 47)

The woman didn't give to earn forgiveness; her generosity flowed from forgiveness. How does understanding generosity as a response to grace rather than an obligation change the way we approach giving our time, talents, and resources?

7. What's in Your Jar?

The sermon reminds us, "Nobody gives Jesus more than they think He's worth." What might you be holding tightly to—security, comfort, control, time, possessions, or something else—that makes it difficult to trust Jesus completely?

8. Living Generously

The message concluded that "Generosity is the fragrance of a forgiven heart." What would it look like for our group to become more generous with our lives, both toward one another and toward the people in the places we live, work, learn, and play?

Practice

Group Practice: Recognizing the Grace

Purpose: Help group members connect their experience of God's grace with a personal response of generosity.

Invite everyone to consider these two statements:

Grace Fills the Heart:

One way I've experienced the generosity and grace of Jesus is...

Generosity Empties the Jar:

One way I sense Jesus inviting me to respond generously is...

Allow a few moments of quiet reflection before inviting group members to share.

Leader Tip: Encourage honesty without pressure. Generosity isn't always financial. It might mean offering forgiveness, extending hospitality, giving time, sharing resources, or stepping into an uncomfortable opportunity to love someone.

Weekly Challenge: Empty Your Jar

This week, respond to God's grace through one intentional act of generosity. Consider three expressions of generosity:

* Time: Give someone your undivided attention, invest in a relationship, or serve someone with no expectation of return.

* Talents: Use a gift or ability to encourage, equip, or meet someone else's need.

* Treasure: Give financially, meet a practical need, or share something valuable with someone else.

The Challenge: Choose one meaningful act of generosity this week. Before doing it, pause and remind yourself:

"I'm not doing this to earn God's love. I'm doing this because I've already received it."

Be ready to share your experience with the group next week.

Further Study

Exploring Grace, Forgiveness & Generosity

1. Isaiah 57:15 — God Draws Near to the Humble

God describes Himself as dwelling both in the highest heaven and with those who are humble and repentant.

Consider: How does knowing that God draws near to the brokenhearted influence your willingness to approach Him honestly?

2. Colossians 2:13–14 — The Debt Has Been Canceled

Paul reminds believers that through Christ, God has forgiven our sins and canceled the debt we could never repay.

Consider: How might remembering what Jesus has already done for us transform our gratitude and generosity?

3. Revelation 4:10–11 — Generosity as Worship

The elders lay their crowns before God's throne, declaring His worthiness.

Consider: What might it look like to lay something valuable at Jesus' feet as an expression of worship?

4. Luke 8:1–3 — Generosity That Advances the Mission

Immediately following the account of the woman at Simon's house, Luke describes women who supported Jesus' ministry through their own resources.

Consider: How can our generosity become part of bringing hope and healing in Jesus to others?