

Judging Rightly

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[0 : 0 0] We'd like to look this morning at a passage in Luke chapter 7 where Jesus has an encounter in the home of a Pharisee named Simon and a woman who Luke refers to as a woman of the city who was a sinner.

And Robert Rowe reminded us last week how often Jesus uses good questions to get listeners to think about the gospel.

Wasn't that good? If you were here last week? And here Jesus asked Simon a question. And Simon, he says, Simon got the right answer.

Jesus tells him, you have judged rightly. And we all need the Holy Spirit, right? The helper. Jesus said he would send us the Holy Spirit to help us to understand about ourselves, about who God is, about the grace of the gospel.

So we call on him this morning as we will pray in just a few minutes. But read along with me as I read from Luke 7, 36 to 50.

[1 : 1 0] Just a few verses down from the encounter of Jesus with the widow of Nain. One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table.

And behold, a woman of the city who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment.

And standing behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment.

Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, if this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him.

For she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said to him, Simon, I have something to say to you. And he answered, say it, teacher. A certain money lender had two debtors.

[2 : 1 1] One owed 500 denarii and the other 50. And when they could not pay, he canceled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more? Simon answered, the one I suppose for whom he canceled the larger debt.

And he said to him, you have judged rightly. Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, do you see this woman? I entered your house.

You gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in, she has not ceased to kiss my feet.

You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins which are many are forgiven.

For she loved much, but he who is forgiven little loves little. And he said to her, your sins are forgiven. Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, who is this who even forgives sins?

[3 : 1 9] And he said to the woman, your faith has saved you. Go in peace. Amen. The word of the Lord. Let's be to God. Let's pray for understanding.

Father, we need your help just to know you, to know you, Jesus. We sing songs about you. We come and we say prayers to you, and we know that we need the Holy Spirit, the helper, the spirit of truth that you said you would send.

To help us to know what is true, to help us to judge rightly, to help us to think correctly about the gospel, about the good news of the gospel.

So we ask you for your help this morning as, again, we look at your word, and we seek to be fed by your word. And we pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. You can be seated. So I want to thank you for praying for us. When we were in Jamaica, we were there when Hurricane Beryl was on its war path, and it left, you know, some destruction in the Caribbean.

[4 : 30] Fortunately, we were on the north side of the island when it brushed on the south side. So we didn't lose our roof or any of the devastating effects that the south side of Jamaica had.

People there are still without power because of all the telephone poles and trees that were knocked down. So we can continue to pray for them. It made us more thankful for just some of the comforts of life like electricity, you know.

Being out of electricity for a few days with no fan, and it's really hot and humid. And it really can make you miserable and a grumbler and a complainer.

But we thank you for, you know, praying for us. Our kids were there with us, our adult kids. And we kind of forgot. We've been living here in Tennessee for 11 years, and we kind of forgot what it was like, you know, living with hurricanes in Miami and in Jamaica.

But thanks for praying for us. The Lord was good to us. And we still had a wonderful 40th anniversary trip in Jamaica. We had a week after the hurricane, so we recovered.

[5 : 41] But on Friday evening before I left, the Friday evening before we left on Saturday, I preached from this passage to a group of about 50 men who none of them take their freedom for granted.

You know, after the service, I drove home to my family, to my wife, but they couldn't go home to their families because they're incarcerated. They're locked up in the Georgia prison system down in Walker State Prison, where I go twice a month and mentor a man there.

And they have a Friday night service, and they ask pastors to come in and preach. And so I had the privilege of bringing the word to these men. And even though these men are serving time, you know, they've experienced the joy and freedom of forgiveness in Christ.

Many of these guys are studying for their MDiv. They're studying in prison, learning more and more about the gospel, the freedom of their forgiveness. And they've been humbled.

They've been humbled by sin. A lot of them are growing in their faith. Over 100 men there are still on a waiting list looking for a mentor.

[6 : 52] There's about 30 of us, maybe 35 of us that go in. And so any of you men, that's a call for you to serve if you want to go with us down to Walker State.

It's greatly appreciated. The man I meet with, he's so appreciative of the friendship and the discipling relationship with another man, a Christian man from the outside, that every time he grasped my hand, you know, at the end of our 90 minutes together, or he gives me a hug and he says, man, I'm so thankful for our friendship.

So it's, you know, even on a Monday evening when I'm tired and I'm feeling like maybe I should skip it, I can't. Because I know it's so, so appreciated. You know, it's not easy to imitate Christ in prison, you know, where meekness can be interpreted as weakness and you can get taken advantage of. But the same is true maybe to a lesser degree on the outside. You know, we want to follow and imitate our Lord Jesus in everything, in every way. We want to imitate him.

But our flesh and the world system and Satan, they get in the way. They try to lock us away to keep us from being dependent on God's Spirit.

[8 : 11] So it's just as crucial for us to call out to God for dependence on him as these men who are on the inside. He's, you know, our help and our guide into all truth, as Jesus said.

And the Holy Spirit has certainly been a helper to guide Paul Miller, to help him see Jesus more clearly. That's the name of the ministry that Robert Rowe works.

He works for Paul Miller. See Jesus is the name of his ministry that Paul started years ago. And he's written a book, Love Walked Among Us.

Some of you probably have read his book. And he emphasizes three obstacles to loving Jesus and others well. Three things that get in the way of us loving well, loving other people, and loving the Lord Jesus.

First of all, he says, it's our tendency to judge others. So maybe that's the greatest spiritual gift that we have, is the spiritual judgment that we can deliver to someone else.

[9 : 15] So first of all, our tendency to judge. Secondly, it's our constant battle with self-righteousness. And third, it's trying to make ourselves appear better than we really are through our own efforts at being good people.

We try really hard. You know, to overcome these obstacles, what you and I need the most is a heart that's been humbled by the grace of forgiveness.

We need this ongoing humbling, like these men in prison have experienced, of forgiveness, knowing that we've been forgiven of a great debt.

And like the prodigal son, we need to see God as the gracious father. From that humble perspective of the prodigal son, after he came to his senses and he realized that the father's arms were open wide for him, that he didn't have to try to be a servant in the father's house.

He didn't have to work hard to have the father's acceptance. Just being in the presence, just being welcomed back, the father knowing that he had come to his senses, as he'd turned from his sin and had come home, was enough.

[10:28] When God helps you realize all that you've been rescued from, it humbles you. You know, it makes you feel less likely to judge others, less likely to be self-righteous, and less likely to think of yourself better than you really are.

You know, the more you continually live in the joy of forgiveness, you know, Jesus said, what did he say about when one sinner repents?

What happens in heaven, right? There's more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 who don't need repentance, or who don't think they need repentance.

So the more you continually live in the joy of forgiveness, the more you're able to love like Jesus.

And on the other hand, the more you live in the self-righteousness of the older brother in Jesus' parable, the better you think you are, the less you're able to love like Jesus, the less you're able to show compassion and love others.

The more you understand how much you need God's mercy and forgiveness, the more you'll be able to love like Jesus. You know, in the culture in which Jesus grew up, a meal in the home of a prominent person like Simon the Pharisee would often be hosted in a large area, maybe even a courtyard in the home.

[11:48] And guests invited to the meal, they would be invited to recline around a low-lying table in the center. They may lay on their side on the left elbow and reach out and eat with their right hand.

If you're invited to the meal, you'd be stretched out there on the mat. And if you've ever eaten at an authentic Middle Eastern restaurant, they might seat you like this.

They might not seat you at a table with chairs. And it wasn't uncommon for neighbors to stop by the home and some even coming in and sitting around the outskirts in the courtyard.

So it wouldn't have been that surprising for this woman, someone to come in to share, who wasn't really invited to share the meal. But what would have been surprising, if anyone knew this woman and knew her reputation, that she would come with a reputation as a sinner.

Most scholars interpret Luke's description here as her having a reputation as a prostitute, so somebody who was caught up in the sex trade. So the thought would have been, you know, what is she doing here?

[13:04] Why is she come in to this, where this invited guest, the rabbi, was invited to the meal? The thought would have been, you know, this woman doesn't, this is inappropriate.

She doesn't belong here. Remember the three things that often block love and compassion, right?

What are they? What did Paul Miller say they were? Judging, right?

Self-righteousness. And thinking we're better than we really are. Not really judging rightly who we are and what we have been rescued from and what we continue to be rescued from every day, right?

Our need for repentance and faith. Do you think she may have had some encounter with Jesus before? Or she had certainly heard about him, right?

She knew something about Jesus. You think she may have heard about the widow's son who had been raised? Remember, maybe she was even there, but Luke says that the word about Jesus had spread throughout the whole of Judea and the surrounding country.

[14:18] So people were amazed by Jesus. His reputation was spreading. And she'd heard that he was coming to Simon's house, so she prepares a gift of ointment in her alabaster jar and she makes her way to where she might be able to offer this as a gift to Jesus.

And as she stands at the feet of Jesus, she probably doesn't intend to break down. But she simply is overcome with love and gratitude for him. And she begins to weep.

And so much that her tears, she's overcome. Her tears fall on Jesus' feet. So picture this in your mind, right? She's embracing Jesus' feet.

She's down on her, sitting down or she's kneeling down. She's let her hair down so that her hair falls over his feet. And from what we read in her culture, a husband could pursue a divorce if his wife let her hair down in the presence of another man.

So this would have been shocking to the guests who were there. It would have been a shocking display of affection to those in Simon's house.

[15:31] And what was Jesus doing while she was weeping at his feet? You know, while he felt her kisses and her embrace, he felt her tears wetting his feet, while she takes this ointment in the jar that she's brought and she rubs it over his feet.

You know, what is the look on Jesus' face, do you think? What about the look on Simon's face and the others in the room? You know, do you think they were a little embarrassed by this display of affection?

Everyone in the house, everyone there is fully aware of this woman and her emotional display of affection to the Lord Jesus.

This was not something that you could just ignore, go on eating, right? Everybody was focused on this woman's display of affection for the Lord Jesus.

And maybe the shock on Simon's face, it turns to a look of disdain when he realizes that Jesus wasn't shocked.

[16:38] Jesus is not embarrassed by this. You know, the look on his face would have been telling that Jesus knew what was going on in his heart.

We can imagine that Jesus had a look of love and compassion for her, just as he had for the widow of Nain. Remember, Robert pointed out that Jesus looks and he has compassion.

And the third thing is he acts on it, right? He looks at the widow and he has compassion for her and he reaches out and touches the casket and raises her son, gives her son back to him.

And that's a picture of God's look on us, right? He sees you and he looks at you and he looks at you with a look of compassion and he acts on your behalf.

He does something to help. You know, the look on Jesus' face was certainly not ambivalence. It wasn't an uncaring, and neither is the look of God.

[17:49] When he looks at his children, his sheep, who have all gone astray, it's a look of love and compassion. The greatest obstacle to loving God and others like Jesus loves is our tendency, because of our sin, to judge others.

We can be really stingy with love, but we tend to be very generous with judgment. It's judgmentalism, right? And it's okay to make a judgment about a situation as long as it's the right judgment.

Right? Right? Right? When we should judge rightly, we often judge wrongly. Right? And sadly, you and I, we still have a little Simon inside.

I mean, Simon, if you think about all the characters in this encounter, Simon is the one you don't want to identify with, right? He's the bad guy.

But the truth be told, if we judge rightly, we know that we have some of the same issues that Simon had. We don't see into people's hearts as God sees.

[18:57] God always sees beyond the surface, and he always sees deep into the heart. He knows the motives, right? He knows our motives. He's looking into your heart right now, and he's looking at my heart.

And the writer of Hebrews says that we're all naked and exposed, every one of us. We are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account, Hebrews 4.13.

Jesus knew that this dear woman's tears and her kisses and her wiping his feet with her hair were all coming from this heart chemistry that had been changed by God's grace, by God's unlimited grace.

Brian Chappell, he's written a book, Unlimited Grace, where he argues that it's grace that creates this heart chemistry in us, that frees us from sin and fuels the Christian life.

He's written another book called Holiness by Grace. He says it's like the gasoline, right? Grace, understanding of grace is like the gasoline that drives the engine of the Christian life.

[20:04] So if you know anything about the internal combustion engine, you know the gas is squirted into the chamber, and then the spark plug creates a spark, and there's an explosion, right?

And there's thousands of these explosions that drive the pistons and turn the wheels on your car so you can drive 80 or faster on the highway, right?

But it's grace is the fuel. Grace is understanding the gospel of grace is what fuels the Christian life. He's saying, he says, since God's love for us is the soil in which love for God grows, so he also describes it as a good soil, God's grace, and when it's planted in our hearts, then it's where love for him grows.

He says, identifying his grace in all scripture is not simply a nice or novel approach. Regular exposure to grace ignites love for God. It fires the love in our hearts.

It gives us this chemistry of love for God, which is his greatest command and greatest compulsion. 2 Corinthians 5.14 says, the love of Christ, Paul says the love of Christ, and the love for Christ is what controls us.

[21 : 26] It constrains us. It drives us forward. So it's the love of Christ that, love for Christ out of gratitude for what he's done that drives us to do uncomfortable things when we don't want to do it because we know we're called to do it.

We know we're called to love. Brian Chappell says that we should look for grace everywhere, on every page, in every story, in every chapter, in every book.

We should identify grace pervading scripture in order to fan into flame our zeal for the Savior. It's kind of like you're building a fire, and if you're like me, I'm not very good at, you know, I call myself one match Billy.

That's a joke because it usually takes about a dozen matches. But sometimes you get down and you help the fire. You blow on the flame, right, to try to make it catch.

And that's what he's saying, is we identify grace in our lives and in scripture that pervades scripture so that that grace comes and blows on the flame of our zeal for God, our zeal for the Savior.

[22 : 39] And I think that's what was driving this woman. I know that was what was driving her, was just her understanding of what, who Jesus is and what he had done for her and what he could do for her.

You know, why was she compelled to display this kind of zeal, this love and affection? It's because she understood how much she needed God's grace and forgiveness, right?

She knew she didn't merit the favor of God. She wasn't coming with a whole list of things that I've done this, Lord, I've done that. You know, you ever talk to somebody and ask them about their walk with the Lord or their journey and they might say, well, you know, I give to the United Way or, you know, whatever.

They have all kinds of things that we think of that earns us a little bit of respect with God, that earns us some merit. She wasn't bringing any of that.

She was coming just humbled by her sin. She knew she needed someone outside of herself. The problems of self-righteousness, judgmentalism, and thinking we're better than we really are, they weren't obstacles for her.

[23 : 57] At that moment, they were not standing in her way. They weren't roadblocks for her as they were for Simon. And it's really, it really is a wonderful gift from God when he opens your eyes to recognize that you're really not a good person.

That's a gift from God. And he does that in, hopefully, in merciful ways to us. Hopefully, it's not something we have to fall into some great, terrible sin.

We don't have to get locked away and be incarcerated for years to come to understand that. But we all need to understand where we stand apart from Christ so that we're compelled, we're constrained to love him more and love others.

When you recognize that your efforts at being good will always fall short, then you're open to depending on the goodness of someone else. Right? You'll be closer to recognizing that your only hope is in the perfect goodness and righteousness of Christ, of Jesus, that has been put into your account by your faith in him alone.

And the sinful woman, she was actually more fortunate than upright Simon. She wasn't holding on to good performance or good morals or good reputation as the way to be accepted by God.

[25 : 23] Those are good things. They're important. Good morals and obedience to God's commands are important. Holiness is crucial. Unrepentant sin is abhorrent to God.

It's the only thing that keeps us out of the kingdom of God. We're called to walk in a manner that shows we're grateful for the rescue that God and the price that God has paid to rescue us from sin.

But what this encounter shows is that God resists good moral people who are proud. He gives more grace to the sinners who are humble.

the more we understand how much we need God's mercy and grace and forgiveness ourselves the more we're able to love others. The more we're able to be able to love God love as Jesus loves. You know in writing his gospel one of the themes that Luke emphasizes throughout his gospel is this great reversal that's taken place in the world by Christ.

[26 : 25] The first are becoming last and the last are becoming first and the proud are being brought low and the humble are being exalted and in this passage the outcast of society is being welcomed into the kingdom while the respected and proud member of society is not ready to enter.

You know the younger brother in Luke 15 who squandered his inheritance he's being celebrated as he humbles himself and comes to his senses and returns to the father while the older brother the privileged older brother the firstborn at the end of Jesus' parable where is he?

He's outside. He's remained outside in his pride. What a reversal that we are seeing that the gospel displays knowing that the gospel emphasizes this great reversal what should be your response?

You know do you recognize regularly your need for humility? Are you being reminded by God's spirit of truth every day of your need for grace and repentance and forgiveness?

Do you readily recognize that you fall short of his glory even before your feet touch the ground in the morning? You know while you're still asleep you still have a sinful disposition and the world your flesh and the devil they're awake waiting for you to wake up they're just waiting right?

[28 : 04] They're ready to go as soon as you get out of bed you know how can we trick this person today to fall into moralism to become self-righteous to be judgmental of someone else to block their compassion to block their love for God how can we make them like Simon?

How can we get them to downplay their need for dependence on God's spirit? That's their full-time job right?

The world system your own flesh and Satan himself Paul Miller says when you're brought low by your sin it's just an opportunity for God to remind you of how much Jesus was brought low on your behalf so we can look at conviction of sin and the humility of being reminded of our sinfulness as a gift we can welcome it because it's it's just a good reminder of this is Christ was brought pretty low because of my sin if you're never brought low or humbled by the weight of sin then how are you ever going to grow in gratitude for the weight of forgiveness for the weight of his sacrifice for what God did for you in Christ the more you understand how much you need God's mercy and forgiveness the more you're able to imitate Christ the more you're able to look and love like Jesus and of course the flip side the flip side of that is the better you think you are the less you think you need forgiveness or you may need a little forgiveness but not a lot you know and the less you're able to love like Jesus

Simon thought of himself as better he judged himself more righteous than the woman but also than the Lord Jesus himself you know if this man were a prophet he wouldn't have known what sort of woman this is who's touching him for she's a sinner he believed that if Jesus had known the details known everything she'd done then he would have pushed her away or maybe he would have pulled his feet up to his chest and he would have said what are you doing don't touch me you know if Jesus had done that if he had rebuked the woman then Simon would have thought better of him right he would have had higher esteem in Simon's mind and the irony is here that Simon puts himself above the only sinless perfect righteous human being that ever walked the face of the earth the person that Simon had invited to the meal and he disrespected him because it was just common courtesy for you to offer a warm embrace when someone he didn't show him hospitality he didn't have a servant wash his feet when he came in maybe he did that to the other guests we don't know but

Jesus said you didn't do these things but yet this woman this outcast of society has done this she has honored the Lord Jesus and Simon didn't realize that the person he'd invited to the meal in his home was the very one that Isaiah had written about you know 700 years before remember Isaiah said the government would be on his shoulder and he would be named wonderful counselor mighty God everlasting father the prince of peace had come to Simon's home and Simon didn't recognize it and Jesus in his mercy and his compassion he has he has mercy on Simon and he looks at Simon right he looks he looks with compassion and he acts and he says to Simon gets his attention in order to explain to him how the gospel works and he says Simon I have something to say to you I want you to think about two debtors one who owes 500 daily wages and the other who owes 50 and

the amount is not important right because

[32 : 21] Jesus says that neither one is able to pay and the point Jesus is trying to get across to Simon is that Simon owes a debt that Simon is unable to pay it doesn't matter how much or how little you think you owe right if you have no way to pay you can't get under out from under the sin debt this sinful woman she'd gotten into some degrading sin that Simon had never experienced she was you could say she was like a 500 sinner and Simon was a 50 sinner maybe she was 10 times more bad experiences and sin and consequences but the amount and the degree of sin it doesn't matter because Jesus says neither one can pay he wants Simon to see that if he understands the weight of his own debt if he understands his inability to pay the debt then he would respond with love for the one who can forgive the debt the person who believes his debt is small responds with small gratitude and small love right he is he who is forgiven little loves little

Jesus says so Jesus Jesus knew the ugly details of this woman's life more than she even knew herself and she knew and he knew Simon's heart too he knew Simon's sin record he knows every detail right if we repent of our sin and trust in him by faith he can say to us your faith has saved you go in peace because our faith in our love for the one who can forgive our sins it's repentance and faith in what Christ has done that brings us humility everybody has to humble themselves at some point if you are a believer in Christ you've been humbled at some point maybe it was even just as a little child that you came to the realization that you were not good enough you needed the Lord Jesus to come and save you and that's the gift of God the gift of humility it brings us compassion toward others it brings us joy it's the grace of repentance and faith it's what fuels the Christian life of obedience to his commands your debt your debt has been paid you know so go in peace live for him in gratitude grow in your Christian life of repentance and faith that's God's desire for us that this grace this understanding of the gospel drives the engine for us as we live the Christian life you know my friend who I visit at the Walker State prison he tells me how much he's grown over the course of his time in prison he's he's paid six years of his life so far on what he hopes will just be a ten year sentence but nobody knows you know what the parole board you have to go before the parole board and sometimes you have favor with the parole board other times you don't it just depends on they have no idea of who's going to be on the parole board at that time and prison is hard he says it breaks you down it humbles you it's not just your loss of freedom but it's the loss of relationships that are dear to you his wife divorced him he's become estranged from a couple of his six adult children he doesn't get to see his grandchildren and as a felon he expects that he'll be deported after he serves his time so it's really been a humbling experience for him and he recognizes his need for forgiveness and he says he's learning to forgive his wife he's learning to forgive his children he's learning to show more compassion to other sinners and sufferers you know maybe he would think of himself as a 500 sinner not a 50 sinner because he's done some really hurtful things and maybe you think of yourself as a 50 you know you haven't murdered anyone you haven't done anything that would get you incarcerated but again the number doesn't really matter right because you can't pay you are not able to pay the 50 any more than he can pay the 500 someone else has to pay someone else has to bring you debt relief and God wants you and me to know the same kind of joyful relief from sin that this dear woman knows he wants your freedom from guilt and judgment to dawn on you so much that you might just embarrass yourself with gratitude you just might not be able to control yourself at times just in gratitude for what God has done for you and that it will make you want to live the Christian life you'll want to serve others and show compassion he wants you to experience great joy over your freedom and your new identity in Christ he wants you to grow every day every single day in greater and greater appreciation that will lead you to greater humility to greater love to greater boldness to worship him to sit at his feet and not to care about any of the judgment of the world this woman had shut everybody else out she didn't care about Simon's judgment of her she was just overcome with gratitude for what she knew Jesus would do for her he was forgiven much loves much Jesus says so God God wants you and me he wants us to know that our debt has not just been canceled it's not just been forgiven but it's been paid for it's been paid in full by someone else right there's no double jeopardy you can't be brought up on trial again because the trial is over Jesus said it's finished God the judge paid the debt with the shed blood of his own son and the more you understand how much you need God's grace the more you're able to forgive the more you're able to love God the more you understand the compassion shown to you the more you're empowered by God to show compassion for others so who would love the master more Jesus

asked Simon you know the one who thought he needed a little forgiveness a little light burden of debt or the one who felt the crushing weight of his burden of sin Jesus said Simon you've judged rightly the one who's been set free from this heavy burden you know so the question for us I guess is how do quote unquote good Christian people love the master like this sinful woman those of us who have never experienced this crushing weight of sin that has brought us awful consequences how do we come to understand that there still is this crushing weight of sin that Jesus took [40 : 04] I think it's continually recognizing for us that it was your sin that crushed him it was your sin that caused him to be despised and rejected by men that he was called a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief it was your sorrows that he carried to the cross because of your sin debt he was smitten by God and afflicted he was pierced for your transgressions he was crushed for your iniquities whether you feel the weight of them or not he felt the weight of your sin and it crushed him completely and it was that crushing weight of our sin that brought us peace that brought us any sense of peace with ourselves if you have a sense of peace today with God and with yourself and with others it's because of that crushing weight that was placed on Christ because your sins have been forgiven any healing you experience in your mind or your body or your spirit it's because he was wounded in mind and body and his spirit right

Isaiah says all like sheep have gone astray so all everyone you can capitalize that all we have all turned away everyone everyone to his own way whether you've just strayed a little gotten lost you feel like you just willfully you strayed a little bit and got caught up in the thicket or you willfully went off the cliff you know you fell off the cliff and every bone in your body was broken and the shepherd had to come and put you back together all of us we're all lost until the great shepherd comes and rescues us at the cost of his own life none of us can find our way apart from his help and his guidance so may we see Jesus for the rescuer that he is may we see ourselves as continually in need of rescue not just way back then but every morning every day you know as the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin he brings the gift of conviction that we recognize man I need Jesus I need Jesus today thank you Holy Spirit for reminding me of what I said or the action or the thought that went through my head help me Lord Jesus thank you for taking the weight of my sin and giving me your righteousness may we continually see our need of his rescue and may it bring us the gift of a broken spirit and a contrite heart like the woman at Jesus feet amen amen let's let's pray as we prepare for the Lord's supper this morning father we thank you for your word again thank you for giving us these encounters that we can be reminded of who Jesus is and his love and compassion for us help us to see him as our savior who was crushed for us and give us more and more grace to see the weight of that sin that was placed on him our sin and may it create such a great chemistry in our affections for him that we can't do anything else but serve him we can't do anything else but give him our whole lives in gratitude that we can't help but get involved that we can't help but get up off the pew if we're sitting on the pew and not involved in helping someone else through the food pantry or through the GLAD ministry or through Love's Arm or through any of these ministries that are available to us help us to be fueled by your grace for our Christian walk to serve you to live lives holy lives before you and we ask these things in the name of our Lord Jesus our savior amen