

Arm's Length Religion- Luke 7:24-50

What did you go out to **see**?

Luke 7:24-50 ESV When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (25) What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are dressed in splendid clothing and live in luxury are in kings' courts. (26) What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. (27) This is he of whom it is written, 'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.' (28) I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

3 times Jesus said "What did you go out to see?"

- Not a reed --- Not a man dressed in soft clothing --- YES a prophet
- The message of "Prepare the Way of the LORD" **was resonating**
- CURIOSITY --- the prophetic voice of the LORD drawing people from all over

We don't stop at Curiosity - NEXT STEP is to Respond or Reject

Luke 7:29-30 (When all the people heard this, and the tax collectors too, they declared God just, having been baptized with the baptism of John, (30) but the Pharisees and the lawyers **rejected the purpose of God for themselves**, not having been baptized by him.)

- The decision is bigger than just whether or not to get baptized
 - To say yes was to - **declare God Just**
 - To say no was a - **rejection of the purpose of God** for themselves
 - (Greek --- ADVICE / COUNSEL / WILL)

Arm's Length Religion = Curiosity - but no Commitment

- Mar 10:17-24 ESV ... What must I do to inherit eternal life? --- 21 And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." --- **curious but no commitment**

Arm's Length Religion = A Pattern of Making Excuses

Luke 7:31-35 "To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? (32) They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.' (33) For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' (34) The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' (35) Yet wisdom is justified by all her children."

- People will avoid "hearing" the message by finding fault with the messenger

- Even though it comes directly from God “I send MY messenger”
- Even though it is presented in different ways
- Criticism and excuse making is another way to keep Christ at Arm’s Length

Wisdom is justified of her children

- Both those who responded to John and those who responded to Jesus prove the wisdom of their choice...Look at how their lives have been affected positively
- As a person is consistent with **responding** to the LORD - we see those choices reflected in his/her life
- Also as people live a life **choosing to reject** the LORD’s Counsel / Purpose - we see those choices reflected in life

An Anonymous Woman -- Example of wisdom justified of her children

Luke 7:36-50 One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. (37) 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, (38) 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. (39) 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."*** (40) And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "Say it, Teacher." (41) "A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. (42) When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?" (43) Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly." (44) 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. (45) ***You*** gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in ***she*** has not ceased to kiss my feet. (46) ***You*** did not anoint my head with oil, but ***she*** has anointed my feet with ointment. (47) Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven--***for she loved much***. But he who is forgiven little, loves little." (48) And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." (49) Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" (50) And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Which One Will Love Him More?

Simon SAW THIS woman ---- Jesus said “Simon DO YOU SEE this woman?”

He did not see things accurately

He didn't see Jesus correctly

- Didn't see him as a prophet or as one who is able to forgive sins

He didn't see the woman correctly

- He saw the prostitute - Jesus saw one who loved GREATLY because she was forgiven so much

He didn't see himself correctly

- He didn't realize the HE TOO was forgiven - NOT SEEING THIS affected his love

Simon Invited Jesus to dinner and ate with Him

The Woman Worshipped Him

Simon Failed to show the LORD common courtesy of the day

The Woman Wept, washed, and kissed his feet

Simon Saw her as a woman of the city - a sinner (prostitute)

The Woman Anointed his feet (alabaster jar was likely a gift from prostitution)

Simon Had forgotten that HE TOO was in need of forgiveness (***two debtors***)

The Woman Was showing expressions of love due to forgiveness

Arm's Length Religion vs Loving Him More

- We can choose to eat with him - but fail to honor him
- We can judge others - but fail to recognize we too are in need of forgiveness
- We can watch others LOVE HIM - or we can humble ourselves to LOVE HIM ALSO