The Life and Ministry of Christ, Part 13

After the miracles of healing the centurion's servant, raising the widow's dead son to life and many other miracles in Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, Jesus went to the house of a Pharisee for a meal.

While sitting to eat, a woman anointed Jesus' feet —Luke 7:36-50

This is not the same event as the one mentioned later in Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8. That event occurred in the house of a leper, a place where no Pharisee would go. In Luke, a woman in the city was a nameless sinner. In the other Gospels, the woman is Mary of Bethany, the sister of Lazarus and Martha. This event presents a contrast between Simon the Pharisee with the woman who was a sinner.

Luke 7:36–37 NKJV Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil,

Luke 7:38 NKJV and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil.

The "woman who was a sinner" suggests that she was a prostitute. Jesus had become widely popular among all people and not just the religious. It is noteworthy that Pharisees would shun and refuse to talk to sinners such as this woman of the city. How she gained entrance into Simon's house is unclear but Jesus allowed her to come near and touch Him without rejecting or questioning her. According to what is said, she came to Jesus and found forgiveness and access at His feet. While others in the room were critical of her person and actions, she came behind the Lord weeping, humbled herself, began washing Jesus' feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head, kissed His feet and anointed them with fragrant oil. This was an expression of the highest form of worship and praise for one who had been forgiven of sin. The Lord accepted her gift and ministry to Him.

Luke 7:39 NKJV Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, *"This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."*

Jesus knew what Simon was saying to himself and as a result, He gave the parable of two debtors.

Parable of Two Debtors - Luke 7:40-43

Luke 7:40 NKJV And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have

something to say to you." So he said, "Teacher, say it."

Luke 7:41–42 NKJV "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?"

A denarii was a Roman silver coin that was equal to a day's wage. Although one of the individuals owed ten times as much, both of them had a significant debt.

Luke 7:43 NKJV Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged."

Luke 7:44 NKJV Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head.

Luke 7:45-46 NKJV You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil.

Jesus was contrasting two debtors, the amount of their debt and the gratitude of both. He was saying the person who receives and recognizes the grace and mercy of forgiveness demonstrates greater love. She kissed Jesus' feet, washed them, and gave oil for His skin. The woman gave Jesus what Simon did not consider doing. Her love and gratitude was the fruit of a heart that received cleansing and forgiveness.

Luke 7:47-48 NKJV Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little." Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

Those at the table were offended at Jesus' actions and questioned His authority to forgive sins.

Luke 7:50 NKJV Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

Faith in the Lord is so powerful that even the worst of sinners finds forgiveness and peace in His presence. After the meal with Simon the Pharisee, Jesus continued His ministry throughout the region.

Ministered to by Women - Luke 8:1-3

Luke 8:1 NKJV Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with Him,

Luke 8:2-3 NKJV and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance.

Anyone Christ has blessed should follow Him and give from their substance to spread the Gospel.

There are four popular suggestions about Mary Magdalene that are not supported in the Bible.

1. she was the prostitute in the Pharisee's house
2. she was young and attractive
3. she had a romantic affection for Jesus
4. she was the woman who broke the alabaster box of perfume, (Mark 14:3-9)

What can be said of Mary Magdalene can also be said about the other women included in this text. All of them had experienced the grace and mercy of God that saves, heals of evil spirits and infirmities. Their gratitude for what the Lord had done brought them into action to provide for Him from their substance. Mary Magdalene was seen at the crucifixion of Jesus, at His burial along with other women, on resurrection morning when an angel told her the Lord had risen, and she was the first to talk to Jesus after His resurrection.

The next three points of our study are connected.

Blind and Mute Demon Possessed Healed - Matthew 12:22; Luke 11:14

Matthew 12:22 NKJV Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw.

The dialogue on the unpardonable sin is related to their criticism about this miracle.

Look at the miracle.

The man brought to Jesus was demon-possessed and as a result was blind and mute. *Not everyone that is blind or deaf, or has some form of physical or mental distress is demon possessed.* When a person is demon possessed, other physical or mental disturbances usually occur. Those physical and/or mental disturbances are secondary to demon possession. If the demon is cast out, the person is healed.

Opposition over Deliverance and Healing of Demoniac - Matthew

12:24-25; Mark 3:22-27; Luke 11:14-23

Matthew 12:24 NKJV Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, “This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.”

Beelzebub is the name of a Philistine deity, a god of Ekron and later Satan the prince of demons. In 2 Kings 1, Ahaziah fell from his upper chamber and sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron to see if he would recover. It means “lord of the flies” or the name of the Devil, as the prince of demons.

Matthew 12:25 NKJV But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.

Matthew 12:26–27 NKJV If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges.

Matthew 12:28 NKJV But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.

When Jesus faced opposition over healing and delivering the demon possessed, He offered a three part defense. First, any kingdom, organization, or group that is divided against itself will self-destruct. Second, since the followers of the Pharisees claimed to cast out demons by the power of God, Jesus asked how their sons cast out demons. Third, His casting out demons signified the kingdom of God has come upon them. Jesus was demonstrating the power of the kingdom of God over the powers of Satan and evil.

Matthew 12:29–30 NKJV Or how can one enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

Unpardonable Sin - Matthew 12:25-37; Mark 3:28-30

Matthew 12:31–32 NKJV Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

There are many questions about the sin against the Holy Spirit which will not be forgiven.

There are seven sins against the Holy Spirit.

First, quenching the Holy Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 5:19-20 NKJV Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies.

The word "quench" means to cause a fervent activity to cease, to stop or resist. This is done when a fervent activity, work, anointing of the Holy Spirit is resisted and caused to cease. "Quenching the Spirit" in this context refers to the function and gifts of the Spirit in the Church. Although this is not the unpardonable sin, it has grave consequences that can cause the function of spiritual gifts to cease.

Second, vexing or grieving the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 4:30 NKJV And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Isaiah 63:10 NKJV But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; So He turned Himself against them as an enemy, And He fought against them.

To grieve means to make sad, sorrowful or distressed. A person grieves the Holy Spirit by not giving Him room to work, ignoring or rejecting Him. This can be trivializing worship, praise, or ministry. Grieving the Holy Spirit may be mimicking or mocking the actions or gifts of the Holy Spirit or refusing to listen to His voice or prompting. Grieving the Holy Spirit is not the unpardonable sin, but it can result in a loss of His presence and power on the church or the individual for a period of time.

Third, lying or deceiving the Holy Spirit, Acts 5:4,9.

Ananias and Sapphira lied to God and conspired to deceive the Holy Spirit and fell down dead.

Acts 5:4 NKJV Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

Acts 5:9 NKJV Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out."

Ananias and Sapphira surrendered to Satan's temptation and contrived together to lie to the Holy Spirit. The consequences of lying to God and deceiving the Holy Spirit may not always be seen immediately, but they definitely happen.

Fourth, sins against your body.

1 Corinthians 6:18–19 NKJV Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins

against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

Immorality is not only a sin against a person's body, but is also a sin against the Holy Spirit, Who dwells within the believer. Don't take it lightly that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Fifth, insulting the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 10:29 NKJV Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

This is intentionally counting the blood of Christ as common or unclean and insulting the work of the Holy Spirit Who imparts the grace of God. A person who does this will receive much worse punishment than rejecting the Law or willfully sinning.

Sixth, resisting or striving with the Holy Spirit.

Genesis 6:3 NKJV And the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."

Acts 7:51 NKJV You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.

Resisting or striving against is actively opposing what the Holy Spirit is attempting to do. In Acts 26, Saul was resisting and persecuting the Lord. Many people resist the urge of the Holy Spirit to draw them to salvation, repentance, or ministry. At some point, the Holy Spirit will discontinue drawing them into His will.

Seventh, blaspheming the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 12:31-32 NKJV Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

This sin is a result of speaking against the Holy Spirit and attributing His work to the devil. Every action Jesus took was by the power of the Holy Spirit Who put into motion every decree of God.Jesus made a distinction between not fully comprehending His person and speaking against the power that was evidenced through Him. To say that the

works of Jesus or God are of Satan is a direct offense to the Holy Spirit, Who works in perfect harmony with the Trinity. If the works Jesus did through the power of the Holy Spirit were attributed to Satan, that person would reap the consequences. When anyone blasphemes the works of God, the glory of God, or the manifestation of God, they are blaspheming the Holy Spirit. The Pharisees said Jesus *"cast out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of demons"* thus attributing Jesus' miracles to Satan's power.

Why is sin against the Holy Spirit so devastating?

Hebrews 6:4–6 NKJV For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, [5]and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, [6]if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

When anyone rejects the witness of the Holy Spirit, there is no other opportunity for repentance. All sin should be considered an attack against God's character and nature. We must guard ourselves against sins against the Holy Spirit.

What lesson can we learn from the woman of the city that came and washed Jesus' feet?

How can we guard ourselves from sins against the Holy Spirit?