

## Who is Jesus?

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Luke

7:36 Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to eat with him. So he went to the Pharisee's home and took his place at the table.

7:37 There was a woman who was a notorious sinner in that city. When she learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's home, she took an alabaster jar of perfume

7:38 and knelt at his feet behind him. She was crying and began to wash his feet with her tears and dry them with her hair. Then she kissed his feet over and over again, anointing them constantly with the perfume.

7:39 Now the Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw this and told himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who is touching him and what kind of woman she is. She's a sinner!"

7:40 Jesus told him, "Simon, I have something to ask you." "Teacher," he replied, "ask it."

7:41 "Two men were in debt to a moneylender. One owed him 500 denarii, and the other 50.

7:42 When they couldn't pay it back, he generously canceled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?"

7:43 Simon answered, "I suppose the one who had the larger debt canceled." Jesus told him, "You have answered correctly."

7:44 Then, turning to the woman, he told Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You didn't give me any water for my feet, but this woman has washed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair.

7:45 You didn't give me a kiss, but this woman, from the moment I came in, has not stopped kissing my feet.

7:46 You didn't anoint my head with oil, but this woman has anointed my feet with perfume.

7:47 So I'm telling you that her sins, as many as they are, have been forgiven, and that's why she has shown such great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven loves little."

7:48 Then Jesus told her, "Your sins are forgiven!"

7:49 Those who were at the table with them began to say among themselves, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?"

7:50 But Jesus told the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

[International Standard Version]

It does not matter so much what we achieve in our

lives. What is more important than anything else is whether we know who Jesus is or not. Let us look again at verse 49, which we just read.

Luke

7:49 "Those who were at the table with them began to say among themselves, 'Who is this man who even forgives sins?'"

Who is this man? Let me read some other verses. We can find the same expression from the verses that begin at verse 1 of the Gospel according to Mark, chapter 6:

Mark

6:1 Jesus left that place and went back to his hometown, and his disciples followed him.

6:2 When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were utterly amazed. "Where did this man get all these things?" they asked. "What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What great miracles are being done by his hands!"

6:3 This is the builder, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon, isn't it? His sisters are here with us, aren't they?" And they were offended by him.

6:4 Jesus was telling them, "A prophet is without honor only in his hometown, among his relatives, and in his own home."

6:5 He couldn't perform a miracle there except to lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them.

6:6 He was amazed at their unbelief. Then he went around to the villages and continued teaching.

Jesus could only lay His hands on a few sick people and heal them. He actually was willing to heal all sick people in there. But, He couldn't. Why was that? It was because of their unbelief. The most horrible sin of human beings is unbelief, isn't it? You cannot obtain true belief by simply uttering, "Yes, I decide to believe." You need help from Jesus. He is called the initiator of faith and the perfecter of faith. But, who is this man?

What kind of man is Jesus? Needless to say, He is not the founder of the religion called Christianity, which was actually made by human beings. Jesus Christ has absolutely nothing to do with any man-made religions. Simon belonged to the so-called Pharisees; he was a Bible scholar and undoubtedly, was a man of great character who was respected in the society. However, in his religious life, the highest value was placed on obeying the laws and living a life according to the commandments. "We need to do this; we need to do that." His life was tied to various obligations after all. This idea is actually shared by all the religions in this world today. That is to say, in religions, it is humans who stand at the center, and demand others to act in a specific way.

When humans are at the center, huge value is always placed on human effort. In this world, people are encouraged to "strive" in all aspects of their lives. I still have a picture, which was taken, I think, at Haneda Airport. It is of an ordinary passenger aircraft and on its body, it was marked with big letters, "Let's Strive, Japan!" This was a slogan, which was seen everywhere three years ago after we were hit by the massive earthquake. An unimaginable number of people were killed instantly and many are still missing. I wondered what the point of asking them to "strive" was. How can they say to the people, "Strive, Japan," when there were so many people who lost all they had in one day or even all family members? How are they supposed to strive? It was the cruelest word for them.

When we stop striving and instead, begin to rely on the one who can do anything, we will have peace of mind. Many people believe that, after all, there is something good in human beings or human beings are innately of good nature. Therefore, they will be saved by striving or making as much effort as they can. However, true salvation does not come as a result of any human effort or as a reward for what we have done. It is a gift from the true, living God, which we do not deserve to receive.

In this regard, Jesus and the Pharisees, the religious leaders of those days, were in total conflict with each other. Jesus said that those who refused to come to Him and admit that they were worthless sinners, would receive permanent destruction. Jesus made it very clear that He was the way and no one could get to the true God unless they rely on Him. Contrarily, the Bible scholars of those days were quite confident that they were the only people who were promised salvation. It was because they were very proud of themselves as the ones who studied the Scripture, which we call the Old Testament today, more than anyone else. They were the ones who obeyed all the biblical laws strictly, prayed and lived highly ethical lives.

It is described in the verses we just read that this Pharisee, Simon, invited Jesus for dinner. It is a great mystery to me why he wanted to invite Jesus. Anyway, Jesus accepted the invitation and went to his house. It was on this occasion that a certain woman sneaked into the house without permission. I am quite sure that it was not an easy thing for her to do. It must have been a big decision for her to do so. Nevertheless, the agony she was holding at the bottom of her heart was growing so large that she could not endure it any longer. Therefore, she gathered all her courage and came to see Jesus.

**Luke**  
7:37 There was a woman who was a notorious sinner in that city. When she learned that Jesus

was eating at the Pharisee's home, she took an alabaster jar of perfume  
7:38 and knelt at his feet behind him.... Then she kissed his feet over and over again, anointing them constantly with the perfume.

It is not hard to imagine that when this woman poured the expensive perfume on Jesus' feet, the room was filled with a very good fragrance. And the eyes of all the people in the room were turned to Jesus and this woman. The man called Simon, even though he saw all these things with his own eyes, was led to wrong conviction;

**Luke**  
7:39 "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who is touching him and what kind of woman she is. She's a sinner!"

Of course, Jesus knew everything about this woman. Jesus knew all the sins she had committed and the debts she brought to her own life. And Jesus was totally aware what was in her mind; that is to say, guilty conscience, the emptiness in her mind, being unsatisfied and the unbearable solitude that filled her heart. Of course, Jesus knew about, not only this woman, but the man called Simon too. Jesus knew his arrogance and what he was thinking deep in his mind. Jesus taught a parable to him; He made a practical application of the parable to this man. It was through this application that Simon had to admit how wrong he had been.

Then, Jesus turned to this sinful woman and said to her in front of all people in the room: "Your sins are forgiven" (verse 48). He also told her, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace" (verse 50). In other words, He let her know that "because of her faith and her belief, she was saved now. Her sins were all forgiven. She had received grace and true peace."

**Luke**  
7:49 "Those who were at the table with them began to say among themselves, 'Who is this man who even forgives sins?'"

Who is this man? This must be one of the most important questions in our lives, isn't it?

What kind of man is Jesus? Many people living today see Him as the founder of Christianity, which is, of course, absolutely wrong. Jesus Christ did not want to be associated with any man-made religions. This world we are living in is so messed up. The most dangerous thing in this world is not nuclear weapons; it is religion. Religions even cause wars between believers and people kill each other because of their beliefs. Religions exist because humans are easily deceived. Religions are businesses that make good money. Religions demand a lot of things from believers. What do they ask for? Knowledge, to

begin with. They ask you to study hard and acquire knowledge. But, studying does not help you to understand what is most important for you. It is not true.

I am feeling so tired lately. I turned 85 years-old. I have two kinds of cancer, and I have no idea how much time is left for me. But, I do not care about it at all since I am sure that I will be raised at the time that is best for me. Now, I am too old, but I used to study the Bible a lot when I was young. I contemplated where the best place to study was. I checked various Bible schools in Germany, but I finally gave up Germany and decided to enter this divine Swiss school. The founder of this school was a remarkable man; he was a great Jewish scholar, who could speak seven different languages fluently. After I studied a few years there and graduated from this school, I decided to continue my studies in another Bible school in Germany. After a while, I studied in one Bible institute in England, where I found out one thing. What I understood there was that I would never understand the truth by being taught in schools. If you come to the understanding that you do not need to understand, it is just fine; you have reached the truth.

All religions are wrong in that they demand people do this, do that and believe this and understand that. It causes people, after all, to be bound, to be kept under restraint and suffer from meaningless guilty consciences. Fortunately, the true God does not demand anything from humans. The calling from the Lord God is simply that He loves us. We do not understand why, how come He loves us. In answering the question as to what kind of man Jesus is, I would say that He is the man who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

What kind of man is Jesus? I can think of three answers. Firstly, Jesus is the one who thoroughly understands each one of us, humans. Secondly, the Lord Jesus is the only one who can completely forgive the arrogance of humans and the failure of human beings. And thirdly, Jesus is the one who saves all His believers and allows them to share in His peace. He is the incomparably magnificent one. I guess it is impossible for humans to completely comprehend the greatness of Christ forever, even after death.

What kind of man is Jesus? As I just mentioned, Jesus is the one who thoroughly understands every human being, to begin with. This is the never-changing truth. It might be hard to believe, but it is true. He literally, knows all things. Nothing can be hidden from Jesus. It is stated in the Bible:

#### Hebrews

4:13 "No creature can hide from him, but everyone is exposed and helpless before the

eyes of the one to whom we must give a word of explanation."

God is omniscient. He knows all things precisely. We are the ones who bear the final responsibility in accepting this very fact and realizing how we are burdened with debt. Let us take to heart that it is this God Himself with whom we are linked. We are not linked to religion, ethics or anything that is based on these man-made things. We are linked with the only living true God. What kind of man is this true God? We will never understand it no matter how hard we try.

He is the one who created this entire universe. He did not use any material, but created it from nothing, which already is beyond our imagination. Mankind has evolved, and we can create almost anything provided we have the required materials. It is something. But, we need to have materials before we begin to create something. The Lord God does not require any source material. He said "Let there be light" and the light was there. It was so simple. Let us look at the Yamaha piano. It was made by many people. The task was not so easy, although it does not look very new.

The creation of the Lord God is perfect. It will not grow old. He did not need any raw materials. He created everything from scratch. It is beyond our imagination. It is unthinkable. However, it is the ultimate blessing for us to know the Lord, who understands all things precisely, isn't it? Only the true God will never be deceived by a human. He should not be disrespected. He is the one who handles everything strictly. Furthermore, He is the one who would never condone any sins of humans. It is stated in the Bible:

#### Proverbs

15:3 "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, observing both the evil and the good."

Let us open the Old Testament now:

#### Genesis

16:13 So she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, "You are 'God who sees,' because I have truly seen the one who looks after me."

"You are the God who sees me," said the woman called Hagar. Nothing can be hidden from the eyes of the true living God. The Lord God knows all thoughts and desires in the human heart. Let me read another verse from near the end of the Bible.

#### Hebrews

4:12 For the word of God (...which refers to the Scripture....) is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul and spirit, joints and marrow, as it judges the

### thoughts and purposes of the heart.

In this sense, the Bible is a dangerous book to read since it makes the readers realize how worthless they are. But, that is not all. It is only through the Bible that we are given true hope. It helps us to move forward in our lives. No matter how difficult the circumstances we are placed in, we do not need to worry. The Bible is the greatest treasure that is given by the God.

#### Luke

7:39 "Now the Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw this and told himself, 'If this man were a prophet, he would have known who is touching him and what kind of woman she is. She's a sinner!'"

Of course, Jesus knew everything about this woman. However, it was not only this woman, but He also knew this Bible scholar completely, who was living a very ethical life. This Bible scholar only thought these things in his mind and did not utter them by word. But, Jesus saw into his heart and answered instantly according to the Bible. His response begins with the next verse, 40. Jesus said to this man, "Simon, you too are the subject of my love. Simply open your ears to my words and open your heart to me." Jesus saw the desire and the reasons hidden in the heart of this Pharisee as much as He knew very well the desire and the reasons, which made this sinful woman come to see Him.

The wall separating these two people was so high that it was absolutely insuperable. On one side, there was this arrogant Pharisee, who justified himself and was so proud of himself, while on the other side, there was this sinful woman, whose heart was totally broken because of the burden of her own sins; it was as if she was lying down in the dust. Let us compare these two people from several aspects.

From a social point of view, these two people had nothing in common. I imagine that the Bible scholar lived in a large luxurious house in a suburban upscale residential area. It was a life that was allowed only to the highest class of people. On the other hand, this sinful woman lived in a place like a ghetto, where all sinful deeds were committed.

In an ethical sense too, they had very little in common with each other. The Bible scholar lived a magnificent life in a suburban area, while the sinful woman was a woman of adultery; she was a prostitute.

Also in an economical aspect, their lives were completely different from each other. This Pharisee lived in great comfort and had nothing to worry about. Contrarily, the sinful woman was so poor that she had no other way to make a living than selling

herself and sacrificing her pureness.

In a religious sense, they were also polar opposites of each other. This Pharisee proudly believed that his life was controlled by his religion, while the sinful woman did not have anything to do with any man-made religions; she even tried to stay away from religions.

There was a complete difference in their personalities too, which was even beyond comparison. This Pharisee was a cold-hearted, calculating, and strict person. The sinful woman was warm-hearted and because of that, she was not ashamed of weeping in front of many people. She did not even hesitate to kiss the feet of Jesus.

In these ways, Simon and the woman were completely different in all aspects, except one; they were totally the same in one thing. That is to say, they were both sinners, burdened with debts. In verse 40, Jesus said, "Simon, I have something to ask you." Then, Jesus told him a parable, through which Simon was exposed to the light.

#### Luke

7:41 "Two men were in debt to a moneylender. One owed him 500 denarii, and the other 50.

7:42 When they couldn't pay it back, he generously canceled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?"

Jesus doubtlessly looked deep into the eyes of Simon as He continued to talk and asked him, "Which of these two men will love the moneylender more?" What was it that through this parable, Jesus wanted Simon to understand? He was saying to Simon, "You are also a sinner and are burdened with debts. It might be true that this sinful woman is in debt as much as 500 denarii while you are the sinner of only 50 denarii, but there is no difference between you two in my eyes."

The Bible says, "since all have sinned and continue to fall short of God's glory" (Romans 3:23). And that, "For whoever keeps the whole Law but fails in one point is guilty of breaking all of it" (James 2:10). It is very hard for most people to understand that the highly esteemed and religious man, who lived a highly ethical life, needs to be saved the same way as prostitutes or even murderers do. There was no doubt that this woman was filled with sins. Jesus, of course, knew that very well and did not deny it at all.

She had been living a filthy and degenerate life, which made her despised by others. She needed to be redeemed and saved. But, this Pharisee was absolutely no different in that he needed salvation. We cannot be thankful enough that Jesus is capable of saving any kind of sinners.

There is no sin that is too horrible for the Lord Jesus to forgive. We should feel so grateful that Jesus saved even a man like Simon. There might be some righteous people who have no debt of wrongdoing, live ethical lives and have no reason to be accused by others; however, in the eyes of the Lord, they are all the same worthless sinners.

Most people are living lives like Simon. We see ourselves living somewhat righteous, exemplary and honest lives. However, what we need to do now is to see ourselves exactly the same way the only true living God sees us. When we see ourselves that way, we will have to admit that we are all imperfect, that we make mistakes all the time and that we are filled with sins. We will realize how we are lost and need to be saved.

Jesus, of course, understood everything about Simon and the sinful woman. And still, He loved both of them and sincerely desired to give them true contentment. Jesus loves each one of us humans regardless of what we did in our past.

Jesus was there even before this world was created; He already knew the debts and sins each human being would eventually commit. Jesus was aware how much we would come to need the salvation of the Lord God. Because of that, Jesus came down from heaven to this earth, at the time His Father, God designated and offered His own life for us as the price to cancel our debts. But, Jesus did not just die and fade away. He resurrected and is still alive among us. He is willing to bless us and forgive us. After all, Jesus desperately wants us to realize the whole love of the Father God so that we begin to live lives that satisfy His will. Let us read another verse:

#### Romans

5:8 "But God demonstrates his love for us by the fact that the Messiah died for us while we were still sinners."

Who is this man? As I mentioned, Jesus is the only one who thoroughly understands us. And He is the one who loves each human being personally with His limitless love. I believe that nothing is more important for us than knowing this man, Jesus.

End