

# THE *Three Faces* OF GOD

## Part 2: The Face of the Forgiver

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Our culture is fascinated by spirituality, yet we are more confused about who God is than ever before. Some believe that God is simply an idea; others believe that God is everything. Still others believe that there are many Gods and that we, as human beings, have the opportunity to become gods someday. In the midst of the confusion, it should be comforting to know that God tells us – through the Bible and through the life of His Son, Jesus – exactly who He is. God doesn't hide from us, but instead wants us to know and recognize Him so that we can relate to Him more fully and experience the blessing of His involvement in our lives.

One of the most significant reasons that we are unable to recognize and relate to God is our inability to give and receive love. We find it difficult to give and receive love because of...

1. Our **secrets**.
2. Our **shame**.

### *Central Point . . .*

A story in the book of Luke tells us about a woman who struggled with her own secrets and shame until she met God the Forgiver...

**Luke 7:36-50** *"One of the Pharisees asked him over for a meal. He went to the Pharisee's house and sat down at the dinner table. [37] Just then a woman of the village, the town harlot, having learned that Jesus was a guest in the home of the Pharisee, came with a bottle of very expensive perfume [38] and stood at his feet, weeping, raining tears on his feet. Letting down her hair, she dried his feet, kissed them, and anointed them with the perfume. [39] When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man was the prophet I thought he was, he would have known what kind of woman this is who is falling all over him." [40] Jesus said to him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Oh? Tell me." [41] "Two men were in debt to a banker. One owed five hundred silver pieces, the other fifty. [42] Neither of them could pay up, and so the banker canceled both debts. Which of the two would be more grateful?" [43] Simon answered, "I suppose the one who was forgiven the most." "That's right," said Jesus. [44] Then turning to the woman, but speaking to Simon, he said, "Do you see this woman? I came to your home; you provided no water for my feet, but she rained tears on my feet and dried them with her hair. [45] You gave me no greeting, but from the time*

*I arrived she hasn't quit kissing my feet. [46] You provided nothing for freshening up, but she has soothed my feet with perfume. [47] Impressive, isn't it? She was forgiven many, many sins, and so she is very, very grateful. If the forgiveness is minimal, the gratitude is minimal." [48] Then he spoke to her: "I forgive your sins." [49] That set the dinner guests talking behind his back: "Who does he think he is, forgiving sins!" [50] He ignored them and said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."*

Wherever Jesus went crowds gathered, and in the passage just before our text, He had been teaching just such a crowd. It is safe to assume that the sinful woman had been among the crowd and that...

...she **saw** Jesus.

...she **heard** Jesus.

...she **responded** to Jesus.

...she was **transformed** by Jesus.

Simon, the local religious leader, invited Jesus to have a meal at his house because social protocol said that he had to.

That's when the sinful woman – a prostitute – entered the story...

She approached Jesus in tears. She cried because of...

1. The realization of her **sin**.
2. The realization that Jesus **knew** her secrets and that she didn't have to be ashamed.

After kneeling by Jesus...

She wet His feet with her **tears**.

She dried His feet with her **hair**.

She anointed His feet with her **perfume**.

A prostitute's perfume was her "trademark". It represented...

- **Who** she was.
- **What** she was.

Simon, of course, disapproved and Jesus answered his disapproval by telling the story of two men who were in debt to a banker.

With His illustration, Jesus tells Simon...

- You judged **Me** incorrectly.
- You judged **her** incorrectly.

Jesus tells Simon...

You had no water for My feet – she has wet them with her tears.

You didn't kiss Me – she hasn't stopped kissing my feet.

You didn't give Me oil. She anointed my feet with perfume.

Jesus tells the sinful woman...

Your sins are **forgiven**.

## *Focal Point...*

Three Questions...

1. Who is **Jesus**?

We must decide if we believe that He is God and that He can see our secrets and our shame.

2. Who are **we**?

We must decide if we believe that we are debtors and if we're capable of repaying what we owe.

3. Are we **forgiven**?

We must decide if we have asked Jesus to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves – to forgive our debt.

## *Turning Point...*

We must exchange our "**trademark**" – the essence of who we are, for the essence of who Jesus is.

Our challenge...

Believers – simply ask God,

*Father God – How am I doing in dealing with the pain of life?*

Seekers – If you are one checking out the claims of Christianity, know that the future God desires for you to experience is one that includes a growing personal relationship with Him. The good news is that to receive it, you simply have to ask Him.

To invite Christ into your heart, you can simply pray,

*Lord Jesus, I want to receive your love today. I believe you came and died for me, and I want to be your friend and follower, starting today. So I officially invite you into my life today. Lead me, guide me, love me, so that I can love others better each day. In Jesus' name, Amen.*